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Raising multilingual learners' awareness of social justice through translanguaging pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines a small-scale intervention plan designed to assess the awareness levels of multilingual learners in an English for Academic Purposes class concerning social justice issues and to examine the potential for increasing their awareness of injustices through pedagogical translanguaging for social change. This mixed-method study involved 59 participants who were initially assessed using a pretest comprising open-ended questions and a Likert scale questionnaire. Subsequently, an intervention plan was implemented over seven weeks, involving the use of news, videos, and in-class and out-of-class forum discussions conducted in both English and the learners' native languages. A posttest, with minor modifications from the pretest, was administered to 40 of the participants to assess changes in their perspectives. The findings indicate that more than half of the learners already possessed some awareness of the term; however, engaging in classroom discussions on social issues improved their conceptual understanding and heightened their awareness of diversity, equity, and injustices. Furthermore, translanguaging was found to be an effective tool in facilitating their comprehension and discussions of these topics.

Keywords
social justice, translanguaging pedagogy, EAP.

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Introduction

In today's interconnected world, the development of the Internet, along with the widespread use of smartphones and the accessibility of information through social media, has brought to light the global prevalence of social issues, manifesting in varying degrees and forms across different regions. This study delves into the specific context of Türkiye, a country characterized by its multicultural and multilingual diversity. While a majority of the population identifies ethnically as Turkish, Türkiye is home to a rich tapestry of ethnic communities, including substantial Kurdish and Arab populations. Additionally, Türkiye maintains its position as the leading host of refugees globally, currently accommodating approximately 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees and nearly 320,000 individuals of concern from various nationalities (UNHCR, 2023). Also, despite Turkish being the official language, Türkiye has a linguistic landscape encompassing nearly 19 living languages (Ethnologue, 2023). Located on the Anatolian peninsula in Western Asia, Türkiye has a rich heritage and diverse culture with a

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developing economy. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed stark income disparities, with students lacking essential resources for online learning. Schools welcome students from diverse backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, language, religion, gender preferences, and economic situations, yet societal tolerance toward "others" remains a challenge. Therefore, educators bear the responsibility of cultivating an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming learning environment, thus contributing to a brighter future for all. Particularly in the context of foreign language educators, their responsibilities extend beyond imparting the formal language structures. They play a pivotal role in enhancing learners' collaboration and communication skills, nurturing critical thinking, and promoting cultural awareness, as emphasized by Glynn et al. (2018). Osborn (2008) underscores the transformative potential of all world language instructors in advancing social justice and advocates for the adoption of a critical approach to language instruction. This pedagogical method involves a thorough examination of the language's significance within discussions, discrimination, and ideology. Osborn further asserts that "if the world views of residents of our global village are embodied … in their languages, then the study of foreign languages is central to an educational program among people committed to faith and learning integration, as well as democracy" (p. 18). Consequently, the incorporation of inclusive teaching practices in language classrooms assumes paramount significance in enriching learners' lives.

Language classrooms, serving as social environments where each learner forges their unique identity, have the potential to transcend their traditional educational objectives and become catalysts for societal transformation, both locally and globally. Within this context, language educators hold an important role in raising awareness regarding matters of social justice. This influence is particularly pronounced in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, which focus on instructing English to support learners' academic pursuits (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). In EAP programs within English-medium universities and higher education institutions, learners enhance their language proficiency tailored to academic contexts, such as delivering presentations, conducting research, composing essays, and participating in scholarly discussions. These courses prioritize the development of learner autonomy and higher-order thinking skills through task-based activities, often adopting a content-based, four-skills integrated approach. Therefore, there cannot be a better context to discuss social issues, as teachers can easily lead learners to analyze and evaluate situations and think critically. However, the very nature of EAP courses, often regarded as English-only spaces, along with English-medium instruction (EMI), raises concerns about linguistic justice, an integral component of social justice. To enhance learners' awareness of social justice within EAP courses, it becomes essential to consider each learner's language proficiency, linguistic background, and approaches to meaning-making. Translanguaging, which challenges conventional language boundaries and hierarchies, emerges as a potential means to imbue EAP courses with greater multilingual awareness (García, 2016). Since translanguaging recognizes and embraces linguistic diversity, promotes inclusive communication, facilitates equitable access to education, and contests linguistic discrimination, aligns closely with the broader goals of social justice. Therefore, integrating translanguaging practices into EAP can contribute to a more linguistically just and socially equitable educational environment. In this respect, this study has been designed to explore the extent of social justice awareness among EAP learners and assess the influence of translanguaging practices on enhancing their understanding of social justice issues.

Literature Review

Social justice

Democracy, equality, and social justice in schooling have been concerning a number of scholars over the past few decades (Adams & Bell, 2016; Ayers et al., 1998; Cochran-Smith 2004; 2010; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Michelli & Keiser, 2005; Nieto, 2010). Different definitions regarding social justice education are also present in the literature. Hackman (2005) states that "social justice education encourages learners to take an active role in their own education and supports teachers in creating empowering, democratic, and critical educational environments" (p. 103). Murrell (2006) also suggests that social justice leads to "a disposition toward recognizing and eradicating all forms of oppression and differential treatment extant in the practices and policies of institutions, as well as a fealty to participatory democracy as the means of this action" (p. 81). These perspectives are also parallel with Nieto's (2010) argument for social justice to "promote critical thinking and agency for social change" (p. 46). As social justice issues underlie the theories of critical pedagogy, aiming to transform oppressive social systems, it would be reasonable to mention Paulo Freire's work, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (2000). He proposes a school vision enabling learners to "perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 2000, p. 35). Although social justice may seem like an umbrella term, some other interdisciplinary frameworks have also been introduced for the examination of ideology, hegemony, power dynamics, fairness, and inclusivity in the field encompassing "(critical) multicultural education, inclusive education, … antiracist pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, anti-oppressive education, culturally responsive/sustaining pedagogies, critical language awareness, and critical applied linguistics" (Ortaçtepe Hart, 2023, p. xi).

In this regard, there has been some research integrating equity and diversity in various contexts and content areas such as English Language Arts (Dover, 2013), Spanish curriculum (Caballero-García, 2018) science education (Buxton, 2010), and mathematics (Gutstein, 2003). This shows that in the classrooms, much attention has been drawn to the fight against discrimination, oppression, poverty, and inequalities in all walks of life, which are present in most societies. Careful attention needs to be paid to underrepresented communities, people of color, lesbian gay bisexual transgender (LGBT) groups, and immigrants by educators. It is possibly because "no other factor has greater weight in influencing the intellectual and moral quality of the instruction children, youth, and adults receive during their years of classroom experience" (Hansen, 2001, p. 20).

Social justice in language classrooms

Hawkins (2011) states that even if there has not been much agreement on the framework of how best to teach a language, what is certain is that all language teachers have to be ready to teach learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In line with critical pedagogy, gender, race, and identity research have long been an interest in language classrooms (Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2022; Mitchell, 2013; Nelson, 2009; Nguyen & Yang, 2015; O'Loughlin, 2001; Paiz, 2017). As English is still the dominant language around the world on

account of globalization and the technological boom, research into social justice in language classrooms has also been abundant. There have been several books published in the field (Glynn et al., 2018; Hastings & Jacob, 2016; Hawkins, 2011; Osborn, 2006), and some studies focused on teachers' integrating social justice into curriculum and design (Wassell et al., 2019), others focused on teaching pedagogies (Randolph & Johnson, 2017) as well as teacher agency and perspectives regarding social justice in language classrooms (Dover, 2013).

Based on previous endeavors, renowned international organizations have started to propose frameworks and take initiatives to promote social justice in language teaching. Edited by Ortaçtepe Hart and Martel (2020), TESOL Journal published a special issue titled "Exploring the transformative potential of English language teaching for social justice: Introducing the special issue," where social justice advocacy in English classrooms is focused. In this special issue, the authors aim to expand upon the prior works and efforts to foster "growing an interdisciplinary and transformative community of practice within the fields of TESOL and applied linguistics that fights against discrimination, marginalization, poverty, and all sorts of inequalities by cultivating social justice, diversity, inclusivity, equality, and equity at large" (Ortaçtepe Hart & Martel, 2020, p. 2). Applied Linguistics (Avineri & Martinez, 2021) published a special issue titled *Cultivating Relationships for Justice: An Aspirational Call to Action*. TESOL formed the *Social Responsibility Interest Section (SRIS)* supporting "social responsibility, world citizenship, and awareness of global issues such as peace, human rights, and the environment" (TESOL, 2022). Similarly, American Association for Applied Linguistics has started an online platform to share materials, concepts, and projects centered around applied linguistics and social justice (AAAL, 2022). Numerous conferences and webinars have also been organized in the field including *the 2022 Conference of the British Association for Applied Linguistics: Innovation and Social Justice in Applied Linguistics*. All these initiatives taken by international organizations have helped spread thought-provoking ideas in the field promoting more research and action and also knowledge on how to approach social justice issues in classes. To promote equity and diversity in language classes, the importance of teacher education has also been addressed. Zeichner (2011) points out that Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE) aims to equip teachers with practices that can decrease "the inequalities that exist in school systems throughout the world between children of the poor and children of the middle and wealthy classes, and the injustices that exist in societies beyond systems of schooling in access to shelter, food, healthcare, transportation, access to meaningful work that pays a living wage, and so on" (p. 7). In one of the projects called *Raising Pre-service English Language Teachers' Awareness of Social Justice in Türkiye* (2018), teacher candidates' awareness in some of the universities was aimed to be raised by providing them with webinars and trainings and then asking for their reflections and lesson designs regarding teaching for social justice. The project is important as firstly the teachers should be educated and guided through appropriate standards about the delicate issues of social justice. A recent contribution by Ortaçtepe Hart (2023) has been a practical resource book called *Social Justice and the Language Classroom – Reflection, Action, and Transformation*. Carefully examining the various problems that language learners from diverse backgrounds might face from race and sex discrimination to marginalization, the author calls for action for a social change by providing some explanations for the roots of the issues and their historical background as well as practical resources for language educators.

Despite the growing interest, social justice education is not easy to achieve or free from criticism. One of the criticisms is that it lacks clarity in the visualization of the term practically

and how it affects school curriculum, program development, or school vision (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). It is also argued by some that language classes should be 'neutral'; therefore, sensitive topics or political concerns should not be discussed in class to avoid conflict (Ortaçtepe Hart, 2023). Therefore, more research is required to provide more structured frameworks and standards regarding social justice language teaching, teacher education, and its implementations in curricula.

Social justice in EAP classes

EAP programs have long been criticized for the use of inauthentic materials and uncritical approaches by mostly aiming at linguistic success (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). However, academic English settings can adopt a critical approach through content or task-based teaching easily and can be an effective atmosphere to promote social justice. While studies into new genres and techniques, and research-oriented practices have been increasing substantially, there have been very few studies into social-justice-informed content in EAP. In one of the case studies, Mortenson (2021) integrated social-justice content by using the novel called 'A Lesson Before Dying' by Ernest J. Gaines with emergent bilingual learners at a 4-year university in the United States and collected data from fieldnotes, class recordings, teacher journal and interviews with the learners. The researcher concluded that the learners in the study were passionately interested, curious about, and invested in the lesson materials and took an active and activist stance on social issues. Also, the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP)'s *EAP for Social Justice Special Interest Group (SIG)* has been carrying out conferences and webinars and sharing and publishing blogs on their website to call for action to raise awareness of being socially-just in EAP settings for the past few years (2020). Heyns (2023) introduced the work SIG does in the paper *BALEAP news – Introduction to SIGs: Meet EAP for Social Justice SIG*:

> The SIG aims to raise awareness of issues related to social justice in EAP, such as unequal access to higher education, the marginalisation of certain groups, and the impact of neoliberal policies on education. Other themes tap into working within and around neo-liberal structures, inclusive and trauma-informed EAP pedagogies, decolonising the curriculum, equalities issues (gender, sexual orientation, race, class), English as an Academic Lingua Franca versus plurilingualism and translanguaging, "othering" in the academy, challenging the deficit model of L2 learners, EAP and sustainability, identity issues – role and positioning of EAP practitioners and students and more. (p. 1)

In the EAP program where this study takes place in Türkiye, multilingual learners are engaged in reading authentic texts and listening to videos to critically evaluate and respond to the ideas presented in the thematic materials. Then, they synthesize the information or form their own arguments based on the resources to write an essay or discuss them in mini-groups. In such a setting, learners' awareness can be raised about social justice issues and daily news happening all around the world. Nevertheless, there is not much guidance in the school curriculum, books, or teacher training sessions on how to help the teachers. There is not much research about EAP learners' awareness level about social issues, either.

Intersections of translanguaging pedagogy and social justice

Translanguaging pedagogy refers to an educational approach that recognizes and embraces the multilingualism and diverse language resources of learners in the classroom. It encourages learners to draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire, including their native language(s) and "a wide variety of semiotics and modalities for meaning-making" (Li, 2023, p. 3), as a valuable tool for learning and communication (García, 2009). In translanguaging pedagogy, teachers intentionally create opportunities for learners to fluidly and meaningfully switch between languages, allowing them to construct knowledge, make connections, and express themselves more effectively (García & Li, 2014). The focus is on promoting language development, academic achievement, and fostering a positive cultural identity within a linguistically and culturally inclusive learning environment.

García and Lin (2016) offer weak and strong versions of translanguaging. Although both versions posit that multilingual individuals have a unitary linguistic repertoire from which they select linguistic features depending on their communicative needs, the weak version refers to strategies that resist the dominance of monolingual teaching and learning assumptions while recognizing learners' native languages and the strong version rejects the existence of individual languages in one's linguistic repertoire (Otheguy et al., 2015). In this sense, in a context such as EFL, where the ultimate aim is to teach named languages incorporating weak translanguaging practices may allow learners to leverage their linguistic strengths, fostering a deeper understanding and effective communication in the target language. The weak version recognizes that learners' native languages hold valuable resources and can serve as a bridge to better understand and acquire academic English. Therefore, by strategically integrating moments of translanguaging, teachers can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes comprehension, engagement, and participation among learners (García, 2016).

Social justice cannot happen without linguistic justice which values the importance of multilingual education (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2009). However, policies promoting monolingualism limit bilingual individuals to using only one language system, which does not align with their daily language practices at home or within their community (Escamilla et al., 2023). As a result, bilinguals are forced to make meaning only in English. This perspective finds substantial backing, particularly within English medium instruction (EMI) contexts, where the utilization of the first language is sometimes perceived as an indicator of insufficient proficiency in English (Baker, 2021; Sahan & Rose, 2021). However, translanguaging, liberating in nature, promotes linguistic justice by valuing learners' multilingual resources, fostering inclusive pedagogy, empowering their identities, countering linguistic discrimination, and ensuring equitable access to education (García & Leiva, 2014). It creates a more inclusive and just learning environment where learners' diverse linguistic backgrounds are acknowledged and celebrated, enabling equal participation and engagement (Li, 2023). By incorporating translanguaging practices, EAP classrooms can promote social justice by recognizing the importance of linguistic diversity and providing equitable educational opportunities for all learners.

Methodology

The objective of this study is twofold: firstly, to examine the extent of learners' awareness regarding social justice, and secondly, to explore the potential impact of translanguaging

pedagogy in enhancing their understanding of these issues. With this in mind, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) To what extent are multilingual EAP learners aware of social justice issues?
2) Can in-class and out-of-class activities, utilizing translanguaging pedagogy, contribute to increasing learners' awareness of social justice?

Participants and context

Convenient sampling methodology was employed to recruit undergraduate learners, primarily in their freshman year, who were enrolled in an English 101 course offered in three sections at a state university in Türkiye. English 101 is an integrated course that focuses on the development of four language skills within an academic context. The university follows English as the medium of instruction, and the study was conducted during the fall term of the 2022-2023 academic year. Firstly, ethical approval was received from the university's ethical board and each participant was asked to sign a consent form if they would like to participate in the study. The participants were aged between 18 and 20 and came from diverse cities in Türkiye, India, Iran, and Azerbaijan. These learners were pursuing studies across various departments of the university. During the pre-test phase, a total of 59 learners (35 male and 24 female) participated in the study. In the post-test phase, 40 learners (25 male and 15 female) formed the group that was included in the subsequent data analysis.

Data collection and analysis

In this mixed-method study, the quantitative data were collected using a pre- and post-survey designed by the researchers. Before constructing the survey, the researchers conducted several informal Zoom meetings to brainstorm and delve into social justice issues unique to the Turkish context. Each researcher independently crafted their version of the survey, and in a pre-study meeting, they collaboratively refined the survey statements to their final form. The pre- and post-intervention surveys are essentially the same, with the only difference being the inclusion of additional statements related to the use of translanguaging in the post-intervention survey. The researchers administered the pre-intervention survey to participants two days before initiating the 7-week intervention plan. Following the completion of the intervention, the researchers collected responses to the post-intervention survey from participants two days later.

Qualitative data collection included task completions and responses to open-ended questions, which underwent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Initially, both researchers separately immersed themselves in the qualitative data to ensure interrater reliability and to familiarize themselves with its content. They proceeded with initial coding, marking segments of data related to social justice. Subsequently, they grouped these codes into preliminary themes. The researchers then convened to share, discuss, and refine their respective codes and themes collaboratively. Throughout this process, they maintained ongoing communication to reflect on their individual biases and assumptions, aiming for a transparent analysis process. This reflexivity allowed them to document factors influencing their interpretations. The final themes were decided upon during a concluding meeting.

Intervention plan

Students enrolled in English 101 classes have four hours of contact over 14 weeks in a semester. Seven of these weeks are specifically allocated for the implementation of the outlined plan. Further details about the plan are available in Table 1.

Table 1. *7-Week Intervention Plan*

Week	Module Content
Week 1	After receiving the ethics approval and consent forms, a pretest including open-ended questions and a 6-point Likert-scale questionnaire was given to the learners in the second half of the course. Following the administration of the survey, the students were provided with a series of concise videos and accompanying explanations about the concept of social justice and what it encompasses.
Week 2	The students were introduced to some movements, such as BlackLivesMatter vs. AllLivesMatter and MeeToo, and some terms, such as gaslighting, body shaming, and different -isms, such as ageism and genderism were discussed.
Week 3	The first news brought to class was about violence against a woman happening that week. Additional multimedia sources and TEDTalk videos were shared with the students to raise awareness.
Week 4	The second news report highlighted instances of discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community in Türkiye. Gender-related vocabulary, such as binary, non-binary, and cisgender were introduced. During the discussion on current events, students were queried about their rationales, viewpoints, and reflections.
Week 5	The third news discussed in class pertained to issues involving authority and power dynamics. During this session, the students viewed a video featuring a journalist who, in the presence of cameras, physically attacked a member of his crew. A social justice wall was opened on Padlet by the first author, and the students were asked to share their news/videos under the given social problems in any language they preferred provided that also a summary in English would be shared over the weeks. (Headings opened on Padlet were discrimination, income gap, gender inequalities, refugee problems, LGBTQ+-related issues, climate injustice, racism, oppression, power & cities, and social justice.) In line with the principles of weak translanguaging pedagogy, the students were encouraged to utilize their knowledge of any language while working on these tasks. Additionally, they were provided with multilingual materials related to social justice, enabling them to construct knowledge by drawing upon resources in multiple languages.
Week 6	The students were asked to share their ideas about what is the most serious social injustice shared on Padlet, and what the reasons and solutions are by writing a 250-word paragraph on Moodle forum discussion. They were also required to read and respond to at least 2 of their classmates' responses.
Week 7	After the final writing activity, the same test was given to the students again to investigate whether there were any changes in their perspectives. A short class discussion about the whole progress was held with the students.

Researchers' positionality

As authors of this article, our positionality is rooted in a deep commitment to social justice in all aspects of life. We firmly believe that fairness, equity, and inclusivity are fundamental principles that should guide educational practices and societal structures. We recognize that students bring rich linguistic and cultural repertoires to the classroom, and we advocate for the use of multiple languages and the integration of diverse cultural perspectives in the learning process. As researchers, we also acknowledge the presence of power imbalances between us and our participants, who were also students taught by the first author. To address these imbalances, we implemented several strategies aimed at advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) throughout the course and data collection processes. Firstly, we structured the course content and discussions to cultivate open dialogue and critical thinking, fostering a linguistically and culturally inclusive atmosphere where students felt at ease sharing their perspectives on the sensitive topic of social justice. Secondly, the first author maintained an accessible and approachable demeanor, both inside and outside the classroom, to minimize any perceived authority that might discourage students from engaging in discussions. Our goal was to empower students to actively participate in discussions related to social justice education and to contribute to educational practices that foster equity, inclusivity, and empowerment for all students.

Findings

Findings regarding the quantitative data

A total of 59 participants initially took part in the pre-test. However, 19 participants did not complete the post-test, resulting in a final sample size of 40 participants who participated in both tests. Among these participants, 24 were males and 16 were females. The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of .864, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Descriptive statistics were then computed to examine the participants' responses in both the pre-and post-tests. The analysis revealed that the mean values for each variable were consistently high across both tests. However, there were no substantial differences in the means of the variables between the pre-and post-tests. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a majority of the participants (M=36) expressed their belief in the utility of discussing social justice within the classroom setting. However, it is important to acknowledge that a smaller proportion of the participants (M=4) exhibited uncertainty regarding this matter.

Given the lack of statistically significant mean differences, further statistical analyses comparing the means of the participants in the pre-and post-tests were deemed unnecessary. Thus, it can be concluded that the participants' means did not exhibit a significant change following the implementation of the intervention plan. The mean values for each variable in the pre-and post-tests are presented in the tables below.

Table 2 presents the pre-and post-test outcomes about the participants' level of awareness regarding the concept of social justice. Participants were requested to rate their awareness of these variables on a 6-point Likert scale, with a rating of 1 indicating the lowest level of awareness and a rating of 6 indicating the highest level of awareness.

Table 2. *Participants' Awareness of the Concept of Social Justice*

Variable	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean
I am aware of the concept of social justice.	4.53	4.68
I hear a lot about social justice.	3.90	4.55
I can identify social injustices around me.	4.51	4.72
I think social injustice affects me and/or my family.	4.46	4.13
I have observed social injustice in our community.	4.78	4.78
I have observed social injustice in our classroom.	1.92	1.85
It is important to respect the diversity of personal values and preferences.	5.36	5.43
The diversity of personal values and preferences is respected in our country.	2.54	2.62
The diversity of personal values and preferences is respected in our classroom.	4.90	4.80
It is important to teach social justice in the classroom.	5.17	5.35

Between the pre-test and post-test, there was an increase in the participants' awareness of the concept of social justice, their perception of hearing more about social justice, their ability to identify social injustices around them, and their belief in the importance of teaching social justice in the classroom. Conversely, there was a decrease in the participants' perception that social injustice affects them and/or their families and a slight decrease in their perception of the importance of respecting the diversity of personal values and preferences in the classroom. The observations of social injustice in the community and classroom remained relatively consistent between the pre-test and post-test.

The second finding pertained to the characteristics of social justice and results are presented in Table 3. The participants were asked to evaluate the significance of these variables on a 6-point Likert scale, where a score of 1 represented the lowest importance level, and a score of 6 denoted the highest importance level.

Table 3. *Characteristics of Social Justice*

Variable	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean
Opportunities	4.92	5.05
Human rights	5.42	5.55
Equality	5.42	5.45
Freedoms	5.46	5.50
Solidarity	4.73	4.93
Democracy	5.25	5.48
Well-being	4.98	5.15

As shown in the table above, the results indicate a notable increase in the participants' perceptions of these social justice attributes. Specifically, the participants exhibited an enhanced understanding and appreciation of concepts such as opportunities, human rights, equality, freedoms, democracy, and well-being. Moreover, the sense of solidarity among participants also witnessed an increase, reflecting a heightened sense of unity and support for these values. In this respect, the post-test results underscore a positive trend in the participants' comprehension and recognition of these characteristics of social justice. Table 4 displays the variables about significant societal issues. The participants were asked to assess the importance of important societal issues using a 6-point Likert scale.

Table 4. *Significant Societal Issue*

Variable	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean
Racism	4.00	4.45
Prejudice	5.03	5.10
Income gap	5.12	5.45
Power	5.12	3.38
Gender inequalities	5.05	5.20
Refugee rights	4.20	4.50
Climate injustice	4.07	4.58
LGBT rights	4.42	4.80
Discrimination	4.80	5.30

It can be seen that the participants exhibited an increase in their awareness and understanding of issues related to racism, prejudice, income inequality, refugee rights, climate injustice, LGBT rights, and discrimination. However, it is important to highlight a significant decrease in the participants' perceptions of power, suggesting a potential shift in their understanding of power dynamics within the context of social justice.

Findings regarding the qualitative data

Through thematic analysis of the qualitative data, several themes surfaced: "Definition of social justice," "Social justice at university," "Evolving perspectives on social justice," and "Translanguaging and social justice." In the following sections, we present the findings aligned with these themes, supported by relevant excerpts from the data set.

Definition of social justice

The first question in both pre and post-test asked students to define social justice. Before intervention, only three students were not sure about the term and they described it as a situation where people judge the crimes. However, after the intervention, students tended to describe the term in more detailed and creative ways. To illustrate, some of the students highlighted the concept that every individual in society should have equal social and economic rights, regardless of their background or status.

> "It is the concept which advocates that every individual in the society should be equal in terms of social and economic rights regardless of their backgrounds or status."

> "Social justice is the equality of justice for all members of society regardless of their nationality, race, etc., that is, without being discriminatory. It includes the welfare of society."

> "People should be valued for just they are human there shouldn't be discrimination or categorizing between the people."

> "Social justice is that each individual has equal conditions regardless of gender, religion, language, race, etc., and continues their lives freely."

This notion of social justice promotes the idea that justice should be applied equally to all members of society, without any form of discrimination based on factors such as nationality, race, or other characteristics. The inclusion of the welfare of society further reinforces the idea that social justice encompasses the well-being and fair treatment of all individuals. Some other students, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of respect and equal opportunities in achieving social justice. Their definitions focused on the need to value individuals for who they are as human beings and called for the elimination of discrimination and categorization.

> "It's about respecting everybody and not judging them before you listen to them. Also, it includes giving everyone equal opportunities."

> "Even though we cannot reach the same level with some people, who are wealthier than us for example, we should try to come there, and give the chance."

The idea of not judging others before listening to them reflects the importance of empathy and understanding in promoting social justice. Additionally, providing everyone with equal opportunities, even if reaching the same level may be challenging, is seen as an essential aspect of social justice. This highlights the belief that society should strive to create an environment where individuals have the chance to succeed and fulfill their potential, regardless of any disparities that may exist.

Social justice at university

In the first survey, the students were asked if they had witnessed any instances of injustice within the university, to which the majority responded negatively. However, a few comments focused on "expensive course books," "economic problems accessing online education," and judgmental sentences such as "engineering is an occupation for males," "students coming from private and state high schools," and "professors' favoritism to some students."

After the intervention, during the final discussion and personal reflection on the issues, some students opened up about their personal experiences of discrimination at school. One student shared that his friends would often make jokes about his background, while another bravely disclosed the discrimination she faced from her friends due to wearing a headscarf. Additionally, another student revealed that he had been physically assaulted based on his religious ethnicity. Their courage to speak out in front of others was inspiring, and it prompted a valuable discussion about the prevalence of judgment within our own society and beyond.

Evolving perspectives on social justice

The final question of the survey inquired whether the students had any additional remarks to add. In general, the responses from the pretest survey indicated a lack of additional comments. However, here are a few of the responses received:

> "I do not know much about social justice☹."
>
> "It can be accomplished by proper education at the right age."
>
> "It's exactly about economic conditions."
>
> "I'm glad that you have mentioned this subject. Thanks."
>
> "We must learn to strive for justice of others."

However, the post-survey comments exhibited a marked shift towards more positive and insightful perspectives. Firstly, there was a strong desire for change and a sense of hope among the participants. Many expressed their hopes for a reduction in social injustice and an improvement in societal conditions. According to them, with the recognition of the existing disparities positive transformation is possible.

> "I hope it will be less than yesterday."
>
> "We should change all of these problems and have hope to solve them."
>
> "I hope social injustice will decrease in our country."
>
> "I hope people in our country will be aware of it."
>
> "Before we discussed and learned about social injustice, I was not aware of it as much as now. It is important to show people and raise their awareness."

Secondly, the comments highlighted the importance of community and empathy. Participants emphasized the need for genuine connections and support among individuals, rejecting judgment and discrimination. They advocated for those in positions of power and authority to listen and take action to address social injustices, while also raising awareness among the general public.

> "If we do not see others, we cannot see the future. We should be a real community that helps each other and not judge or leave people to their fate."
>
> "Those who hold power and administration should listen to their mercy and not only prevent their own social injustice but also work to raise awareness among the people."
>
> "Talking about social injustice makes me more careful about my actions and question my unconscious behaviors that can hurt anyone."
>
> "People in society need to realize that they must respect the lives of others."

Thirdly, the concept of equal rights and valuing diversity emerged consistently. Participants expressed the belief that all individuals should have equal opportunities regardless

of their race, age, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. They emphasized the importance of respecting and valuing diverse perspectives and rejecting any form of discrimination.

> "People have the same rights actually, but they cannot use these rights in real life because of injustice in society. In my opinion, everybody should live regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity."

> "No one has the right to make people suffer from this kind of social injustices."

> "This topic is [about] something that affects everyone, and therefore we should give much more attention to it."

> "I think every person and their opinions are valuable. Discrimination should not be an option."

Overall, the analysis of the comments revealed a strong awareness and concern for social justice among the participants. They demonstrated a desire for positive change, highlighted the importance of empathy and community, and expressed a commitment to promoting equal rights and valuing diversity. These insights provided valuable information for understanding the participants' perspectives and attitudes toward social justice issues.

Translanguaging and social justice

When the participants were asked about the impact of using translanguaging materials on their understanding of the concept of social justice, a significant majority expressed that such materials had a positive effect on their comprehension. Although the majority of participants (70%) did not provide detailed explanations of how translanguaging was helpful, they still expressed positive sentiments toward its utilization. Some of the participants, on the other hand, provided specific comments highlighting the benefits they experienced, such as increased awareness of injustices in their local communities, exposure to diverse perspectives through multiple languages, and a better understanding of the concept itself. For instance, one participant highlighted the impact of translanguaging materials, affirming that *"[translanguaging materials] enabled me to see and detect injustices better in my local community*." By focusing on the perspective of *local,* the participant underscored the effectiveness of utilizing multilingual materials in bridging the gap between their immediate context and the broader concept of social justice, facilitated by fluid language practices. A similar aspect was also accentuated by another participant who stated "*definitely, [translanguaging materials] make you aware of more perspectives.*" The participant emphasized the capacity of translanguaging materials to broaden their perspectives. By engaging with materials that encompass multiple languages, the participant was able to gain access to a wider range of viewpoints regarding social justice. In this regard, translanguaging served as a means through which the participants enhanced their awareness of social justice, both within the course content and in their everyday lives.

In contrast, a subset of participants (5%) expressed a more neutral stance, acknowledging the positive impact to some extent but also indicating a preference for materials exclusively in English. For example, two participants indicated their preference for English-only materials.

> "English sources are way more hence I understand the concept in English."

"English is better because we can see more news or concepts about social justice."

The participants reflected a perspective that prioritized English as the primary language for accessing information regarding social justice concepts. This was motivated by the assumption that there is a greater availability of resources or information related to social justice in the English language.

Discussion

The findings of the study provided valuable insights into the participants' level of awareness of social justice and the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on their understanding of the concept. Although the quantitative results of the study were not statistically significant, there was a noteworthy general trend of improvement among the participants, indicating that the intervention plan has had a positive impact. For instance, the results showed a noticeable increase in the participants' awareness of social justice. This heightened awareness is a crucial initial step toward taking action (Dover, 2013), making these results significant even in the absence of statistical significance. It is also important to keep in mind that effectively promoting awareness and understanding of social justice concepts through classroom interventions alone can be challenging (Dover, 2013; Mayhew & Fernández, 2007). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the participants' already heightened level of awareness of social justice. Given the academic setting of the university in which the study took place, the observed result was not surprising, as the students enrolled in this institution rank among the highest achievers in the country. While possessing exceptional academic achievements is not a prerequisite for having sensitivity toward societal issues, it is widely recognized that higher levels of education are often linked to greater awareness and understanding of such matters (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008). Furthermore, this university boasts vibrant student clubs, with proactive students who engage in protests when the need arises. It offers a relatively conducive environment for embracing individual differences compared to many other regions in the country. Moreover, the pervasive use of social media and smartphones has significantly facilitated the rapid dissemination of news, making it nearly impossible not to stay informed about societal developments (Careless, 2015). Hence, this digital interconnectedness likely facilitated the participants in staying informed about societal developments and actively participating in discussions and movements aligned with their personal beliefs and values.

In some of the aspects of the survey, the participants' responses demonstrated a decrease. For example, there was a decrease in how they perceive social injustice as negatively affecting them and their families. This decline could be attributed to the individualized nature of this particular statement of the survey. Participants may have encountered instances of social injustice when they initially responded to the survey, but such experiences may not have been as personally relevant to them by the time they completed the second survey, leading to this decrease. A similar decline is observed in the participants' expression of the concept of power. Since power is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon (Dahl, 2007), participants may have interpreted it differently in their initial survey responses, contributing to this decline. However, it is also important to note that this finding emphasizes the ongoing importance of social justice education, as it highlights the need to continue raising awareness among learners until a greater number of them are informed about its significance (BALEAP, 2020; Dover, 2013).

The qualitative analysis provided further insights into participants' perceptions of social justice and the implementation of the intervention plan. The thematic analysis of open-ended responses revealed a variety of definitions and understandings of social justice among the participants. Common themes included concepts of equality, equal rights, and opportunities, treating people without discrimination, and respecting diversity. These findings align with the overarching concept of social justice, which pertains to the fair distribution of social power and benefits within a particular society (Osborn, 2006). Although the participants were not provided with a formal definition of social justice as part of the intervention plan, they independently formulated their own interpretations that resonated with the broader understanding of the term. These results also underscore the subjectivity of social justice, as individuals tend to emphasize different facets based on their unique perspectives and life experiences (Randolph & Johnson, 2017). While the participants collectively emphasized common themes like equality, equitable rights, and opportunities, their individual approaches to these concepts were subtly nuanced, reflecting their distinct personal backgrounds. This finding also highlights the significance of comprehending students' subjective grasp of the concept of social justice. When students enter the classroom, they bring with them a unique background and lived experiences related to social justice or injustice (Osborn, 2006). Consequently, it becomes crucial to acknowledge and leverage these personal experiences as valuable resources for enhancing their awareness of social justice. This can be achieved by incorporating their individual perspectives and personalities into the teaching approach.

The qualitative analysis also shed light on the impact of the intervention plan on participants' experiences and reflections. While initial responses to questions about injustice at the university were predominantly negative due to the limitations of online education, subsequent discussions, and personal reflections revealed instances of discrimination and prejudice experienced by some participants. This highlights the importance of creating a safe space or even brave spaces for learners to share their experiences and engage in open dialogue about social justice issues (Arao & Clemens, 2013). Discussing social justice, a sensitive topic that often brings injustices to the forefront, can be challenging. Consequently, it becomes crucial to establish environments in which learners feel at ease sharing their experiences and participating in open dialogues regarding social justice matters. These conducive spaces can facilitate a more profound comprehension of these issues, encouraging constructive conversations that ultimately result in increased awareness and positive change. The findings suggest that the intervention plan was partially successful in achieving this objective.

Regarding the effect of translanguaging pedagogy, the qualitative analysis indicated that the use of class materials in multiple languages, including participants' home languages and English, had a positive impact on their understanding of social justice. Participants reported increased awareness of injustices in their local communities, exposure to diverse perspectives through multiple languages, and a better understanding of the concept itself. This finding aligns with the positive effect of translanguaging on the comprehension of the content matter (Baker & Wright, 2021; Duarte, 2019; García & Li, 2014; Rahman & Singh, 2022). Translanguaging, by allowing individuals to draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire to construct meaning, has the potential to offer a diverse range of avenues for comprehending a concept. This multiplicity of approaches is inherently empowering, far surpassing the limitations of relying on a single mode of expression and comprehension. It becomes especially significant in the context of content such as social justice within the classroom, where learners' "languages and literacies" must be acknowledged to attain a comprehensive understanding (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 89). In

this context, translanguaging serves a dual purpose: facilitating the acquisition of content knowledge and directly applying the principles of that knowledge. Moreover, the utilization of translanguaging materials holds the potential to reduce learners' anxiety levels (Özkaynak, 2020). Consequently, it is conceivable that the incorporation of translanguaging materials created a more comfortable environment for participants to engage in discussions of sensitive subjects such as social justice.

It is worth noting that a subset of participants exhibited a preference for materials exclusively in English, which can be linked to their specific language ideologies concerning the English language. These ideologies appear to encompass two key dimensions. Firstly, participants might perceive English materials as more current, widely accepted in academic and intellectual circles, and readily available. This belief finds some support in the fact that English is the most frequently used language online (Statista, 2023) and in academic publishing (McIntosh & Tancock, 2023). Consequently, their inclination towards English materials becomes comprehensible. Secondly, it can be deduced that participants potentially associate the concept of social justice itself with the English language. This connection can be justified by considering the historical context and global prevalence of English. Historical, social, and geopolitical factors have led to the English language becoming unduly associated with terms such as development, education, and democracy (Phillipson, 2009) and social justice is a similar term. The colonial legacy of English as the language of colonizers contributed to its association with the institutions and values they introduced, including these concepts (Pennycook, 1994, 1998). Furthermore, the global influence of English as a medium of communication and its utilization in international organizations and global media have further facilitated discussions and advocacy of these ideas in English-speaking contexts (Crystal, 2003). While it is essential to acknowledge that concepts such as development, social justice, and democracy are not confined to any particular language or cultural context, it is understandable that the participants in this study, who were educated in environments where English served as the dominant foreign language, may still maintain a connection to the postcolonial legacy of English even though they were not in a formerly colonized country.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings highlight the complexity of promoting awareness and understanding of social justice within the classroom setting. The results indicate the need for continued efforts to address the uncertainties and diverse perspectives among learners. Additionally, the findings suggest the potential of translanguaging pedagogy in enhancing comprehension of social justice concepts. Instead of trying to remain 'neutral' in classes, language educators can take action to promote social justice education for social change. These insights can inform future interventions and instructional approaches aimed at fostering social justice awareness and understanding among learners.

While these findings contribute to our understanding of social justice awareness and the effects of translanguaging pedagogy, this study has certain limitations. To address the areas where participants exhibited a decrease in their responses, there are potential revisions that can be made to both the instrument and the intervention model. Specifically, enhancements can be incorporated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of power and its interconnectedness with social justice within the intervention model. Additionally, conducting longitudinal studies would be beneficial in investigating the enduring effects of social justice

education and assessing how translanguaging pedagogy continues to influence learners' perceptions over an extended period. Furthermore, qualitative research methods could be employed to delve more profoundly into the nuanced and subjective understandings of social justice, shedding light on the factors that underlie participants' language preferences when accessing information. To explore this matter comprehensively, a combination of classroom observations and interviews with participants could provide valuable insights. Overall, further research is needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of social justice education and the role of language in promoting awareness and understanding.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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