

Identity Investment and Bi/Multilingual Pedagogies in South African Higher Education

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Abstract

This study examines the potential of using various languages in learning materials to promote access within higher education in the context of a highly multilingual country, namely South Africa. The primary objective of the study is to explore the use of multiple languages within learning materials within a selected third-year linguistics module at a South African university. To achieve this, the study employs a qualitative case study approach and draws on digital lecture materials and lecture hall recordings. The findings indicate that multiple languages are used within the module for four purposes. The main purpose that emerged from the data is Identity Investment. The study found that in this module, language is mainly treated as an object of study rather than a tool which can be used to further understanding. These findings contribute to the ongoing debate about bi/multilingual learning and teaching in education. Additionally, the findings suggest that there is space within the current higher education landscape to imagine a more inclusive and identity affirming approach to learning.

Keywords: access; inclusive; language ideologies; sociolinguistics; university