Language Policy and Education in Multilingual South Africa: An Ethnographic Exploration

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Abstract

Language policies in South Africa reflect its multilingual nature, where multiple official languages coexist. The education system is a focal point for language policy implementation. An ethnographic approach was employed, involving participant observation, interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis of language policy documents. Language proficiency among learners varied significantly across different school districts, with some regions showing a clear advantage in teaching materials and resources that aligned with the national language policy. Despite efforts to promote multilingualism, disparities persist in educational opportunities based on linguistic background. Enhanced teacher training programmes should focus on bridging linguistic gaps and improving resource allocation in underprivileged areas.

Keywords: *Multilingualism, Bantu Languages, Heritage Language Education, Ethnography, Linguistic Rights, Africanization, Cultural Studies*

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