



Language Policy and Education Outcomes in Multilingual Botswana: A Qualitative Exploration

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Abstract

Botswana is a multilingual country where multiple languages are used in official contexts, including education settings. The government has implemented various language policies to promote national unity and linguistic diversity while ensuring educational quality. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with educators, parents, and students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Focus groups and document analysis supplemented these methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of language policy implementation and effects. The findings indicate that while bilingual education programmes have been established in most schools, there is considerable variation in their execution across different regions. Teachers often struggle with implementing bilingual curricula effectively due to resource constraints and lack of training provided by the Ministry of Education. This study highlights the challenges faced by educators when trying to integrate language policy into daily classroom practices, particularly regarding teacher competence and student achievement disparities between primary and secondary levels. Recommendations include increased funding for bilingual education programmes, improved professional development opportunities for teachers, and regular evaluations of language policies' effectiveness in improving educational outcomes across Botswana's multilingual landscape.

Keywords: *Multilingualism, Bantu Languages, Heritage Language Maintenance, Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Cultural Studies*

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