

# The use of "mother tongue" in information literacy instruction among the NEET (not in education, employment, or training) youth at a South African township

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Received: 10 December 2024

Accepted: 18 February 2025

*South Africa, with its rich linguistic diversity, boasts 12 official languages, including sign language. The current schooling system uses the English language as the preferred language of instruction for many schools, except Afrikaans-speaking schools. As a result, many students are fluent in English. Many South African educational institutions have adopted other languages, depending on their geographical location as part of their multilingual policy implementation. The focus of this study was on information literacy instruction. The study aimed to investigate the use of the mother tongue in information literacy instruction among the NEET population at Khuma township in South Africa. During the apartheid era, townships were reserved for the African population with limited access to libraries, offering information and user education in their mother tongue. A participatory action research approach was employed, utilising a focus group of 14 participants to collect data. The findings revealed that NEET youth prefer English over their mother tongues for learning purposes. Some of the reasons for the preference of using English include that formal schooling was conducted in the language, difficulty in understanding concepts in the mother tongue and the different dialects of the official languages being a barrier. Additionally, the study highlights the challenges of integrating the mother tongue into teaching and learning, largely due to the unequal status of these languages compared to English. The study offers recommendations for policy, advocacy, and the possible incorporation of the mother tongue into teaching and learning, particularly in information literacy. These findings are expected to motivate further empirical research on this phenomenon.*

**Keywords:** Mother tongue, information literacy, NEET, instruction, higher educational institutions

## 1 Introduction

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, the South African government has made significant strides towards promoting linguistic diversity and equity in education to ensure everyone has equal opportunities. Before 1994, South Africa had not embraced diversity and inclusion in the languages used. The transition from secondary schools to higher educational institutions becomes challenging, where teaching and learning occur primarily in English, creating a language barrier and making it challenging to comprehend content. Learning in one's mother tongue has many benefits beyond academic work. Literature highlights that mother-tongue instruction enhances comprehension, facilitates critical thinking, and improves learners' ability to grasp complex concepts (Maja, 2023; Motala, Sayed & De Kock, 2023). This is because learners are more likely to connect with and understand content delivered in a language they speak fluently and use daily (Ndebele, 2022). Moreover, instruction in the mother tongue fosters a deeper sense of cultural identity and pride, as it validates and celebrates the learners' linguistic heritage (Ahmad, 2020). It also serves as a bridge for acquiring additional languages, including English, by providing a solid foundation in literacy and communication skills. These arguments are corroborated

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by an assertion by Nelson Mandela, who said *“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart”*.

The implementation of mother-tongue instruction in many educational institutions across the country has largely remained unchanged. English continues to be the primary language of instruction, even in communities where it is not the learners' first language (Ngcobo & Barnes, 2021; Motala et al., 2023). In South Africa, despite the Constitution of 1996, the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 and the Use of Official Languages Act of 2012, the use of English continues to dominate in most schools (Kretzer & Kaschula, 2021). This trend has significant implications for educational outcomes, cultural preservation and identity formation, particularly in linguistically diverse settings such as the Khuma (Stilfontein).

To learn in your mother tongue is to learn in a language that carries personal and communal significance. It empowers you to navigate educational landscape challenges with confidence while preserving cultural values and traditions. However, achieving this in South Africa's education system requires addressing structural and societal barriers that perpetuate the dominance of English in educational institutions (Ndebele, 2022). Therefore, this study sought to investigate the use of the mother tongue in information literacy (IL) instruction among the NEET population, and in line with this, the following objectives were addressed:

- To ascertain the NEET youth's language preferences for IL instruction.
- To assess the influence of mother tongue versus English language on IL instruction.
- To identify perceived challenges in using mother tongue languages in IL instruction.

## 2 Background

North-West University (NWU) is a South African multi-campus institution with three campuses located in two provinces: Potchefstroom and Mahikeng in the North-West, and Vanderbijlpark in Gauteng. This research is a component of a Science Shop Project at the university, for a study titled *“Re-imagining community education post COVID 19: Mobilizing unemployed youth as community assets to reduce the educational divide in a South African township”*, which sought to empower the NEET youth.

It is a participatory action research project consisting of various NWU stakeholders, spearheaded by the Faculty of Education. The NWU Library and Information Service (NWU LIS) has engaged as a collaborative stakeholder in the project to support Goal 3: Integrate and align community engagement with teaching, learning, and research to foster a culture of active citizenship within the university's strategic plan for 2024 and beyond. This initiative aligns with the NWU LIS strategic priority of Engage and Position, which seeks to establish the library as a catalyst for addressing social disparities in communities. In addition, the project supports Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and Goal 17 (Partnerships) of the Sustainable Development Goals. The stakeholders in the project include the Faculty of Education (project lead), Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences (EMS), and Engineering, each providing distinct expertise.

This Science Shop Project receives funding from the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the National Research Foundation (NRF). A science shop is an establishment, sometimes associated with a particular university or a non-governmental organisation (NGO), that offers independent, complementary, participatory research assistance addressing civil society's problems and issues. A demand-driven, bottom-up methodology is essential for research (Savoia, Lefebvre, Millot & Bocquet 2017). NWU is among the institutions leading this initiative within their respective environments, including the University of Western Cape (UWC), the University of Cape Town (UCT), the Durban University of Technology (DUT), the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), and the University of Pretoria (UP).

## 3 Literature review

The reviewed literature serves as a valuable reference for understanding the use of mother tongue in instruction. It also contextualises the South African landscape regarding language in teaching and learning. There is a dearth of studies specifically focusing on mother-tongue and IL instruction; therefore, this study is a welcome contribution to closing this gap.

### 3.1 Linguistic diversity and multilingualism in South African higher education institutions

Linguistic diversity and multilingualism in South African higher education institutions have become important topics of discussion, particularly due to historical language policies and the continued impact of colonial languages in educational environments (Madiba, 2010; Darquennes, Du Plessis & Soler, 2020; Wildsmith-Cromarty, Reyneke, Kaiser & Dlavane, 2022). With 12 official languages, the country is committed to acknowledging and celebrating this diversity. Although the South African Constitution advocates for the use of all 12 languages, English and Afrikaans remain dominant in educational landscapes due to the legacy of apartheid, which has resulted in systemic inequalities, often marginalising students who

speak other languages. Greenfield (2010) describes this phenomenon as "linguistic apartheid," where institutional practices continue to favour colonial languages over the mother tongue. This preference limits Black students' academic performance and engagement, reflecting historical inequalities. Furthermore, Stroud and Kerfoot (2020) emphasise the importance of "Linguistic Citizenship," which promotes linguistic inclusivity and enhances epistemic justice, enabling students to use their linguistic resources for better self-representation, comprehension and knowledge-sharing.

South Africa's language policy in higher education has evolved significantly since the end of apartheid. The historical context of language policy in South African higher education has been profoundly influenced by the legacy of apartheid, which marginalised mother tongue languages in favour of Afrikaans and English (Tait, 2007; Nudelman, 2015). The post-apartheid era has seen a concerted effort to address historical inequalities and promote linguistic diversity within academic institutions. Early in the democratic period, the focus was on redressing the exclusion of mother tongue from the higher education curriculum. The shift reflects a broader commitment to recognising and valuing South Africa's multilingual heritage, aligning with constitutional mandates that emphasise linguistic diversity (Tait, 2007; Bamgbose, 2008). This exclusion created significant barriers for students whose first languages were not represented in the academic curriculum, leading to linguistic and academic disenfranchisement (Nudelman, 2015; Lumadi, 2021; Akpojivi, 2023).

The #FeesMustFall movement further highlighted the need to decolonise education, advocating for greater inclusion of mother tongue and cultural contexts within the curriculum (Nudelman, 2015; Lumadi, 2021; Akpojivi, 2023). This is further corroborated by Greeff, Mostert, Kahl and Jonke (2016), stating that the protesters demanded that language should play a critical role in shaping knowledge and cultural identity and, therefore, the curriculum should reflect the linguistic realities of South Africa's diverse population.

### 3.2 Language as a barrier

According to Johnston, Partridge and Hughes (2014), students who use English as a second or a foreign language typically find it difficult to comprehend information and use it effectively due to the language barrier. This is supported by Selematsela (2005) and Chipeta (2010), arguing that most students in South African universities come from the Southern African Developing Countries (SADC) region and beyond, whose mother tongue is not English, experience language barriers in learning. In South Africa, where many students transition from mother-tongue instruction in secondary school to predominantly English instruction in higher education, this transition also presents a significant barrier (Nudelman, 2015). The integration of mother tongue into the curriculum, therefore, holds the potential to alleviate these challenges and support better academic engagement (Nudelman, 2015).

As various libraries also serve international students, the aspect of language becomes prevalent, as librarians might not be able to effectively engage with such students in their mother tongue, exacerbating language barriers. South African universities have increasingly recognised the importance of IL instruction, incorporating it into their educational frameworks to support academic success (Ndou, 2022). Traditionally, this instruction has been delivered in dominant languages, often neglecting the linguistic diversity of student populations (Limberg & Sundin, 2006). This oversight can hinder the academic success of students whose mother tongues are not represented, as they may struggle to fully grasp concepts and terminology presented in a second language. Curry and Copeman (2005) also found that language and communication were important when dealing with international students in reference interviews. The authors found that, in the poorer reference interviews, librarians used rapid English and library jargon. Lin (2010) adds to the debate by reporting that language influences IL, as knowledge differences can affect language use.

Johnston et al (2014) support that language influenced IL, especially because English is a foreign language for students who have to find other ways to read, understand, organise and translate information. This indicates that they could use critical thinking methods to resolve the language challenge. It should be noted that countries such as China and Japan have investigated in translation tools to which their citizens have access. This area is still relatively new in South Africa. Lastly, Limberg and Sundin (2006) state that instruction in a learner's first language can significantly improve their ability to navigate academic resources, thereby empowering them within the educational framework.

### 3.3 Challenges of embedding mother tongue in instructional practices

Literature has highlighted the challenges of effectively embedding mother tongue in teaching and learning across the world (Kioko, Ndung'u, Njoroge & Mutiga, 2014; Mandillah, 2019; Abiyo, 2024; Velasco, 2024). However, Malindi, Ndebele and Gobingca (2023) argue that even though English is the preferred language of teaching and learning in most South African schools, most teachers are experiencing challenges in using English with learners whose first language is not English. They further state that these challenges exist because this is against the basic psychological principle of good learning from the known to the unknown.

Nonetheless, the marginalisation of the mother tongue has perpetuated challenges that persist to date in embedding these languages in educational settings. Studies have highlighted that teachers often face pedagogical challenges due to a lack of sufficient knowledge about their own mother tongue and skills to teach it, as well as insufficient training to implement language policies (Tupas & Martin, 2016; Velasco, 2016). In a study conducted among teachers in the Philippines on the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBME) policy, there was a perceived lack of standardised Hiligaynon (language) orthography, which hindered the establishment of clear conventions for written Hiligaynon, including aspects such as spelling rules, hyphenation and capitalisation necessary for mother tongue instruction. Furthermore, teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of instructional materials, which they described as often containing archaic terminology that even they found challenging and unfamiliar (Velasco, 2024).

In addition to instructional material, there is also the challenge of instructors. Findings from a Kenyan study highlighted the shortage and inadequate placement of competent and skilled mother tongue teachers as an additional challenge (Mandillah, 2019). Also, Magocha, Mutasa and Rammala (2019) argue that some key challenges are attitudes towards local languages (mother tongue) and the hegemony of geographically, politically, economically and/or religiously powerful languages. The attitudes and perceptions towards mother tongue serve as a hindrance to the effective implementation of these languages in educational settings. As the language of economic progress is almost invariably seen to be an official or international language, parents resist schooling in a language which they believe will inhibit their children's chances at employability after school (Kioko et al., 2014). This raises the issue of internationalisation, which often prioritises languages such as English and French, exacerbating the marginalisation of the use of mother tongues in African educational systems (Yende 2020). Nkwashu, Madadzhe and Kubayi (2015) indicate that the use of English is extremely popular in higher education because it is "viewed as the language of the corporate world as well as the language of science". The challenges of use of the mother tongue were summed up by Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1986:11) quote from Kenya in the 1950s:

*"Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment – three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks – or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY".*

Furthermore, demographic change and migration have also been highlighted as contributing factors to the diminishing value of mother tongue. This is supported by Magocha et al. (2019), who state that people who move from other provinces of South Africa change their languages, with reference to the modifications made to languages such as Sepedi, which contains mixtures of Tshivenda and Setswana, making it unique.

#### **4 Methodology**

This study followed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which involved a pre-evaluation in assessing the IL skills and needs of NEET youth, followed by an intervention in the form of targeted training and, lastly, a post-evaluation. This paper reports on the findings from the post-evaluation, with a focus on the language aspect and IL. PAR is communitarian and social, which seek to bring about social change and improvement to the quality of individuals in respective communities, involving a recursive and systematic process of learning, with planning, action, analysis and reflection leading to further planning, action, analysis and reflection (Creswell, 2013; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

The population consisted of the NEET youth based at the Khuma Transnet Community Centre in Stilfontein, North-West Province, South Africa. Convenience sampling was used to select 14 NEET youth, chosen because they had previously received training in IL. The training was conducted entirely in English, and all examples used during the sessions were also in English. The youth, who had all completed the IL training, were interviewed using the focus group method at their respective centres where they were based in July 2024. The aim was to determine the use of mother-tongue IL instruction while exploring the NEET youths' language preferences in enhancing understanding and engagement with the materials. The focus group interview was recorded and transcribed. Data analysis proceeded inductively, developing from specific observations to broader themes, with researchers interpreting the underlying meanings of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data in interviews often comprises field notes, audio or video recordings, and includes methodologies such as in-depth interviews, document analysis, participant observation and ethnography to explore phenomena comprehensively (Maree, 2016; Ngulube, 2019).

Ethical clearance was obtained from the NWU and consent from the Community Centre. Participants' anonymity was observed.

## 5 Findings

The findings of this study are grouped into the following themes:

- (a) Language preferences in IL
- (b) Use of mother tongue for comprehension in IL
- (c) Challenges of mother tongue in IL instruction
- (d) Recommendations to use mother tongue in information

These are reported below as follows:

### **(a) Language preferences in IL**

The focus group interview conducted among 14 NEET Youth yielded the following findings in line with the study's objectives:

To ascertain the NEET youth's language preferences for IL instruction, the following questions were asked:

"If you were taught in your mother tongue from grade R to grade 12, would you be comfortable?"

Most NEET youths alluded to their preference for being taught using the English language in IL. Some of the responses included:

*"Yes, definitely".*

*"It would be easy".*

*"The session would've been better if it was in a more understandable language of the one teaching and expression".*

### **(b) Use of mother tongue language for comprehension in IL**

To assess the feasibility of mother tongue versus English language use on the NEET youth's comprehension of IL skills, the following question was posed:

"If the training had been conducted in your mother tongue, how do you think it would have influenced your ability to grasp and apply the IL skills taught?"

These were some of the assertions from the NEET youths:

*"To be honest, we always say somethings we have to understand in our mother tongue but when it comes to deep words it is so difficult, it is similar to English. English we can understand it at least, but our mother tongue, when we go there!"*

*"Even in high school you find that learners pass English more than their home language".*

*"When it comes to language, I think we need to understand that our brains have this thing of recording certain languages for certain means. When we are here, we would prefer English because it is somewhat formal, it is seen as a language used for business or serious thing whereas when you now change it somewhat lose its seriousness in a way. It's a matter of us now recognising what is being done and recruiting it to the language that is being done in. The information received in English is likely to stay in our minds because we value it or view it as a serious thing that is being taught, whereas the one you use in your mother tongue is somewhat not formal and therefore it's easier to forget."*

Due to the legacy of apartheid, it would appear that using English has an advantage over using another language. It should also be noted that South Africa is a multilingual country with 12 official languages, and it would be impossible for the instructor to provide instruction in all the languages. The responses below support this.

*"I feel like the information literacy being done in English than our mother tongue. Personally me, I didn't have a problem with it because as people we are different. All of us are different, but English is the main thing that we all can*

*understand. In a way it helps us we still going to meet different people in higher levels, I can't just say I want an interview to be done in Setswana”.*

*“It's easier in English because a lot of things we do are in English, your phone is in English, we watch our favourite shows are in English, we type in English. The problem is not the language it is with the audience. Which language do they understand”.*

### **(c) Perceived challenges in the use of mother tongue for IL instruction**

To identify perceived challenges of using mother tongue languages in IL instruction, the following question was asked:

*“Do you think it would be challenging to be taught IL in your mother tongue? Please elaborate”.*

Most of the NEET youths agreed that it would be challenging, and these were one of the responses:

*“Things will be difficult because sometimes you don't know how to read your mother tongue but you can speak but you can't read unlike English:/*

Interestingly, some participants shared the same sentiments with regard to how diverse South African classrooms are, which can pose some challenges, and if teaching and learning were done in their mother tongue, these were some of their assertions:

*“If we have a Zulu learner and Afrikaans learner, it will be much easier to translate the language into English. If a question is in English is translated into IsiZulu it will be much easier for the learner to understand the question”.*

*“It's going to be simple, but our mother tongue is not worth it. There are different types of Setswana language. It might be difficult for a learner to understand Setswana from Botswana because they are well acquainted with Setswana from Taung. You can hear that these are two different Setswana languages. It will be difficult because there is a language difference within the Setswana language. That's why I prefer English”.*

*“I think the challenge is that most of us are mixed race, my mother is Sesotho my father is Xhosa. My father doesn't speak Sesotho at all. My mother only speaks Xhosa here and there. When we are at home my father will speak his language my mother will answer in her language. Growing up there was a challenge whereby when going to school, most of my brothers did Sesotho and the later generations did Xhosa. When communicating and doing things at home was a problem, that's why we resorted to English”.*

### **(d) Recommendations to improve the use of IL using mother tongue**

In addition, the NEET youths made the following comments/suggestions with regard to mother tongue instruction in IL based on this question:

*“What suggestions can you make for using your mother tongue in the training, using the search tools and information search results?”*

*“I think that mother tongue or vernacular can be used to emphasise certain things, to explain difficult or complex concepts to understand also to enlighten the mood if the audience is tight or feel like they are not receiving the presentation well”.*

*“Few days ago, my little sister asked me about a Sesotho term that I didn't know in English, then I asked MetaAI about the Sesotho term, then it showed me an animal”.*

*“Meta AI tried to explain the Sesotho terms however the context was not correct, it was like teaching a minor child how to speak Sesotho”.*

From these responses, the NEET youths require authentic learning examples. Real-life examples from the community that the youth can refer to are needed. In addition, first-language speakers need to be used to develop applications and artificial technology tools that students can use to provide the right answer.

## 6 Discussions

The findings from this study demonstrated the marginalisation of mother-tongue languages perpetuated by past injustices and the continuation of this through the usage of English as the main language of instruction in most academic institutions in the country. Various authors support this notion, as they highlight that all 11 South African languages enjoy parity of status “theoretically” (Alexander, 2003; Lafon, 2009). The slow adoption of mother tongue languages in the country also affects the use of the languages as formal communication languages even though they are recognised in the country. Institutions of higher learning in South Africa have made attempts to introduce the use of the mother tongue in various aspects of teaching and learning such as the universities of Limpopo, Pretoria, South Africa and Venda. Students are afforded the choice to conduct their studies in African languages in either English or an African language of their choice at master’s and doctoral level (Madadzhe, 2019). However, there are a few obstacles that are faced, such as the availability of search tools and reading material in the indigenous languages (Mhlongo & Ngulube, 2020).

NEET youths indicated that they struggled with understanding concepts when they are explained in their mother language. This finding is similar to the pedagogical challenges that were found in the studies by Tupas and Martin (2016) and Velasco (2016) in relation to the understanding of concepts when presented in the mother tongue. From the participants, there was more willingness to be taught in the English language that the NEET youth had been exposed to in their formal education years. Furthermore, some of the concepts may not be used in their language and, therefore, they would struggle to relate to them, especially as some languages have different dialects. This assertion is supported by various authors, who have alluded that the use of the mother tongue is falsely perceived as being grammatically inadequate for use in teaching subjects such as Natural Sciences and Mathematics (Alexander, 1989; Wolff, 2018). In addition, Foley (2001:2) echoed as follows:

*“There is a belief that African languages are not able “to carry academic discourse effectively and therefore to function as fully-fledged languages of learning and teaching [because their] standard written forms remain in many ways archaic, limited and context-bound, and out of touch with the modern scientific world”.*

This is further corroborated by a pilot study done by Mqgwashu (2014), where IsiZulu was embedded in the academic literacy module for students enrolled in a Bachelor of Education Honours module. The authors reported that for this to be impactful, the language has to be developed to have academic discourse. Furthermore, Stroud (2003) highlights several key factors that contribute to the devaluing of indigenous languages. The author argues that efforts to incorporate mother tongues into education frequently face challenges such as curricula that favour metropolitan languages like English, inadequate resources in local languages, insufficient training for teachers in bilingual and bicultural teaching methods, conflicts arising from the roles of teachers, institutional demands and social identities. Nkwashu et al. (2015) also add to the debate by indicating that, in the communities in South Africa, people have negative attitudes towards African languages and do not view them as academic or scientific, but as just home languages for functions such as communication amongst peers. Thus, the use of mother tongue is not widely promoted in some communities. The perceptions towards the use of the mother tongue need to be promoted in communities to ensure that they do not lose their identity.

Participants were also asked if they would have preferred to be taught in their mother tongue in order to be able to grasp the concepts of IL. This question was influenced by Limberg and Sundin’s (2006) study that indicated that instruction in a learner’s first language could significantly improve their ability to navigate academic resources. However, the responses from the NEET youth highlighted the intricacies of the mother tongue, particularly when the opportunity to be taught in these languages from a young age was not provided. As alluded by Nkwashu et al. (2015), there are already negative stereotypes towards the use of African languages for academic and scientific purposes, but the use of English will still be preferred.

In addition, the issue of authenticity in IL instruction is considered by the NEET youth as being important. This is supported by Klipfel (2014) who found that authenticity is required and should be adopted in effectively embedding mother tongue in teaching and learning. This also motivates the students and is related to what they know. Furthermore, using authentic examples also requires a constructivist approach where meaningful learning occurs in IL instruction. This study’s limitation was that there was no authentic assessment to gauge what the NEET learners had learnt. It is an area that needs to be explored in future studies.

The issue of inter-cultural marriages also has an effect on the languages that are used in the households. In most instances, children have to speak different languages but at school, they are not taught to read or write these languages with English and Afrikaans being the languages used. This presents challenges for students, as they have to use different languages where terms can be similar but are used in different ways. In addition, in some mining areas, such as Khuma township, there are migrant workers from countries such as Mozambique and Lesotho. They speak dialects of Sesotho and Tsonga that differ from the dialect used in South Africa. This presents challenges for the educators and also for the learners.

## 7 Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it is clear that English continues to hold a dominant position in teaching and learning, followed by Afrikaans, even 30 years after the end of apartheid. The marginalisation of mother tongues persists, as younger generations are not given the opportunity to be taught in their native language from the basic educational level. This lack of instruction in their mother tongue negatively impacts their fluency and comprehension, particularly in the learning process.

In the context of the Khuma township, the use of mother tongue in IL instruction could play a crucial role in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps within educational frameworks. By implementing mother-tongue instruction, libraries and educational institutions can create more inclusive learning environments that respect and promote linguistic diversity. This approach not only supports academic success but also fosters a sense of identity and belonging among students, reinforcing the value of their cultural backgrounds. As South Africa continues to navigate its multilingual landscape, it becomes increasingly important for higher education institutions to adopt strategies that prioritise linguistic equity in IL instruction.

The prevalence of indigenous languages in Khuma township highlights the need for educational practices that are responsive to the community's linguistic realities. Incorporating mother-tongue instruction into IL programmes aligns with constitutional mandates and promotes cultural relevance in education. This method can help bridge the gap between students' everyday experiences and formal academic practices, ultimately enhancing their IL skills. By prioritising multilingualism, higher education institutions can create environments where all students, including those from surrounding communities, feel valued and supported, leading to improved outcomes and fostering a deeper connection to their cultural identities.

This study can serve to enhance the implementation of multilingual policies in higher education institutions. It can also raise awareness and advocate for the increased use and preservation of these languages. Lastly, the findings could motivate further research on this phenomenon.

## Acknowledgements

This study has been funded by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa. The authors sincerely acknowledge their financial support, which enabled this research. The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the DSI or NRF.

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