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Teacher practices used to mediate the Sepedi mathematics register in multilingual classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This study proposed to examine teacher practices used to mediate the Sepedi mathematics register in South African multilingual classrooms. The study was conducted in Foundation Phase classrooms where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is SePedi. The participants of the study were three foundation phase teachers, one from Grade 3 and two from Grade 1. Data was collected through lesson and interview transcripts.

The study used an adapted version of Adler and Ronda's (2015) MDI framework as a conceptual and analytical framework. The study employed the MDI's three broad themes - exemplification, exploratory talk and learner participation- as key practices so findings were presented under each theme. The findings of the study revealed that teachers use similar and contrasting examples to mediate the mathematics register. Contrary to research on the use of indigenous languages in the teaching and learning of mathematics, the findings revealed that teachers maintained the cognitive demand of tasks, used the correct mathematical register in SePedi and seldom code-switched to English. Learners were active participants and used the correct SePedi mathematics register as modelled by the teachers. Based on the findings, the study recommends the use of learners' home language(s) in the teaching and learning of mathematics.