African Perspectives of Research in Teaching and Learning Journal
Issue 3, Volume 8, 2024 Special Issue
ISSN Print: 2521-0262
ISSN Online: 2662-012X
REVIEW
https://doi.org/10.70875/v8i3article8

Towards breaking linguistic imperialism in teaching and learning in South African universities: A decolonial perspective

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Abstract

The elevation of English as the primary language of teaching and learning in South African higher education institutions defies the South African constitutional and other statutory obligations and their aspirations to promote the development of African languages as intellectual languages for teaching, learning and research. Thus, English hegemony must be teased out as part of the decolonial agenda that seeks to introduce pedagogical practices which break the coloniality of language and linguistic barriers to epistemic access to higher education. This conceptual paper problematised linguistic imperialism in South African universities and the hegemony of English over African languages. It employed decolonial tools to theorise the challenges and opportunities to negotiating a multilingual, Afrocentric approach to a democratised pedagogy in South African higher education. It concludes that deep introspection and complicated conversations are required on the intersectionality of decolonisation, multilingual pedagogical practices, and the English hegemony, which, in turn could map some way forward for the transformation of the self as a stakeholder, and the system at large as transformative tools. This, if consistently adhered to, could promote epistemic access in the teaching and learning of students, especially those who use English as an additional language in the predominantly English medium policy driven higher education contexts.

Keywords: Decolonial perspective, epistemic access, indigenous languages, linguistic imperialism, multilingualism,translanguaging

Introduction

Before independence in South Africa, the colonial and apartheid legacies imposed both English monolingualism and bilingual policies, which favoured only English and Afrikaans in public, official domains of life, while African languages were excluded from enjoying equal parity. The imposition of English and Afrikaans on indigenous South African students was detrimental to their cultures, values, philosophies, and ways of knowing and being. That unprecedented dehumanising experience disoriented them from their roots (Madadzhe, 2019; Nyoni, 2019). It was outstandingly visible in the formal education systems through the adoption of English and Afrikaans as primary media of engagement. The problem of the English medium policy in South African universities still affects the students who use English as an additional language. English presents a barrier to epistemic access and success resulting in the marginalisation of the students and a high failure rate. Such students find their identities and unique ways of meaning-making within academic contexts disregarded (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2021; Ndhlovu & Makalela, 2021). Course materials for teaching and learning are presented in either Afrikaans or English, with the latter dominating. The language policies for several university institutions in the country exalt English as the language of teaching, learning and assessment, thus disadvantaging students whose cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in English is weak (Makalela, 2021). This paper problematises the dominance of the Western languages and considers them exclusionary forces which continue to deprive students who are non-native English speakers of their epistemic right.

The language question in South African higher education is addressed in the statutory

policy frameworks and directives, including the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Higher Education Act of 1997, the National Plan for Post-School Education and Training of 2020 and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training 2013, among others. All these focus on the need to promote the development and growth of the official indigenous languages for teaching and learning so as to improve student access to knowledge (Department of Education 1997; Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2013; 2020; Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996). However, to date, no permanent solution has been found to the challenges related to linguistic imperialism in the multilingual South African university contexts. Thus, the unchallenged dominance of English in South African universities negatively impacts on students' knowledge and epistemic access, especially those whose linguistic background is not English. This happens despite the new language policy for higher education which exhorts the promotion of multilingualism and the advancement and use of the ten official indigenous languages of South Africa (DHET, 2020). Such a move would facilitate meaningful access and participation by university students and staff in various activities (2020, p. 5). There is a policy crisis because the Language Policy for Higher Education (LPHE) contradicts itself by elevating English as the de facto medium of instruction (DHET, 2020, p. 15), making it difficult for the higher education institutions in the country to implement multilingual pedagogical practices more meaningfully. It is unfortunate that the LPHE, as amended, does not have any monitoring instrument in place as it merely promises that the department will develop it. Thus, English hegemony remains the elephant in the room that has to be challenged in South African higher education and other institutions of higher learning elsewhere in the global South. That done, epistemic access would be guaranteed to those students who learn through the medium of a second or third language.

Thus, the country's education system, especially higher education, is colonised by the adoption of the single (English medium policy) or dual domination of high-status languages (English and Afrikaans) at the expense of the other ten official African languages, viz, isiNdebele, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Sepedi, Siswati, Xitsonga, Sesotho and Tshivenda. It would take what Nyoni (2019) refers to as a process of shifting away from Western perspectives as the absolute centre for development to uncage the colonised ways of knowing and doing. As argued by Mafeje (2000, p. 6), the aim would be "to be rooted in something… specifically in African conditions and experiences". However, it should be remembered that most parents, students, teachers, academics, and lecturers in the African postcolonial contexts have reservations about using African languages as media of instruction (Madadzhe, 2019). More work needs be done by higher education, government, and other interested stakeholders to lobby for the use and valuing of African languages.

The trivialisation of African languages in Africa (Phillipson, 1992) has been, to some extent, the reason for the negative attitude towards them (Ndimande- Hlongwa & Ndebele, 2017; Shava & Manyike, 2018). Subsequently, most non-native speakers of indigenous African languages would not appreciate the value of learning these languages. The dominant Western languages in Africa, which are, English, Portuguese and French, have been used to symbolise power in the political, social, economic and education spheres. The symbolic power of English has dominated what counts as valid knowledge in higher education teaching, learning and research, where Eurocentric science regards all other knowledges as unscientific (Shava & Manyike, 2018, p. 37). That has triggered scholars, especially those from the global South, to engage in critical debates on the dangers of English hegemony (Phillipson, 2017; waThiongo, 2009; 2016), such as the disastrous effects of distorting educational possibilities and weakening the value of African languages.

Nevertheless, noticeable progress has been noticed in quite a number of universities in South Africa where African languages have been advancing. The University of South Africa (Unisa), University of Limpopo (UL), University of Venda and the University of Pretoria allow post graduate students to write research

dissertations/theses at both master's and doctoral levels in the African languages of their choice (Madadzhe, 2019; Unisa, 2016), while English remains the primary language of teaching and learning at other levels. Another development is Unisa's use of glossaries in all the nine African official languages to scaffold learning (Moropa, 2021). The following developments are also plausible:

- At the University of KwaZulu Natal, isiZulu is a mandatory course for all first year students (Madadzhe, 2019).
- At the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Stellenbosch University they offer multilingual glossaries in both English and isiXhosa.
- Northern Sotho is used to teach a programme called Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies at the University of Limpopo.

However, currently, there is ongoing debate, with some arguing for 'Sesotho sa Leboa' while others still argue for 'Northern Sotho' and 'Sepedi'. This is despite the fact that the latter designation is used in the Constitution and at UL's School of Education.

To further promote the African languages, this paper proposes that not only should these languages be used as compulsory courses in specific programmes, but they should also be the main languages of teaching and learning across the curricula. As a starting point, this practice could be implemented in all the universities' African Languages departments by introducing the use of African languages as primary media of teaching and learning for all first year undergraduate modules. In addition to that, the departments could also set assessment work and examinations in both those African languages and English so that students choose which language to use in their assignments and examinations. If countries such as Norway, Greece, South Korea, Japan, Iceland and China, to mention a few, have successfully used their indigenous languages for teaching, learning and research (Madadzhe, 2019), why cannot Africa adopt similar approaches? This conceptual paper, therefore, seeks to problematise and interrogate linguistic imperialism, especially the hegemony of English over African languages in teaching and learning. It employs the decolonial perspective, with the intention to chart a way forward for a more meaningful multilingual education that would combat linguistic hegemony and promote equity and access to learning in South African universities.

Methodology

The paper draws from literature on the politics of the medium of instruction in higher education in Africa in general and South Africa in particular. It further interrogates the hegemony of English as a medium of instruction. The paper uses the decolonial perspective to propose possible approaches that universities in South Africa could adopt to decolonise teaching and learning while promoting the status of African languages as equally valid media of teaching and learning.

Complexities in promoting multilingual approaches in South African universities

The politics of language in the postcolonial, multilingual South African university is complex and multi-faceted. It draws attention to multilingual dynamics and global epistemological inequalities. South Africa is multilingual and multicultural, with twelve official, distinct ethnic languages: English, Afrikaans, and the indigenous languages, viz; isiZulu, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho, Tshivenda, Swati, Tswana, Sign Language and Xitsonga. The indigenous languages are not only associated with ethnic ties but are also socially tied to traditional values (Nkwashu, Madadzhe & Kubayi, 2015). South Africa has recognised the importance of its multilingual and multicultural realities by accepting multilingual education at higher education level, backed by the constitution of the country and other legislative directives (DHET, 2020; RSA, 1996). Despite the official statuses of the twelve languages, English is marked socially as a language of trade and higher job prospects, and it is also designated as the official language, which is used at all levels of education, for administration purposes, and international trade (Ndimande-Hlongwa &

Ndebele, 2017). English is also associated with professional and high-profile jobs. English acts as a gatekeeper at South African higher education institutions as it is an entry requirement for first-year students at universities. It is, therefore, the language of prestige and upward mobility (Dearden, 2014), which is believed to be indispensable in education systems where global graduates are trained and expected to be proficient in English, which is considered an international language.

The paradigm shift from bilingualism, whereby teaching and learning were done only through English and Afrikaans, to multilingual approaches is shaping up against a background in which historically colonial and dominant languages (English and Afrikaans) have secured prestigious spaces as default languages of education (Ntombela, 2020). As already elucidated earlier, the dominant language ideologies as reflected in the social-economic, education and other public domains, largely favour English as a prestigious language. A lot of parents, schooling institutions, policy makers and implementers often promote the belief that students should be proficient in English for them to secure upward mobility. It is however lamentable that those multilingual paradigms are adopted in spaces which are strongly neocolonial and associated with language ideological underpinnings which mythologise the adoption of indigenous languages for teaching and learning as an educational aberration. Pre-colonial language scholars such as Akpome (2017), Foley (2015) and Krause (2018) discredit the value of African indigenous languages, which they assume are out of touch with modern intellectual languages. However, it is my argument in this paper that a negative attitude towards the value of indigenous languages without substantial evidence is tantamount to abyssal thinking. The colonial logic of abyssal thinking is subtle and regressive as it perpetuates the creation of a line where on one side we have the civilised societies with people who are linguistically and culturally Western and Eurocentric and on the other, we have the 'uncivilised' who are considered sub-human and deserving to be upgraded from their indigenous knowledges, languages and cultures (de Sousa Santos, 2007; Quijano, 2000). This paper challenges that kind of hegemonic thinking as an insidious legacy, quite out-of-place in the contemporary world of equally valid heterogeneous knowledge systems.

In the twenty first century, there is an increase in cultural and linguistic diversity of both university staff and the students (Phipps, 2019; Badwan, 2021). Impervious to resistance, English hegemony has resulted in universities remaining persistent sites of linguistic contestation with each cultural and linguistic group of students interrogating whose language and culture should dominate the space and why. Such an interrogation is possibly triggered in the South African university context by the language policy conceptualisations which enumerate languages as independent entities. Due to the global mobility of teaching staff leaving one university and joining another, it means many international lecturers and academics in South African universities may not be adequately prepared to engage with the full range of linguistic resources which are brought into the lecture halls by diverse students. Lecturers enter the lecture halls to teach a multilingual body of students, but because of their weak multilingual repertoires, they may not be effectively able to use multilingual teaching methods for the benefit of the students. Most of such lecturers and academics resort to the use of English as their language of teaching. Although scholars such as Chalmers and Murphy (2022) regard linguistic diversity among teachers and students as a readily available pedagogical resource instead of a limitation, I concur with McKinney (2017) and Probyn (2019) who say that multilingualism may become a problem instead of a resource. This is especially where there is a knowledge gap between the languages known and spoken by the lecturers and that by the students.

This paper laments the reliance on merely the teaching of introduction courses in indigenous languages to help students improve their communication in those languages without allowing these indigenous languages to feed into other courses. Also, students do not use such languages when they write tasks, assignments, and examinations (Du Toit & Maseko, 2017). If multilingual pedagogies are not used in all the

courses across disciplines, the essence of multilingual education becomes highly compromised. It becomes clear that in one way or another, multilingual approaches could turn to sites of language hierarchisation, whereby several indigenous languages may be used to scaffold learning yet the international language, English in this case, remains powerful and hegemonic.

This paper problematises the role of language in the South African multilingual university. It is here that, currently, institutions promote systems of domination, subordination, and epistemic injustices under the guise of an adoption of the English medium of instruction as a global lingua franca for a global, 'neutral' space. To promote access to education for South African multilingual students, there is need to decolonise the medium of instruction. However, it should not be to completely discard the English medium policy, but to promote cognitive, social, and epistemic rights of students who learn through a non-native language through the use of transformative, approaches which tease out, unsettle, and interrogate the status quo.

Breaking linguistic hegemony in teaching and learning through a decolonial turn

The decolonial perspective is a reaction to the abused humanity of the [ex] colonised, particularly the black people, whose ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological paradigms are doubted and pushed aside by Western worldviews, which the West mythologises as ultimate reality (Mpofu, 2013; 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The decolonial thinker subscribes to the shift from, and a rejection of an inferiority status to the assumption of a radical interrogator who seeks to be understood as a complete agentic being (Maldonaldo-Torres, 2017; Mpofu, 2019; waThiongo, 1994). In the postcolonial era, decoloniality is a process which begins with the acknowledgement that in the absence of territorial colonisation, coloniality still exists in many domains of life. Africa, for example, is still mentally and epistemically colonised. The concept of 'decolonial' should be understood in relation to the indigenous people's quest and struggle for emancipation from the myths and hegemonic hierarchies imposed on them through linguistic imperialism, coloniality of being, power and knowledge in public domains such as politics, business, government, social circles and education (Mpofu, 2019). In the postcolonial African higher education contexts, South Africa included, there is glaring evidence of the cultural and linguistic colonialism at play, the appropriation of the other by assimilation (Fanon, 1963; Heleta, 2018; waThiongo, 2009; 2016). Here, indigenous students are expected to learn through the medium of Western European languages such as French, Portuguese, Afrikaans and English, the latter being the most dominant. Appropriation by assimilation raises the status of the Western-educated personality as installed from coloniality under the guise of the civilisation and enlightenment project, which, in fact, is geared to perpetuate a generic Euro-American concept of culture and humanity, thus relegating the African ways of knowing and languages as uncivilised and peripheral (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2021). The hegemony of English as a supreme language of science and progress bolsters the justification of its use as a medium of teaching, learning and research across the world. The reversal of this stereotype could be one way of negotiating a decolonial turn in teaching and learning in the South African university.

A decolonial thought foregrounds how the Eurocentric ideology continues to influence the philosophies, epistemologies and outcomes of higher education teaching and learning and research in Africa (Oparinde & Govender, 2019) to the detriment of alternative approaches and conceptions of knowledge (Govender & Naidoo, 2023). Consequently, decolonial think-tanks emphasise that Eurocentric worldviews are not absolute realities (see also Mignolo, 2011; Mpofu, 2013; Quijano, 2007). As a methodology, decoloniality troubles the myth of universalising Eurocentric thought systems by advancing that the world is a heterogeneous space with multiple realities, cultures, and ways of knowing and doing things which should be legitimated. To disentangle the Western myth, there is need to address the geopolitics of language and knowledge hegemony and reject Western thought, which denigrates non-Western ways of knowing as inferior as abyssal thinking (De Sousa Santos,

2014). Such a stance aims to problematise, interrogate and deconstruct coloniality and the taken-for-granted intersectionality and relations of knowledge, power and being, which if not teased out, negate equitable representation of knowledge systems, languages and epistemic issues in teaching and learning, among other domains. This paper argues that without the decolonisation of the medium of teaching and learning, achieving epistemic justice for those who learn through second languages remains rhetoric and elusive.

Decolonising the being, language and power

Coloniality has made the [ex] colonised and modern subjects embrace racial, cultural and linguistic hierarchisation as normal. They have thus embraced the myth that Africa's place is at the periphery of everything, and its ontology deserves the lowest rank (Fanon, 1963; waThiongo, 2009). By adopting a defeatist attitude, an indigenous person allows himself/herself and his/her language, among other things, to be subjugated, dominated and controlled, a typical example of what the Latin American decolonial scholars (Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2007) and African decolonial think-tanks (Cesaire, 2000; Mpofu, 2013) understand as coloniality of being and power. The South African university is immersed in linguistic power dynamics which normalise the English and Afrikaans culture and the reproduction of ways of being and knowing which continue to contribute to the Englishification of the African continent, an epistemic crisis which calls for epistemic decolonisation (Fanon, 1963). For a decolonial discourse to be implemented in the teaching and learning in South African higher education and elsewhere in the continent, there is need to problematise the decontextualisation of the adoption of English medium policies in the African universities where most students only use English as second language users.

The exploitative and exclusionary nature of adopting Eurocentric languages as the only appropriate languages of science and innovation can also be explained in the sense of coloniality of being. As argued by decolonial philosophers, the humanity of the ex-colonised has been made to accept that he or she belongs to the zone of no-being in which he or she normalises the act of the so-called superior ones (those who belong to the zone of being) lording it over him or her in all domains of life, institutions and categories of thought systems, and languages (Mignolo, 2011). Such is the mindset of most indigenous Africans who have been moulded by the colonial and apartheid system to assimilate themselves into that myth, without realising that it is merely part of the Eurocentric mythologies aimed to fast-track linguistic starvation (Fanon, 1963; waThiongo, 2009). The perception of English as the best developed language to be used as medium of teaching, learning and research illuminates the extent of the damage that colonisation has caused in the minds of the colonised. In South Africa, there is a growing number of Blacks who use English and Afrikaans for business and communication at the expense of indigenous South African languages (Ntombela, 2016). There are also some parents who send their children to English medium schools because they believe it is through using English and/or Afrikaans (in some cases) in learning that a person can become a whole, competitive graduate and prospective employee. That is problematic since the country is multilingual. On the other hand, it shows how hegemonic English is, that, in a country with diverse linguistic representation policy makers opt for English because of its perceived economic value. To enhance access to education and achievement rates for indigenous African students in the universities, they should be given the chance to learn and express themselves in indigenous languages. Research affirms that concepts are understood better when they are taught and learnt in the first language (Cummins, 1979, 2000; Desai, 2016; Ndimande-Hlongwa & Ndebele, 2017).

As proposed by Mignolo (2011), Maldonaldo Torres (2017) and Mpofu (2013; 2019), a postcolonial subject should critically interrogate the self or assumptions of being, which, often, are inclined to Eurocentrism. Some assumptions of the self play out when people prioritise other people's cultures, languages and ways of knowing over their own. Thus, being critical of self-definition brings people closer to their roots and identities. How we define our own

work and what is appropriate or not provides awareness about what triggers our perception of self. In cases where the triggers relate to colonial violence and traumatic experiences, people have the choice to adopt approaches which define standards and appropriateness beyond the labels given to them due to colonial experiences, a process which waThiongo refers to as decolonising the mind (waThiongo, 1994).

To render an indigenous African language-less is to render him or her a non-being, for non-beings, though they might communicate, do not have a language. The ability to think, enunciate and speak is a marker of being (Mignolo 2011, p. xxiv). The colonised, branded as lacking a language and letters, cannot enunciate and, therefore, is not a 'human' being. Language is where the identity of the people is located, for language is not what human beings have, but what human beings are. Mignolo (2009, p. 160) clearly states that thinking is done by a 'racially marked body in a geo-historically marked space that which prompts the urge to speak and articulate in whatever semiotic system, the urge that makes of living organisms human beings'. As argued by waThiongo (1994; 2009) and Mbirimi-Hungwe (2021), when users of English as second language continue to claim and strive to be proficient in the English language, they strive to continue being speechless. My argument on becoming speechless is that one automatically becomes cultureless, and, in turn, gets second-class citizen treatment.

Language is a carrier of culture and means to communicate. Therefore, by using a colonial language, the students are coerced to be carriers of the English culture, at the expense of their own. WaThiongo (1994) argues that such an action de-members or chops them off from their roots and original cultural and linguistic identities. In the absence of political colonisation, coloniality of language is still rampant in the South African higher education spaces in which English and/or Afrikaans are exalted as primary media of teaching and learning, while the indigenous African languages are peripherised. With imposition of English and/or Afrikaans comes identity loss and cultural erasure (Phillipson, 2017, Skuttnabb-Kangas et al. 2009). It creates mechanisms of symbolic power and can act as a tool for symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991). The decolonial helicopter view foregrounds that English and Afrikaans languages as media of instruction are not neutral pedagogical decisions which only carry communicative value. Rather, they are profoundly political and imperial, thereby causing cultural dilemma for people who are compelled to use them for teaching and learning. Despite having been dis-membered, decolonial thinkers argue that the African indigenous languages, as beings, can be re-membered (waThiongo, 2009) through provincialising the English/Afrikaans medium policy and centring indigenous languages as equally valid scientific languages of teaching, learning and research. The hegemonic and imperial nature of Eurocentric languages manifests in the dimension of power. The English medium policy is associated with political, commercial, and economic interests of those in power in the education arena such as the institutional executive teams and policy makers. Those stakeholders are equally responsible for the creation and promotion of decolonised teaching approaches and methods for equity of access, and cognitive and social justice.

Way forward: Translanguaging as a relevant, decolonial pedagogical practice

Better ways of recognising and promoting the African languages in the teaching and learning should continue to be envisioned. For instance, Makalela (2015) advocates for the recognition of the African way of life where the guiding principle is the interconnectedness which shows that Africans are not divided according to languages, or linguistic differences. This paper extols the translanguaging pedagogical practice as relevant in its power to challenge the orthodox understanding of language boundaries between the culturally and politically labelled languages (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2021; Wei, 2016). Translanguaging approaches counter-attack the labeling of languages as fixed entities in any given context. Positing from a translanguaging perspective, multilinguals in any teaching-learning environment could draw from any one linguistic repertoire by strategically choosing linguistic features to effectively communicate and

express themselves (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Typically, bilingual/multilingual students receive content in English, for instance, and then use their home languages to interact with the content for better understanding. In the South African context, students could use any of the other ten official languages (Setswana, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, SiSwati, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Sepedi, isiNdebele, Sign Language and Afrikaans) or any other home languages (for international students) for better comprehension of the content taught.

When students learn through the English medium in lectures and tutorials or when they read, they translanguage amongst themselves through the medium of the other languages for deeper understanding and meaning-making. The language policies, both at national and institutional levels, should not be limited to the use of English as a de facto language and only any other two more indigenous official languages as that renders other students who fall outside the other two official languages speechless in the classroom and other teaching-learning engagements. In a typical South African university context, there is a likelihood of students who come from all the eleven official linguistic backgrounds and even others from outside the national borders. Such students may be excluded if their languages are not accommodated as languages of engagement in the institutional language policies. This illuminates, as already hinted to earlier on, the complexities which internationalisation of higher education poses to the national and institutional design of language policy directives. Thus, language enumeration is untenable in a multilingual environment.

Viewing multicultural and multilingual pedagogies from a decolonial stance will empower curriculum policy makers, managers, implementers, and consumers to dismantle the reproduction of standardised language policies which foster linguistic resource dependency in teaching and learning. The translanguaging pedagogy is, however, a mammoth task as it perpetuates the dominance of English while relegating the role of African languages to scaffolding meaning and understanding. However, with the will power from the government, university leadership, staff and other stakeholders, it could finally lead to the implementation of African languages as languages of teaching, learning and research, starting with undergraduate programmes in the universities' African Languages departments, and later spreading to other departments and faculties.

Conclusion

This paper affirms that universities in South Africa glorify English as a primary medium of teaching and learning. This is evidenced in the various university language policies which seek to, among other things, subscribe to the global agenda to produce graduates with a high level of English linguistic competences for them to fit in any global context. Although institutions have adopted a multilingual approach, especially after the 2015/2016 #FeesMustFall protests, African languages in teaching and learning are merely used for scaffolding purposes, thus they are still peripherised in the curriculum. A peripheral role inadvertently strengthens English hegemony in contexts where multilingualism should be used as an approach to facilitate linguistic parity, social and cognitive justice in teaching and learning. However, it should not be overlooked that most users of English as a second language who are taught and assessed through the media of English face challenges in understanding concepts and may fail to optimally access and achieve well in tasks and examinations. Drawing from the decolonial perspective, this paper advances that for more meaningful decolonisation/transformation of teaching and learning, the use of indigenous languages should go beyond tokenism in order to promote translingual pedagogical practices. For that to happen, the national statutory directives should categorically raise the status of African languages, for example, through policies which promulgate African languages as primary media of instruction whereby assessment is conducted in both English and African languages. It implies that the government, through the Department of Higher Education and Training and the universities in South Africa and the global South in general, should avail financial resources and infrastructure to enable the implementation of

multilingual and translingual pedagogical systems. That could be addressed in more aggressive ways in theory and practice. Countries that offer tuition in languages other than English will have to adopt systems of verifying graduate qualifications by liaising with other universities which offer tuition in languages other than English. Such evaluation processes could guarantee equal employment opportunities comparable to graduates who receive tuition through the medium of English. If there are no buy-ins and commitment from university authorities, and all other stakeholders, the language question and multilingual education would remain mere rhetoric.

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