

GUEST LECTURE

Prof. Coetzee-Van Rooy

(NWU South Africa)

Students' multilingual repertoires at a South African university: Implications for conceptualizing multilingualism in assessment

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Language-in-education policy scholars argue that successful policies should be built on a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the linguistic realities of the learners that these policies aim to serve. The same applies to the conceptualization of multilingualism in assessment. Multilingual assessment plans for South African students should take the nature of the language repertoires of multilingual students into consideration. This contribution shares descriptive empirical data gathered from the students of one South African University via (a) language repertoire surveys (2010, 2015, 2020), (b) language portraits (2020) and (c) questions about languages for assessment from language audits (2018, 2021). The aim is to work out implications for the conceptualization of multilingualism in assessment at the particular institution. The main finding is that there seems to be a dominant language constellation (the home language and English) for literacy within the multilingual repertoires of the participating students. The main implications are to activate the full multilingual repertoire for classroom pedagogies (involving informal assessment) and the bilingual constellation (including the home language and English) for formal assessment.

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