

Home Language and the Language of Learning and Teaching in Mathematics Classrooms

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ABSTRACT Second language (English) learning of mathematics is common in South African mathematics classrooms, including those in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa where isiXhosa speakers are taught in the language that is not spoken at home by both teachers and learners. The purpose of the present research is to investigate issues of language, both home (isiXhosa) and the language of learning and teaching (English) in multilingual mathematics classroom settings. The semi-structured face-to-face teachers' interviews generated qualitative measures. The interviews with four teachers in four schools were aimed at understanding their perceptions about the use of languages in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Teachers' responses indicated that they are faced with a complex situation of using English and isiXhosa in a dual role when teaching mathematics to reap some benefits (if there exist any) that come with such a pedagogical approach in the mathematics classroom. In addition, it appeared that teachers perceive the use of languages in the classrooms were generously influenced in absentia by the Language in Education Policy that was introduced to schools for implementation prior to the curriculum reform in post-apartheid South Africa, which is not easily accessible and understood by the teachers.