

Assessing Students' Perceptions of Conversational IsiZulu as a Compulsory Module in a South African University

Chinekpabi Anyanwu

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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ABSTRACT This study was conducted to gauge students' perceptions of conversational IsiZulu in a South African university. Driven by the bilingual policy initiatives of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), a total of 1 287 students have registered for conversational IsiZulu as a mandatory requirement for completing an undergraduate degree. This study is an investigation in which interviews, observation and policy documents were used to gather data from students who are taking the module for the first time. Using a qualitative case study, this study investigates the learning of Conversational IsiZulu, paying attention to the classroom social context, meanings and experiences of participants. Research findings suggest that students responded positively to learning an additional language, despite challenges experienced in the mastery of content and vocabulary amongst other aspects. This study therefore concludes that the UKZN Language Policy of eventual bilingual education is successful within the School of Education in its initial stages of implementation.