



Perspectives on Teaching Sesotho Home Language Content and Didactics Modules among Lecturers of Select Universities in South Africa

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Background: Despite multilingual policies in higher education, Indigenous African languages remain marginalised because of institutional barriers, limited resources, and the dominance of English. Although existing studies have examined challenges in developing and using Indigenous African languages in higher education, limited attention has been given to lecturers' perspectives on teaching Sesotho Home Language content and didactics modules. Understanding these perspectives is important because lecturers play a central role in preparing student teachers to teach Sesotho as a Home Language.

Objectives: This study explored university lecturers' perspectives on teaching Sesotho Home Language content and didactics modules.

Method: Guided by Sociocultural Theory, the study adopted a qualitative case study design involving four purposively selected lecturers who taught Sesotho Home Language content and didactics modules at a selected university in South Africa. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically.

Results: Three themes emerged: (1) institutional and curriculum constraints on pedagogical practice; (2) English dominance and language ideologies in higher education; and (3) limited culturally relevant resources and pedagogical preparation. These challenges constrained lecturers' ability to integrate Sesotho content knowledge with pedagogical practice and implement multilingual and decolonial approaches.

Conclusion: The findings show that institutional, linguistic, and pedagogical conditions shape the teaching of Sesotho Home Language content and didactics. Although lecturers recognise the importance of effective Sesotho teacher preparation, English dominance, curriculum challenges, and limited resources constrain their practices. Strengthening Sesotho Home Language teacher education therefore requires institutional support and recognition of Indigenous languages as important sites of knowledge production and teacher preparation.

Unique Contribution: The study foregrounds lecturers' experiences and contributes to debates on decolonising higher education and advancing epistemic justice through Indigenous language education.

Key Recommendations: Greater collaboration among lecturers, improved access to relevant teaching and learning resources, and continuous professional development are needed to strengthen the integration of Sesotho content knowledge, pedagogical practice, and contextually appropriate multilingual approaches.

Keywords: Curriculum alignment; Decolonisation; Higher Education; Sesotho Home Language; Sociocultural Theory.



INTRODUCTION

Within this linguistic landscape, lecturers teaching Sesotho Home Language (HL) occupy a pivotal role in preparing preservice teachers. Their responsibilities extend beyond developing disciplinary knowledge of the language to fostering the pedagogical competencies required to teach Sesotho HL effectively in schools. At the study site, these responsibilities are distributed across two faculties: Sesotho HL content modules are offered in the Faculty of Humanities. In contrast, Sesotho HL didactics modules are offered in the Faculty of Education. This institutional arrangement makes collaboration between disciplinary content and teacher education particularly important, as prospective teachers require both sound knowledge of Sesotho and the pedagogical knowledge to teach it effectively. Consequently, lecturers must negotiate curriculum demands, pedagogical practice, institutional expectations, and language policy while promoting the academic legitimacy of an Indigenous African language within an education system historically shaped by colonial language hierarchies.

Although scholarship on Indigenous African language education in higher education has expanded, much of the existing research has focused on cross-national comparisons of African language education (Khohliso et al., 2024) and broader discussions of decolonisation and socially-just pedagogies in teacher education (Ajani, 2025). However, comparatively little attention has been paid to the experiences of university lecturers specifically responsible for teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics modules. As a result, there is limited empirical evidence on how lecturers teaching Sesotho HL navigate institutional constraints, linguistic hierarchies, and pedagogical expectations while preparing future teachers of the language. Although the study is situated within broader debates concerning Indigenous African language marginalisation, multilingualism, and decolonisation in higher education, its empirical focus is specifically on Sesotho HL teacher education. Addressing this gap is important for understanding how Sesotho HL can be strengthened as a language of teaching, learning, and knowledge production within higher education.

This study, therefore, explores university lecturers' perspectives on teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics modules in higher education. Guided by the research question, "What are university lecturers' perspectives on teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics modules in higher education?", the study seeks to generate empirically grounded insights into the institutional, curricular, linguistic, and pedagogical factors shaping the teaching of Sesotho HL in teacher education. These insights may inform curriculum development, pedagogical practice, and institutional support for Sesotho HL teacher education programs.

The paper is organised as follows. It first presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study, followed by a review of the literature on the teaching of Indigenous African languages in higher education. The methodology for data generation and analysis is then described, followed by the presentation and discussion of the findings in relation to the research question, the relevant literature, and the guiding theoretical framework.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in the Sociocultural Theory, which conceptualises learning and teaching as socially situated processes shaped by interaction, cultural tools, and the contexts in which knowledge is constructed (Lantolf et al., 2022; Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, knowledge is not transmitted in isolation but is mediated through language, social relations, institutional structures, and cultural artefacts that shape meaning-making and understanding.

Within this framework, language is understood as a central mediational tool through which teaching and learning are socially and culturally organised. From a Sociocultural Theory perspective, learning occurs through social interaction and is mediated by cultural tools, including language, texts, and other resources that shape how knowledge is constructed and communicated. In higher education, lecturers therefore play an important mediating role by structuring learning activities, guiding student teachers' engagement with disciplinary knowledge, and providing scaffolding that supports the development of increasingly independent understanding. In the context of Sesotho HL teacher education, this mediation occurs within a multilingual environment in which English remains dominant in academic discourse. At the same time, Sesotho is used only to a limited extent in formal teaching and learning spaces. This linguistic context requires lecturers to negotiate the use of diverse linguistic and cultural tools to facilitate access to Sesotho HL content and didactic knowledge. The concepts of mediation, cultural tools, social interaction, and scaffolding, therefore, provide an analytical lens for examining how lecturers experience and negotiate the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics modules.

From a sociocultural perspective, the teaching of Sesotho HL content and its didactics is shaped by the interaction among institutional structures, available resources, language ideologies, and the lived experiences of lecturers and students. Lecturers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but active mediators who facilitate meaning-making by drawing on linguistic repertoires, cultural references, and contextual examples that connect academic content to students' prior knowledge and lived realities.

In many cases, preservice teachers enter university programs with uneven linguistic and academic backgrounds, having been schooled primarily in English despite being speakers of Sesotho (Heugh, 2021; Makalela, 2022). From a Sociocultural Theory perspective, these differences require lecturers to scaffold learning through multiple forms of mediation, including explanation, rephrasing, translation, questioning, and the use of culturally relevant examples. Such practices function as mediational tools that enable lecturers to support student teachers' engagement with Sesotho HL content and didactic knowledge. Through social interaction between lecturers and student teachers, these forms of scaffolding can help learners connect their existing linguistic and cultural resources to new disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge. These strategies are therefore not merely individual pedagogical choices but are shaped by the sociocultural and multilingual conditions in which teaching and learning occur.



Furthermore, from a Sociocultural Theory perspective, the availability and use of cultural and material resources are important mediational conditions in teaching and learning. Teaching and learning resources, including textbooks, academic literature, digital materials, and culturally relevant texts, can function as cultural tools through which knowledge is accessed, communicated, and constructed. In the context of Indigenous-language teacher education, the availability and relevance of such resources may influence how lecturers mediate disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge. This perspective also highlights the broader institutional and historical conditions under which lecturers use linguistic and cultural tools in teaching, including the continued dominance of English as an academic language. These theoretical considerations provide a lens for examining how lecturers experience and negotiate the availability of resources when teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics modules.

In this study, Sociocultural Theory provides a lens for understanding how the dynamic interaction between language, culture, institutional constraints, and educational goals shapes lecturers' teaching practices. It enables an exploration of how meaning is constructed in Sesotho HL classrooms and how lecturers navigate linguistic and pedagogical challenges in preparing preservice teachers. Through this lens, the study examines lecturers' perspectives on teaching content and didactics in Sesotho HL within a higher education context characterised by linguistic inequality and ongoing decolonisation efforts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews relevant literature to identify gaps in the teaching and learning of Sesotho HL by preservice teachers in HEIs. These gaps have significant implications for language development, curriculum delivery, and broader educational transformation. The review is organised around three interrelated themes: lecturers' expertise in teaching Indigenous languages in HEIs, resource allocation for Indigenous languages, and curriculum alignment between content and didactics modules in Sesotho.

Lecturers' Expertise in Teaching Indigenous Languages in HEIs

From a Sociocultural Theory perspective, teaching and learning are shaped by social interaction, institutional contexts, and the mediating role of language and cultural tools. Within this framework, lecturers' expertise in Indigenous language education is not only a matter of disciplinary knowledge, but also of how knowledge is mediated through language within specific institutional and cultural environments (UNESCO, 2022).

In the context of Sesotho HL teaching, lecturers in Humanities disciplines and those in Education faculties often bring different disciplinary orientations to their practice. Humanities-based approaches tend to emphasise linguistic structure, grammar, and textual analysis, while Education-based approaches foreground pedagogical strategies, classroom practice, and learner-centred instruction. These disciplinary orientations shape how lecturers interpret what counts as important knowledge, how it should be taught, and how students are expected to engage with it.



Existing scholarship broadly agrees that Indigenous African languages remain constrained within higher education despite multilingual policy commitments (Makoni et al., 2022; Theledi & Masote, 2024). However, the emphasis of these studies differs. Makoni et al. (2022) approach the issue from a broader multilingual and decolonial perspective, whereas Theledi and Masote (2024) draw attention to institutional language practices and resource-related constraints. While these studies establish the persistence of structural barriers, their focus provides limited insight into how university lecturers responsible for specific Indigenous-language teacher education modules negotiate these constraints in their everyday teaching. Similarly, Ajani (2025) advances the discussion through socially-just pedagogies, but the focus remains broader than the specific teaching of Sesotho HL at the university level. Thus, although the literature establishes the broader problem of Indigenous-language marginalisation, less is known about how lecturers who teach Sesotho HL content and didactics experience and negotiate these conditions.

Research indicates that lecturers often face challenges in this mediation process due to limited formal preparation in Indigenous language pedagogy and a scarcity of teaching resources for African languages (Diko & Bechtold Celliers, 2024). Consequently, they rely on adaptive strategies such as recontextualisation, explanation, and culturally relevant examples to make academic content accessible. These strategies reflect the sociocultural nature of teaching, where meaning is co-constructed through interaction rather than transmitted directly. Thus, lecturers' expertise extends beyond linguistic proficiency to include the ability to mediate knowledge across disciplinary, linguistic, and institutional boundaries. This is particularly important in contexts where Indigenous languages remain marginalised within higher education systems dominated by English.

Resource Allocation for Indigenous Languages in Higher Education

The inadequate allocation of resources for Indigenous languages continues to constrain their meaningful integration into higher education. Although policy frameworks in contexts such as South Africa, promote multilingualism, institutional investment in infrastructure for Indigenous language teaching, learning remains uneven and insufficient (Xu et al., 2022). From a sociocultural perspective, resources function as mediational tools that shape how knowledge is produced, accessed, and shared. The lack of textbooks, digital platforms, standardised terminology, and academic literature in Sesotho limits lecturers' and students' ability to engage with disciplinary content (Khumalo & Nkomo, 2022; Sibeko & Setaka, 2024). This scarcity also increases the cognitive and pedagogical demands on lecturers, who often must create or adapt materials in the absence of institutional support.

The continued dominance of English in academic publishing and institutional communication reflects enduring colonial language hierarchies that position Indigenous languages as less legitimate vehicles for knowledge production (Kamaşak et al., 2021). As a result, efforts to implement multilingual education are often constrained by structural inequalities rather than pedagogical intention.



Reports such as those by the Council on Higher Education highlight a persistent disconnect between language policy commitments and actual resource allocation. This lack of coordinated institutional support often results in fragmented implementation, where lecturers and departments work in isolation to develop teaching materials (Lubogo, 2023). Within a Sociocultural framework, this fragmentation limits collaborative knowledge construction and weakens the sustainability of Indigenous language programs.

Curriculum Alignment for Content and Didactics Modules in Sesotho

Studies on African language teacher education emphasise the importance of developing both subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge as complementary dimensions of teacher preparation. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), for example, distinguishes subject content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge, noting that their integration contributes to pedagogical content knowledge (SAQA, 2024). Recent research specifically on Sesotho HL teacher education similarly highlights the relationship between content and pedagogical knowledge. Mohanoe and Khosa (2026a) found that preservice teachers experienced a misalignment between Sesotho HL content and pedagogical modules at a South African higher education institution, indicating that the relationship between what student teachers learn about Sesotho and how they are prepared to teach it warrants closer attention. However, their study focused on preservice teachers' experiences rather than the perspectives of the lecturers responsible for teaching the two components.

A related study by Mohanoe and Khosa (2026a), examining classroom implementation, focused on four lecturers from the Faculties of Humanities and Education and identified tensions between curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, policy expectations, and classroom realities. While this work provides important insight into the implementation of Sesotho HL content and pedagogy, there remains a need to examine more closely how lecturers themselves experience and interpret their roles in teaching these complementary components. Moreover, research on Sesotho in South African higher education has addressed broader issues, including the intellectualisation of Sesotho and the development of terminology to support its use as an academic language (Ngubane, 2024; Ngubane & Khohliso, 2024). Taken together, the literature demonstrates growing attention to Sesotho in higher education, curriculum alignment, and Indigenous-language development, but comparatively limited attention has been given specifically to the perspectives of lecturers teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics across the Humanities and Education faculties. This study addresses this gap by examining the perspectives of four lecturers involved in these complementary components of Sesotho HL teacher education.

Research indicates a persistent disconnect between the content-focused and pedagogical components of Indigenous language programs at many South African universities (Mabela & Ditsele, 2024; Opoku & James, 2021). In the case of Sesotho, preservice teachers often struggle to translate disciplinary knowledge into classroom practice due to limited integration between linguistic theory and pedagogical training.



From a Sociocultural perspective, this misalignment reflects a breakdown in the mediation of knowledge across learning contexts. When content and pedagogy are treated as separate domains rather than interconnected practices, opportunities for meaningful knowledge construction are reduced. Scholars such as Roy and Swargiary (2024) argue that curriculum design should reflect learners' sociolinguistic realities and promote coherence between knowledge systems and teaching practices. Similarly, higher education policy discussions emphasise the need for collaborative curriculum design between subject specialists and educationists to strengthen continuity and relevance in teacher preparation (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). However, empirical research on how such alignment is enacted in Sesotho programmes remains limited.

Despite growing interest in Indigenous language education in higher education, limited attention has been paid to the perspectives of university lecturers who teach Sesotho HL content and modules on didactics. Existing studies have examined preservice teachers' experiences of learning Sesotho HL content and pedagogical modules, as well as the implementation of Sesotho HL curriculum content and pedagogy in higher education classrooms (Mohanoe & Khosa, 2026a; 2026b). However, less is known about how lecturers themselves experience and interpret the teaching of these complementary components, particularly where content and didactics are located within different disciplinary contexts. This gap is significant because lecturers working in Humanities and Education may engage with different disciplinary expectations concerning knowledge, pedagogy, and language use.

This study, therefore, explores university lecturers' perspectives on teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics modules in higher education. Specifically, the study focuses on four purposively selected lecturers: two responsible for Sesotho HL content in the Faculty of Humanities and two responsible for Sesotho HL didactics in the Faculty of Education at [University name], South Africa. Guided by Sociocultural Theory, the study examines how these lecturers understand and negotiate the institutional, disciplinary, linguistic, and pedagogical conditions surrounding the teaching of Sesotho HL. The study seeks to generate empirically grounded insights that may contribute to curriculum development, pedagogical practice, and institutional support for Sesotho HL teacher education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study research design to explore university lecturers' perspectives and experiences of teaching Sesotho HL content and its didactics within a specific teacher education program at a South African university. The case was bounded geographically by the selected university, institutionally by the teacher education program, and conceptually by the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics within that program. Thus, the case was not the individual lecturers themselves; rather, the four lecturers constituted the participants through whom the case was explored. This bounded definition of the case enabled the study to examine the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics within its specific institutional and program context.



A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study sought to develop an in-depth understanding of lecturers' perspectives, experiences, and meaning-making regarding the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics. The case study design further enabled the phenomenon to be investigated within its real-life context, taking into account the institutional and pedagogical conditions that shape lecturers' teaching experiences. The design was therefore appropriate for generating a contextualised and nuanced understanding of the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics within the selected teacher education programme.

One university was conveniently selected based on accessibility, as it is the institution where the researcher is currently affiliated as a lecturer. The site was considered appropriate because it offers Sesotho HL modules at both content and didactics levels.

Site Selection and Participant Selection

A single higher education institution was purposively selected as the research site because it offered a contextually appropriate setting for examining the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics within a teacher education programme. The selection was also informed by the researcher's familiarity with the institutional and programme context, which facilitated access to participants and enabled an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon in its natural setting. However, the choice of a single site was not based on accessibility alone. A single-site case study was considered appropriate because it enabled a detailed, contextually grounded examination of the teaching of Sesotho HL within a specific teacher education programme. The bounded nature of the case also made it possible to explore lecturers' experiences in relation to the particular curricular, institutional, and pedagogical context in which their teaching occurred.

Four lecturers were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in teaching Sesotho HL modules within the programme. Two lecturers were responsible for teaching Sesotho HL content modules, while the other two taught Sesotho HL didactics modules. This purposive selection ensured that the study incorporated perspectives from lecturers with different yet complementary teaching responsibilities within the same programme, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

The researcher's position as a lecturer within the same institution required careful consideration of positionality and reflexivity. As an insider to the research setting, the researcher had contextual knowledge of the programme and its teaching environment, which supported a nuanced understanding of participants' accounts. At the same time, this insider position created potential methodological risks, including power dynamics, social desirability bias, participants' reluctance to express critical views about the institution or its practices, and the possibility that participants could perceive participation as expected rather than entirely voluntary. These issues were recognised throughout the research process.

To minimise these potential influences, participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that their decision to participate, decline to participate, or withdraw would have no consequences for their professional relationships or institutional standing. The researcher also maintained a reflexive stance throughout data collection and interpretation by critically



considering how their institutional position, prior knowledge, assumptions, and relationships with participants could influence the research process and interpretation of the data. Confidentiality and anonymity were treated as particularly important given the small number of lecturers in the programme. Identifying information was therefore excluded or anonymised when reporting findings, and participants were assigned pseudonyms to reduce the risk of individual identification. The researcher's insider position was thus treated not only as a potential source of bias but also as an aspect of the research context that required ongoing reflexive engagement.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions. This method allowed participants to describe their experiences and perspectives in detail while enabling the researcher to probe emerging issues (Adams, 2015). The interviews focused on lecturers' experiences of teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics modules, including pedagogical practices, curriculum issues, language use, and resource availability.

Data Generation and Linguistic Procedures

Data were generated through individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the four lecturers. All interviews were conducted by the researcher in a private boardroom at the university and lasted approximately 45 minutes per participant. The interviews were conducted individually to provide participants with an opportunity to express their views freely, minimise interruptions, and enhance confidentiality. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture of their responses and facilitate verbatim transcription.

Interview Language, Transcription, and Translation

The interviews were conducted in both Sesotho and English, and participants were permitted to respond in either language or to alternate between the two languages according to their preference. Allowing participants to use their preferred language enabled them to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical views naturally and with greater linguistic flexibility. The researcher also used both Sesotho and English during the interviews, depending on each participant's preferred language.

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Where participants responded in Sesotho, their accounts were initially retained in the original language during transcription to preserve the meaning, nuances, and contextual features of their responses. The Sesotho transcripts were subsequently translated into English by the researcher. To enhance translation accuracy, the translated transcripts were checked against the original Sesotho transcripts, with particular attention to preserving conceptual and contextual meaning rather than relying solely on literal translation. Because language was central to the phenomenon under investigation, particular attention was given to maintaining linguistic and contextual integrity throughout transcription, translation, and analysis. The original-language transcripts were treated as the primary reference point during interpretation, and the researcher repeatedly compared the original and translated versions to identify and resolve discrepancies in meaning. This process helped minimise potential loss, distortion, or alteration of meaning during translation from Sesotho into English.



Although interviews constituted the sole source of empirical data, the researcher systematically compared participants' accounts during analysis, identifying both convergent and divergent perspectives across the four lecturers. Particular attention was given to similarities and differences between lecturers responsible for Sesotho HL content modules and those responsible for didactics modules. This comparative analytical process enabled the researcher to identify patterns and variations among participants and contributed to a deeper, more contextually grounded interpretation of the findings. The systematic comparison of participants' accounts also supported the credibility and trustworthiness of the analytical process.

Data Generation, Transcription and Translation

All interviews were conducted face-to-face by the researcher in a private boardroom at the university and lasted approximately 45 minutes per participant. Each lecturer was interviewed individually to facilitate confidentiality, encourage open expression of views, and minimise interruptions. With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture of their responses and to facilitate verbatim transcription.

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The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Where participants responded in Sesotho, their responses were initially retained in Sesotho during transcription to preserve the meaning, nuances, and contextual features of their accounts. The Sesotho transcripts were subsequently translated into English by the researcher. To enhance translation accuracy, the researcher repeatedly compared the English translations with the original Sesotho transcripts, paying particular attention to conceptual and contextual meaning rather than relying solely on literal translation. The original-language transcripts were treated as the primary reference point during interpretation, and discrepancies identified during comparison were reviewed and resolved by referring to the original recordings and transcripts. This procedure helped minimise potential loss, distortion, or alteration of meaning when translating participants' accounts from Sesotho into English.

Although interviews constituted the sole source of empirical data, the researcher systematically compared participants' accounts during analysis to identify patterns of convergence and divergence across the four lecturers. Particular attention was given to similarities and differences between lecturers responsible for Sesotho HL content modules and those responsible for Sesotho HL didactics modules. This comparative analysis enabled the researcher to develop a more nuanced understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences, thereby contributing to the analytical depth and credibility of the findings.



DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data, following the six-phase framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019). This method was selected for its flexibility and suitability for identifying patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The researcher conducted data analysis, and the study's analytical framework informed interpretation. The first phase involved familiarisation with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts. In the second phase, initial codes were generated by systematically identifying significant features of the data, including references to curriculum challenges, language use, and resource constraints.

In the third phase, related codes were grouped into broader themes. The fourth phase involved reviewing and refining these themes to ensure coherence and alignment with the dataset. In the fifth phase, themes were clearly defined and named to reflect their central meanings, such as curriculum misalignment and language practices in teaching. The final phase involved producing a coherent narrative supported by direct quotations from participants.

Analytical Rigour and Methodological Limitations

To enhance analytical rigour, the researcher engaged in iterative discussions throughout the analysis to critically interrogate interpretations, compare emerging patterns across participants, and refine the developing themes. Particular attention was given to areas of convergence and divergence in participants' accounts, rather than treating consistency across responses as evidence of credibility in itself. This reflexive and iterative engagement facilitated a systematic interpretation of the data and enhanced the credibility and dependability of the findings (Ahmed, 2024; Schlunegger et al., 2024).

Interviews constituted the sole source of empirical data in this study. Consequently, the study did not employ methodological triangulation by drawing on additional sources such as curriculum documents, module outlines, institutional language policies, teaching materials, or classroom observations. The absence of multiple data sources is acknowledged as a limitation, as the findings are based primarily on participants' reported experiences and perspectives. It may therefore not capture all dimensions of the teaching of Sesotho HL content and its didactics. Nevertheless, the systematic comparison of participants' accounts, together with the researcher's iterative and reflexive engagement during analysis, provided a structured basis for identifying patterns, variations, and contextual nuances within the bounded case.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the University of the Free State (UFS), with approval number UFS-HSD202/2600. A gatekeeper letter was also secured to authorise access to the research site. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully informed of the study's purpose and that participation was voluntary. Participant confidentiality was ensured through the use of pseudonyms. Lecturers teaching content modules were identified as LC1 and LC2, while those teaching didactics modules were identified as LD3



and LD4. Data collection took place over eight weeks, allowing sufficient time for in-depth engagement with participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data generated through interviews with the four lecturers were analysed thematically. Given the distinct yet complementary roles of Sesotho HL content and didactics modules within the teacher education program, the findings are presented separately for the two module categories to provide greater clarity and avoid ambiguity in interpreting the lecturers' perspectives. The findings related to the teaching of Sesotho HL content modules are presented first, followed by those relating to the teaching of Sesotho HL didactics modules. Within each category, the themes emerging from the data are presented and discussed in relation to the study objectives and relevant literature.

For the Sesotho HL content modules, the themes identified were experience and subject expertise, curriculum alignment, literature-based learning, and diversity of resources. For the Sesotho HL didactics modules, the analysis generated themes relating to aligning content and didactics, bridging theory and practice, curriculum alignment, and diversity of resources. While some themes were evident across both categories, their manifestations differed according to the nature and purpose of the modules. Presenting the findings separately, therefore, allows these similarities and differences to be examined more explicitly while retaining the contextual relationship between content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in Sesotho HL teacher education.

Profile of Participants

Table 1 summarises the demographic and professional profiles of the lecturers who participated in the study.

Table 1: Profile of the university and lecturers

Institution type	Faculty	Participant	Gender	Age	Area of Specialisation	Module	Teaching Experience
Public university	Humanities	LC1	Male	56	Linguistics, Translation, Editing, and Interpreting	Sesotho HL content	35 years
Public university	Humanities	LC2	Female	40	Language structure and literature	Sesotho HL content	12 years
Public university	Education	LD3	Female	45	Language structure and literature, Editing	Sesotho HL didactics	28 years
Public university	Education	LD4	Male	48	Language structure and	Sesotho HL	20 years



					literature	didactics	
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1. Experience and Subject Expertise

Lecturers demonstrated extensive experience in teaching Sesotho HL across different educational levels, including higher education, postgraduate supervision, and research. From a Sociocultural Theory perspective, this experience represents an important form of professional knowledge shaped by participation in academic and educational communities over time. Such experience influences how lecturers interpret curriculum demands, mediate knowledge, and respond to institutional expectations in multilingual teaching contexts.

- LC1 highlighted over 20 years of experience spanning basic and higher education.
- LC2 emphasised postgraduate supervision and experience in external examination.
- LD3 focused on research in Sesotho linguistics and literature.
- LD4 combined content and didactics teaching experience within the same programme.

Rather than functioning as isolated expertise, these experiences reflect socially situated professional knowledge that informs lecturers' navigation of teaching in a linguistically complex higher education environment.

2. Aligning Content and Didactics

Lecturers consistently highlighted the importance of coherence between content and didactics modules in supporting preservice teacher preparation.

- LD3 explained that the sequencing of learning experiences influences how students engage with pedagogical training.
- LC2 noted that students may struggle when pedagogical expectations assume unevenly developed prior knowledge.
- LD4 emphasised that strong disciplinary grounding supports confidence in teaching practice.

These accounts reflect lecturers' perceptions of how different modules interact within the programme structure. However, these perceptions are based on individual teaching experiences rather than formal curriculum mapping between departments. From a Sociocultural perspective, these findings suggest that learning is mediated by curriculum structures, institutional sequencing, and shared assumptions about student knowledge. Any perceived disconnect between modules reflects how knowledge is distributed and accessed across different learning contexts rather than a formally verified curriculum misalignment.

3. Curriculum Alignment in Sesotho HL Content Modules



Lecturers responsible for Sesotho HL content modules emphasised the importance of curriculum coherence in clarifying learning outcomes, content coverage, and assessment expectations. Their accounts suggested that coherence between the different components of the curriculum was important for supporting consistent teaching and learning within the programme. However, these findings reflect lecturers' situated perceptions and experiences of curriculum implementation rather than a formal evaluation of institutional curriculum-alignment processes. The findings should therefore be understood as reflecting how lecturers experienced and interpreted curriculum coherence within their teaching contexts.

From a Sociocultural Theory perspective, curriculum coherence can be understood as a mediational structure through which knowledge, expectations, and pedagogical practices are organised and communicated. The way curriculum components are connected influences how lecturers mediate knowledge and guide preservice teachers' learning. Where lecturers perceive limited coherence among curriculum components, this may shape how they interpret learning outcomes, select and organise content, and support preservice teachers in making connections between different aspects of their learning. Thus, curriculum alignment is not only an institutional or structural concern but also influences the processes through which knowledge is mediated within the classroom.

4. Literature-Based Learning

Lecturers emphasised the use of Sesotho literary texts as important mediational tools in teaching both content and didactics modules. These include novels, folktales, and poetry, which were used to support students' understanding of linguistic structures and cultural meanings. From a Sociocultural perspective, literature functions as a cultural artefact that mediates meaning-making by connecting academic concepts to learners' lived experiences. Through engagement with authentic texts, preservice teachers can interpret language not only as a formal system but also as a socially and culturally embedded practice. However, lecturers also noted challenges related to limited access to updated and diverse Sesotho literary materials. This scarcity constrains the range of mediational tools available for teaching and requires lecturers to adapt or supplement existing resources. In this way, knowledge construction becomes dependent on the availability of culturally relevant materials within the institutional environment.

5. Bridging Theory and Practice

Lecturers described classroom activities such as lesson planning, peer teaching, and demonstrations as strategies to support preservice teachers' engagement with pedagogical concepts. From a Sociocultural Theory perspective, these activities represent mediated learning experiences in which knowledge is constructed through participation, interaction, and guided practice. Learning occurs as preservice teachers engage with teaching tasks within structured academic environments that simulate classroom practice. Rather than a simple transfer of theory into practice, these activities reflect situated learning processes in which preservice teachers gradually develop professional knowledge through participation in socially organised teaching



activities. Lecturers play a key role in structuring these experiences and guiding meaning-making through feedback and modelling.

6. Diversity of Resources and Cultural Grounding

Lecturers reported using a variety of teaching resources, including literary texts, digital platforms, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and Indigenous knowledge systems to support teaching and learning. From a Sociocultural perspective, these resources function as mediational tools that shape how knowledge is accessed, interpreted, and constructed. The selection and use of resources are influenced by institutional availability, technological access, and cultural relevance. Lecturers emphasised the importance of culturally grounded materials that reflect students' linguistic and social realities. However, unequal access to such resources limits the extent to which Indigenous knowledge systems can be fully integrated into teaching practices. This creates a learning environment in which lecturers must continually adapt available tools to support meaningful engagement with Sesotho HL content.

CONCLUSION

This study explored university lecturers' perspectives and experiences of teaching Sesotho HL content and didactics within a teacher education programme at a South African university. The findings indicate that lecturers' disciplinary knowledge, teaching experience, and familiarity with Sesotho HL played an important role in how they mediated learning for preservice teachers. Participants' accounts suggested that lecturers drew on their professional and subject expertise to interpret curriculum expectations, select and explain content, and support students' engagement with Sesotho HL. From a Sociocultural Theory perspective, these practices can be understood as forms of knowledge mediation shaped by lecturers' participation in particular institutional, disciplinary, linguistic, and cultural contexts.

The findings further suggest that lecturers perceived a need for stronger coherence between Sesotho HL content and didactics. Participants' accounts indicated that the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical preparation shaped their understanding of and approach to preservice teacher preparation. These findings should, however, be interpreted as lecturers' situated experiences and perceptions rather than as evidence of objectively established deficiencies in the institutional curriculum. A more integrated relationship between content and didactics may nevertheless provide opportunities for preservice teachers to connect what they learn about Sesotho HL with how to teach it in school contexts.

Another important finding concerned the role of literature and teaching and learning resources in Sesotho HL education. Participants highlighted the value of culturally and linguistically relevant materials in supporting teaching and learning. At the same time, their accounts highlighted challenges related to the availability of appropriate Sesotho texts and digital resources. From a



Sociocultural perspective, such resources can function as mediational tools through which lecturers and preservice teachers engage with disciplinary knowledge, language, culture, and meaning. The findings, therefore, suggest that the availability of relevant resources is an important consideration in strengthening Sesotho HL teaching in higher education.

The study also identified pedagogical modelling as a way in which lecturers connected theoretical knowledge with classroom practice. Participants' accounts indicated that demonstration, explanation, interaction, and guided participation were used to help preservice teachers understand how to enact knowledge of Sesotho HL and pedagogical principles in teaching. Rather than conceptualising this process as the direct transmission of knowledge, the findings suggest that pedagogical modelling provides opportunities for preservice teachers to observe, participate in, and develop an understanding of teaching practices within a socially and culturally situated context.

Taken together, the findings indicate that the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics is shaped by the interaction between lecturers' professional expertise, curriculum experiences, available mediational resources, and opportunities to connect disciplinary knowledge with pedagogical practice. The findings should be understood within the bounded context of the selected teacher education programme and should not be generalised to all higher education institutions or Sesotho HL programmes. In addition, because the study relied solely on interviews with four lecturers, the findings represent participants' reported experiences and perceptions and do not constitute an independent evaluation of curriculum structures, teaching practices, or institutional resource provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, greater collaboration between lecturers responsible for Sesotho HL content and those responsible for didactics should be encouraged. Such collaboration could create opportunities to discuss curriculum expectations, identify connections between disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge, and support greater coherence in the preparation of preservice teachers. This recommendation responds directly to participants' reported experiences. It should therefore be understood as an opportunity for strengthening programme-level collaboration rather than as evidence that the existing curriculum is objectively deficient.

Second, higher education institutions should consider strengthening the availability and accessibility of Sesotho HL teaching and learning resources. This could include expanding access to relevant literary texts, academic materials, digital resources, and culturally responsive teaching materials. Developing and making such resources available could provide lecturers and preservice teachers with a broader range of mediational tools for engaging with Sesotho HL knowledge and pedagogy.



Third, professional development opportunities for lecturers involved in Indigenous language teacher education should be strengthened. Such opportunities could focus on areas identified through the findings, including the mediation of disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical modelling, culturally responsive teaching, and the effective use of available linguistic and digital resources. Any professional development initiatives should, however, be responsive to lecturers' actual needs and institutional contexts.

Finally, future research should investigate the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics using multiple sources of evidence. Curriculum documents, module outlines, teaching materials, institutional language policies, and classroom observations could complement interviews. Such a multi-source approach would enable future researchers to examine whether lecturers' reported experiences correspond with documented curriculum structures and observed teaching practices. Research involving more participants and additional institutions could also provide a broader basis for understanding the teaching of Sesotho HL in higher education.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of understanding Sesotho HL teacher education as a socially and culturally situated process in which lecturers, preservice teachers, curriculum structures, and mediational resources interact. Strengthening the connections between disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical preparation, and culturally relevant resources may contribute to more coherent and meaningful preparation of future Sesotho HL teachers.

FINAL STATEMENT

Overall, the study contributes to an enhanced understanding of how lecturers experience and navigate the teaching of Sesotho HL content and didactics modules within a higher education system characterised by linguistic inequality and ongoing transformation. Within Sociocultural Theory, the findings highlight how lecturers' pedagogical practices are shaped by institutional conditions, resource constraints, and language ideologies, as well as by their efforts to mediate knowledge to preservice teachers in multilingual contexts. In doing so, the study foregrounds lecturers' agency in advancing Indigenous language education and contributes to broader debates on decolonising higher education and promoting epistemic justice.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the University of the Free State for providing permission to conduct this study.

Sources of funding

The study was not funded.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Author's contributions



Pinki Mohanoe conceived the study, including the design, collected the data, and wrote up the results. The study is part of a PhD thesis.

Pinki Mohanoe conceived the study, including the design. She also collated the data, conducted the data analysis and interpretation, and drafted the initial manuscript.

Data availability statement

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Disclosure

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used ChatGPT (OpenAI) for language editing, grammar correction, improvement of readability, and assistance with restructuring sections of the manuscript in response to reviewer comments. The AI tool was not used to collect, generate, analyse, or interpret the empirical data, nor to generate participant responses, quotations, findings, or research results. The author independently conducted the research and analysis and carefully reviewed, revised, and verified all AI-assisted outputs. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

Citation

Mohanoe, P. (2026). University Lecturers' Perspectives on Teaching Sesotho Home Language Content and Didactics Modules at Selected South African Universities. *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 4(3), 30-49, <https://doi:10.5281/zenodo.22972540>.

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International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research (IJSSAR)

Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp.30-49, September 2026, ISSN: 3043-4467 (Online), 3043-4459 (Print)

<https://doi:10.5281/zenodo.22972540>
