

**A Pidgin language, the social semiotics of the workplace and 21st Century sociolinguistic change  
In South African mining: Fanagalo and the road to the Marikana Platinum mine.**

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**Abstract:**

This paper deals with the social semiotics of language in the workplace through the example of language in the large industrial context of the South African mines. It offers an analysis of social change in relation to language as a semiotic in the workplace in the increasing global phenomena of multilingual societies. In turn it offers an explanation of the limitations of industrial policy formulation in the absence of explanations and understandings of complex social phenomena, such as, workplace communication and the attempted linguistic erasure of Fanagalo, a pidgin language. The paper is based on three years of research covering 26 mines in the South African deep level mining industry in platinum, gold and coal mining coal using quantitative and qualitative data covering the production communication process and social stratification of the workforce.