

REPORT ON THE USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS MEDIUMS OF INSTRUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



higher education
& training

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FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the release of the report on deliberations regarding the development of African Languages at institutions of higher education and training in South Africa.

The higher education and training sector, in line with the fundamental principles of human dignity, freedom and equality enshrined in our Constitution, has a responsibility to contribute to the socio-economic and cultural development of South African society. It is through knowledge and skills produced by our institutions of higher learning that we are able to build an inclusive economy which addresses the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment which continue to pose a threat to our social cohesion and nation-building.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa declares that “everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.” This is the obligation that our higher education sector must adhere to.

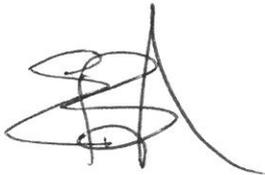
After 21 years of a democratic dispensation, South Africa’s higher education system continues to be characterized by a pervasive marginalization of indigenous African languages. The democratic dispensation has not made much progress in exploring and exploiting the full potential of indigenous African languages in facilitating access and success in higher education. As a result the yoke of inequality remains a heavy burden carried by many historically disadvantaged and discriminated students as demonstrated through high dropout rates, particularly for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. To some extent this can be attributed to linguistic challenges these students are confronted with when they enter the higher education space.



It was in response to some of these challenges and the Constitutional imperative that all South African languages be granted parity of esteem in all sectors of society, that my department convened a round-table discussion in October 2010 on the status of African languages at South African universities. The discussion set out clear goals and recommendations which culminated in my Ministry appointing a panel on African Languages in Higher Education to engage with the recommendations of the round-table deliberations and propose the way forward.

The report is a result of extensive consultation and engagement with various stakeholders, including partner government departments and universities, on the development of African Languages in South African higher education institutions.

The release of the report marks an important milestone in the broad higher education transformation agenda as it outlines specific interventions needed for the development and strengthening of African languages at institutions of higher learning. I trust that all relevant stakeholders – our universities especially – will use this report as a reminder of the need to join hands with government in bringing into effect the Constitutional imperative of affirming our indigenous African languages. This is a social justice issue that we can no longer afford to brush aside or leave to chance.



Dr BE Nzimande, MP

Minister of Higher Education and Training



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Abbreviations and acronyms

ALs	African languages
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DUT	Durban University of Technology
HAI	Historically advantaged institution
HDI	Historically disadvantaged institution
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LOTE	Languages other than English
LPHE	Language Policy for Higher Education
LRDC	Language Research and Development Centres
MAPALHE	Ministerial Advisory Panel on African Languages in Higher Education
NLB	National Language Body
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropole University
PanSALB	Pan-South African Language Board
RU	Rhodes University
SA	South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFH	University of Fort Hare
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UniZul	University of Zululand
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WSU	Walter Sisulu University



Definition of terms

Indigenous African languages: In this report the term 'Indigenous African languages' is used to refer to African languages of the Southern Bantu language family (where 'Bantu' is used purely as a linguistic term). In this context the term excludes Afrikaans.

Multilingualism: The ability to use more than two languages, and can be at individual or societal level. At the individual level it refers to the speaker's competence to use more than two languages. At the societal level it refers to the use of more than two languages in a speech community.



Executive Summary

Since the attainment of democracy in South Africa in 1994, a number of legislative policy documents and frameworks on what should guide language practices in higher education, have been produced.

Primarily these documents recognise that South Africa is a linguistically and culturally diverse society and that higher education reflects this diversity. They also recognise that language is essential in facilitating the communication of knowledge in a learning process; that language has the power to promote social cohesion and that it has the potential to contribute to social transformation in various ways. The legislation cautions that, while English and Afrikaans, because of the global status and level of development, are seen as languages of higher education, this should not act as a barrier to opportunity, access and success for those who speak them as additional languages.

It is in the above context that legislative policy recommends dynamic approaches to language use that embraces and includes African languages. Legislation commits universities to create conditions for the use of indigenous African languages as languages of learning and eventually also of teaching, as well as their structural development in order to fulfil this legislative function.

The commitment and recommendations for multilingualism that embraces indigenous African languages are made in the *Constitution* (1996), the *Higher Education Act* (1997), the *Language Policy for Higher Education* (2002), the *Report on the Development of Indigenous African Languages for Use as Mediums of Instruction at University* (2003) and, more recently the *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions* (2008), the *Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences* (2011) and the *White Paper on Post-Secondary School Education and Training*.

The language legislation, policy frameworks and guidelines on one hand, affirm the role of indigenous African languages in HE and, on the other hand, highlight conditions in HE that systematically place value on English and Afrikaans, and consequently marginalise indigenous African languages as languages of teaching, learning and research. Because of this trend, the Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training, the Honourable



Dr Blade Nzimande, appointed a Ministerial Advisory Panel on African Languages in Higher Education (MAPAHLE) in 2012.

The task of MAPAHLE was to

- review language policy provisions for HE
- establish how they may be improved, especially in relation to facilitation of multilingual education and the development of African languages
- advise the Minister on progress made in implementing the present language policy provisions
- investigate and advise on barriers that hinder implementation of multilingualism in HE
- provide recommendations in order to support universities developing and promoting African languages.

The full term of the Ministerial Advisory Panel on African Languages expired on 31 July 2013 and the panel was not able to submit a Ministerial report at the end of its term. Therefore, the Minister approved the appointment of a consultant to consolidate and finalise the work that the panel had produced, and develop a report with recommendations.

The Ministerial Report therefore traces the historical development of indigenous African languages in education, provides an overview of present legislation and other guiding documents that govern language practices in HE, and investigates the extent to which HEIs comply with provisions of this legislation. The Report also investigates possible barriers to policy implementation. Lastly, it identifies instances of good practices that could be developed into recommendations as part of language policy implementation to nurture multilingualism and to foster equity of access and success of all in HE.

The historical overview of African languages in education illustrates a close relationship between language and society, and ideology and politics. Except in a few limited instances, indigenous African language have never been used beyond the first six years of education, and the value of the knowledge embedded in these languages has not influenced knowledge production in the learning process. The relationship between language and society, and ideology and politics is illustrated through the development of Afrikaans which, even though its graphisation started in the 1920s, about a hundred years after the first indigenous African language was written down (first print in isiXhosa appeared in 1823), was developed to be



the powerful scientific language it is now through organised and vigorous state intervention. The value placed on English and Afrikaans was accompanied by orchestrated undermining of the value of indigenous African languages in education and their mother tongue speakers. In the present context, in order to enable indigenous African languages, HE continues to grapple with the consequences of past language practices in education.

The overview of the language legislation illustrates that the legislation, *albeit* with escape and limitation clauses, enables the realisation of the political and ideological goals of the present government. However, lack of systems of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the provisions of the policy, amongst other things, results in non-compliance from the HEIs.

Even though the investigation process illustrates non-compliance to implementation of policy, there is a clear indication that most HEIs with institutional language policies, have adopted multilingualism in their policies, even if on paper only. Most institutions have at least three official languages, one of which is an indigenous African language. English and/or Afrikaans still dominate as the only languages of teaching and learning. Implementation plans around the teaching, learning and research in indigenous African languages does not seem to consider any indigenous languages as the language of teaching and learning. Consequently, English and Afrikaans and so, their speakers, continue to be privileged in HE even in the current political dispensation.

The Report presents a strong view – that there needs to be systematic and comprehensive research on implementation of multilingualism in education from which we can draw hypotheses on multilingual education, derived from the (South) African context. This research should consider the local HE context and local conditions for effective use of African languages, alongside English and Afrikaans, for effective learning.

The Report also gives an account of some instances where institutions are taking bold steps to establish a multilingual teaching, learning and research environment. These accounts are not only given as instances of good practice, but also as a way of illustrating that, with considered planning, meaningful integration of ALs in HE lecture halls, is possible. Instances of good practice include development and implementation of curricula to teach African languages to speakers of other languages, teaching content subjects in African languages, and unearthing and developing of these languages for use in various acts of HE.



The Report ends off by suggesting intervention strategies that could be adopted to respond to the challenges raised. These are in the form of recommendations that are made with the objective of improving the status quo. Some recommendations are that policies should reconsider the use of clauses that can lead to non-compliance and that the responsibility of the Ministry (DHET) should be to put in place systems of assessing, monitoring and evaluation of implementation plans at all institutions. Other recommendations include injection of funding into language policy implementation in HE – where research systematically documents, as well as formulates hypotheses around instances of good practice. Facilitation of institutional collaboration with the purpose of accelerating the implementation process and to avoid duplication of effort, is also recommended, as well as developing a meaningful relationship with the publishing industry.

The Advisory Panel also recommended the formation of a dynamic partnership between the DBE and the DHET. The Panel believed that multilingualism in HE should be underpinned by effective multilingual education in basic education.

Introduction and background

South African Higher Education (HE) is characterised by multilingualism. Multilingualism in this context can be understood as the use of multiple languages either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers. The democratic change in 1994 saw desegregation of higher education and, consequently, an accelerated increase in linguistic and cultural diversity in terms of student population.

Mindful of the past discriminatory policies towards speakers of languages other than English and Afrikaans, the state has over the years developed language policy frameworks with the emphasis on multilingualism and equity of access and success for all students in HE. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996), the *Higher Education Act* (1997) as amended, the *Language Policy for Higher Education* (2002) and, more recently, the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (2013) are some of the policies.

Even though the post-apartheid language policy provides for legitimisation and valuing of African languages (ALs) in higher education, evidence shows that the use of English as a common language of teaching and learning continues to create a differential educational experience and treatment of students who speak indigenous African languages being denied



meaningful participation and success in higher education, and their sociocultural backgrounds and experiences playing an insignificant role in the learning process. While there could be other factors linked to students' access and success in education (e.g. schooling background and socio-economic status), there are studies undertaken at various universities both locally and internationally that illustrate that utilisation of a student's language in learning, can facilitate cognition and consequently lead to success in education (Cummins 1981 and 2000, Dalvit 2010, Dlodlo 1999, Heugh 2000, Kapp & Bangeni 2009 and 2011, Madiba 2010 and 2013, Wolff 2002).

Alexander (2013) and Madiba (2013) argue that the present legislative university language policy provides an enabling environment for introducing and strengthening the role of African languages in higher education. However, the reality is that there has not been much progress in this regard. This is evidenced by the declining numbers of students choosing African languages as their major subjects, and the resultant threat of closure of some African language departments.

Although there are some emerging intervention strategies, generally indigenous ALs are not accorded sufficient attention in higher education, not only as subjects or mediums of instruction, but also as valuable resources in the learning, teaching and research practices in South African higher education. It is in this context that the *Ministerial Report on the Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences* (2011) recommends, amongst others, an investigation into the role indigenous African languages can play in facilitating concept formation in ALs, as well as what knowledge in these languages could influence the teaching, learning and research practices in the HE landscape.

The disregard for ALs in HE manifests itself particularly in the throughput of students speaking languages other than English (LOTE) in HE, which is low compared to the numbers of students who gain access to HE. An exploratory study undertaken at Rhodes University in a Cell Biology course, tracks students over a three-year period and establishes that there is a 5% margin in the students' performance, where students speaking LOTE perform, on average, 5% lower than those speaking English, the language of tuition at the institution. Further investigations initiated by the DHET, report linguistic discrimination experienced by students speaking LOTE (e.g. the 2008 *Ministerial Report on Transformation in the HE sector*).

If one were to consider, on the one hand, the cognitive and socio-cultural benefits of language in education, and the relationship between education and human development on the other hand (Djité2008, Obanya 2004, Wolff 2002), it is unfortunate that the present language practices in HE, which legitimise and overvalue English, are in fact perpetuating social inequalities of the past, rather than enabling social transformation envisaged for a South African society in the South African Constitution.

Twenty years after democracy, it is necessary to reflect on the efficacy of the legislative policies that were formulated to facilitate social transformation. The language-in-education policies, and particularly those applicable to higher education, recognise the potential and critical role of HE institutions in the transformation of the South African society.

Although there is ample literature supporting the pedagogical and socio-cultural benefits of language in the learning process, the democratic dispensation has not made much progress in exploring and exploiting the potential role of indigenous African languages in facilitating access and success in higher education and subsequent social transformation.

There are, primarily, two challenges facing higher education in the democratic era: firstly, embracing multilingualism not only in policy, but also in its implementation in higher education teaching and research practices to counter the dominance of English and secondly, the promotion, development and use of indigenous African languages as languages of scholarship.

Given the lack of progress, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has since 2010 engaged in intense and focused debates regarding the development of African languages as languages of teaching and learning.

It is in this context that in 2012 the DHET Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande established the Ministerial Advisory Panel on the Development of African Languages in higher Education (MAPALHE). The Terms of Reference for MAPALHE were as follows:

The Panel;

- a. must undertake a literature review on the development of African languages in South Africa with particular focus on higher education institutions - this review should include proposals on African language usage and other relevant parts contained in the draft Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences



- b. must review the existing Language Policy for Higher Education and its implementation, particularly in relation to the development of African languages at South African universities and recommend how the policy can be improved.
- c. must study the report of the Ministerial Steering Committee appointed to investigate the development of indigenous African languages as mediums of instruction in higher education and advise where necessary
- d. must review all the universities' institutional policies and the extent to which they are being implemented, especially with regard to the development of African languages, and recommend on how they can be improved either collectively as groups, or individually
- e. must undertake a holistic audit of initiatives undertaken by our universities relating to teaching, research, development and good practices in the promotion of African languages in particular and multilingualism in general
- f. must conduct an investigation of obstacles presented by the current structure and operations of the publishing industry in development and usage of African languages and suggest possible ways on how this can be improved
- g. must provide recommendations on how African Languages departments at universities can be strengthened - the recommendation should consider various types of interventions
- h. must advise the Minister on infrastructural, human and funding resources required for the development and promotion of African languages in the South African higher education system - such advice should consider the use of ICT to strengthen African languages in higher education
- i. must interact with the work of the Ministerial Task Team on the Review of the Funding Formula for universities as well as the Green Paper development process, which are both underway, in order to ensure that these processes have adequately addressed the development of teaching, research and general development of African languages - this interaction should consider the mainstreaming of African languages in budgets and academic activities at our universities



- j. must forge linkages with other relevant bodies and institutions that may enhance prospects for the realisation of objectives in the development of African languages in our university system
- k. can include, with explanation, any other matters it considers crucial for the determination of the above-stated purpose
- l. must provide quarterly progress reports, and at the conclusion of its work, provide the Minister with a final report outlining concrete actions that need to be taken to ensure the development of African languages at universities - the final report is to be submitted to the Minister in July 2013.

The full term of the Ministerial Advisory Panel on African Languages expired on 31 July 2013 and the panel was not able to submit a Ministerial report at the end of its term. Therefore, the Minister approved the appointment of a consultant to consolidate and finalise the work that the panel had produced, and develop a report with recommendations.

In light of the above, the report provides an overview of the history of indigenous African languages in SA higher education. It also looks critically at the legislative framework for promotion of indigenous African languages in HE and reviews compliance of HEIs with provisions of the legislative policy. It gives an overview of the current practices of HEIs towards teaching, learning and research in African languages, highlighting good interventions/model practices, as well as their shortcomings.

Historical review of the development of indigenous African languages in South African HE

One of the primary motivations for the development of any language is to create value in it for its speakers and those of other languages. For the purpose of this section of the report, we look briefly at the socio-cultural, the cognitive and the economic value of a language.

- The **socio-cultural** value is the worth of the language as an expression of identity, culture and heritage of its speakers.
- The **cognitive** value is the benefit the language provides for its speakers to be able to be the producers and consumers of knowledge, especially in the learning process,



where their language is used as a reservoir from which they can draw in the process of learning. Madiba (2010) argues that in the learning process, using one's primary language to access knowledge presented in another language, provides a foundation for contextualising newly acquired knowledge within pre-existing knowledge, and should enable students to produce new knowledge in both content subjects and the languages they learn. So, in learning they also become producers and not only consumers of knowledge.

- The **economic** value in this context refers to the extent to which language makes it easier to get a job, and makes it easy to participate in production in the labour market. It is this value of language that has a direct impact on human development, and consequently, social transformation (Alexander 2013).

According to Alexander, the value of a language is **created**; a language does not acquire value automatically. He concludes that education plays a critical role in this regard, and that this construction of value for languages is a reflection and reproduction of the socio-economic status of the people who speak it (Alexander 2013: 102-5).

In reviewing the history of the development of indigenous ALs beyond secondary schooling, especially for use in high-function domains such as HE, one needs to consider the extent to which these languages are judged as desirable and valuable in human life for socio-cultural, cognitive and economic benefit, especially for the benefit of those who speak them as primary languages. In this regard Alexander (2013:108) states that

'Unless African languages are given market value, that is, unless their instrumentality for processes of production, exchange and distribution is enhanced, no amount of policy change ... can guarantee their use in high functions and, thus, eventual escape from dominance and hegemony of English... [The] current language-medium practices cause cognitive impoverishment and, consequently, necessitate investment in compensatory on-the-job training... This wastefulness would have been avoidable if there had been a national development plan in which reform of education and economic development planning were integrated.'

It is a widely acknowledged that it is primarily the Christian missionaries who pioneered the transition of indigenous African languages from oral into written form in the early 1800s. The purpose of the early development was of instrumental value to them – ‘to win souls through the Christian biblical message in the languages closest to the hearts and minds of Africans’ (Prah 2009). They codified the language, wrote descriptive grammars and dictionaries and initiated translation of texts, especially biblical texts and primers for purposes of evangelism and education for those whose hearts were ‘pierced’ by the Word.

Makalima (1981) comments that missionaries must be commended for converting the hitherto oral languages into print, but wonders whether the current complications around development of African languages could in fact be a consequence of the initial purpose for which these languages were developed for educational purposes. Makalima (1981) and Miti (2009) state that they were of **instrumental and functional value to the missionaries themselves**, and except for the language itself, very little reflected the culture or the world view of the Africans (Makalima 1981:39-43, Miti 2009:53-9). Therefore, their development was for a narrow rather than expansive purpose, deliberately disregarding the richness of the culture and the world view of the speakers (Prah 2009).

Literacy was exclusively for those converted, who would then enjoy the privilege to attend schools. In the early years of schooling, the language of instruction would be the mother tongue, but would shift to English after four years of schooling, with even the African languages themselves taught in English, especially in post-secondary schooling. This offered little opportunity for the development of the African languages in high function domains.

The role of the early literate black elite in the development of African languages is often underplayed. In the middle of the nineteenth century, as black people acquired literacy, they started to write texts reflecting their own cultures, world view and experiences, using newspapers to escape regulation from missionary-controlled publishing houses (Opland 2003; Limb 2012, Odendaal 1984). Early African language and/or multilingual newspapers such as *Isigidimi* (1870-1888), *Bantu-Batho* (1912-1931), *Imvozabantsundu* (1884-1994), some of which started publishing in the 1830s for over a century, were dominated by these black intellectuals who made major contributions to the development the African languages and literature. It is unfortunate that these texts are lying in archives, and not informing present discourses on the development of African languages and literature.

The apartheid era, following the colonial/missionary era, saw accelerated development of indigenous African languages, even though the development was carefully orchestrated with the main purposes of ensuring the value of Afrikaans, and relegating African languages to lower levels of education, and to practical subjects (Heugh and Mahlalela-Thusi 2004). Legislative policy was carefully formulated, followed by a strategic implementation strategy. In terms of legislation, the 1953 Bantu Education Act saw the extended use of the mother tongue in schools. Status planning saw the elevation of the status of African languages in education, and corpus planning saw terminology development and textbook production (Heugh and Mahlalela-Thusi 2004: p. 182).

It is during this period (in the 1960s) that language-specific language boards were established, with each board tasked with responsibility of overseeing the development of the specified language. They resorted under the Education Department and were mainly constituted by the Inspectorate. Language-specific radio stations were also established. It is evident from this that the apartheid era developed language policies and practices that entrenched their ideology of separateness.

It is also mainly during this period (from the 1920s) that 'Bantu Languages' Departments were established at various universities across the country. In some instances, these departments started off as part of Anthropology, and then evolved into Bantu Studies, then Bantu Languages and later, perhaps for 'political correctness', became African Languages.

Led by 'non-native' speakers of African languages, some of whom came from disciplines such as Anthropology, research activities at the university departments centred on a structural approach to the study of African languages and literature, using English and Afrikaans as a medium, as well as teaching these languages to speakers of other languages. A survey of early research seems to indicate that non-native speakers of these languages focused on structural linguistics with special focus on syntax, phonology and morphology, while native speakers focused on semantics and literature.

The history of the development of African languages shows that missionaries and the apartheid government contributed significantly to language planning activities such as language codification, translation, materials development and other general language development activities. However, in both cases the indications are that, in the case of the

missionaries, it was for the instrumental benefit of the missionaries, while for the apartheid government, it was to advance the system of divide and rule, as well as Afrikaner supremacy.

In the meantime, the development of Afrikaans was systematic and vigorous, with the state investing, in terms of resources and infrastructure, to its development across domains, and as a language of scientific discourse or scholarship.

The development of Afrikaans centred on

- the mobilisation of Afrikaans speaking intellectuals, promoting the speaking and writing in Afrikaans
- the establishment of an Academy to drive the development of Afrikaans as a scientific language
- the organisation of the clergy and politicians to provide support for the elevation and use of Afrikaans in their domains
- the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction throughout all levels of education
- the establishment of lexicography units to drive the development of dictionaries in different disciplines for different levels of educations
- the promotion of a print culture (Giliomee 2003).

While the ALs were incidentally developed during this time, it was not in a manner that instilled pride and functional value of the languages to their speakers. They were not developed and promoted for the cognitive benefit to their speakers, especially in the learning process, nor were they seen as valuable tools for their human development. Knowledge embedded in these languages was also not viewed as valuable to be shared in high-function domains such as education, etc. The negative attitude displayed by their speakers (and those of other languages) towards them, and overvaluing of English, could arguably be the result of this persistent devaluation (Alexander 2013).

However, whatever the intention before 1994, and certainly at ascension of the National Party as a ruling party in 1948, all organs of state, for example the education departments, the

universities, and the publishing houses were organised so that they advanced the language agenda of the state during this particular historical period.

The realisation of democracy in 1994 placed a high demand, through legislation, on meaningful social transform.

The legislative language policy applicable to HE, stipulates transformation in the following critical areas:

- Multilingualism
- Equity of participation by all in acquiring and producing knowledge in HE
- Ensuring equitable success for all
- Non-discrimination in access
- Redress of past political injustices
- Social cohesion.

(See the following, also to be discussed below: *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996), the *Higher Education Act* (1997) as amended, the *Language Policy for Higher Education* (2002) and, more recently, the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (2013)).

Legislative policy and other frameworks for the promotion of multilingualism in HE

Linguistic and cultural diversity became the cornerstone of a democratic South Africa, with English, Afrikaans and other indigenous African languages (ALs) recognised as official languages of the country. Multilingualism was established as a norm through various legislation and other policy documents.

Mindful of the past deliberately selective development of the indigenous African languages, legislative policy provides for these languages to be developed as languages of scholarship in and from which students can learn. Further, it provides for promotion of proficiency in English, the current dominant language of tuition in HE, for students to whom English is an additional language.

However, unlike in the past political dispensation, this scenario did not necessarily see multilingualism being established as a language of teaching and learning in Basic as well as in Higher Education. General observation is that South Africa is experiencing regression

rather than progress. Instead of multilingualism, monolingualism which favours English, is becoming a norm, with indigenous African languages being marginalised (Madiba 2013, Alexander 2013, Maseko 2014).

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) confers on all the right to quality education. Quality education is generally understood as effective teaching and learning which empowers individuals to be producers and consumers of knowledge, which nurtures diversity and the need to understand the world views of others, while encouraging rootedness in one's own culture. Central to the provisions of the *Constitution* is the issue of access and success. The Constitution states that language, race and other markers that have been used in the past to discriminate against certain groups of people, should not hinder their access and success in education (Maseko 2014). Policy pertaining to language in higher education advances the sentiments of the *Constitution*. The following provides an overview of the key legislative policy and other published documents pertaining to language in education, particularly indigenous languages in HE.

- First and foremost, the role of indigenous African languages is acknowledged, and the promotion of their use and development in education is mandated, *albeit* with limitations, by the *Constitution*. Section 6 (2) of the *Constitution* states that in, 'recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.' Furthermore, Section 29 (2) of the Bill of Rights states that 'everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable'.
- The *Higher Education Act of 1997* Section 27 (2) provides for the Minister to determine language policy for higher education in the country. Further, it provides that, subject to the development of policy by the Minister, the councils of public higher education institutions, with the concurrence of their senates, must determine the language policy of their higher education institution and must publish and make such policy available on request. Such a policy must be aligned to key national principles of unity in diversity and social transformation.

- The Department of Education developed and promulgated in 2002 the *Language Policy for Higher Education* (LPHE). The policy seeks to promote multilingualism in institutional policies and practices. It provides for 'the simultaneous development of a multilingual environment in which all languages are developed as academic and/or scientific languages while at the same time ensuring that the existing languages of instruction do not serve as a barrier to access and success' (2002:5 (6)). The policy notes that 'the role of language and access to language skills is critical to ensure the right of individuals to realise their full potential to participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, intellectual, economic and political life of South African society' (2002:4 (4)). The primary objective of the policy is to ensure the promotion of multilingualism, equitable access, and the participation and success of all in higher education.
- The *Ministerial Report on the Development of Indigenous African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education, 2003* is based on the premise that, given the history of the use of indigenous African languages in the South African higher education system, these languages continue to be marginalised even after the commitment from the LPHE (2002) for their promotion, development and use. The consequence is that their use, teaching and learning (as mediums of instruction, as scientific subjects and as additional languages to promote multilingualism) as articulated in the Policy, remains unchanged. The following are key issues that are raised as concerns around the future of indigenous languages: *The Ministerial Report on the Development of Indigenous African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education, 2003*
- emphasises and acknowledges the disadvantages experienced by speakers of indigenous African languages when they enter university - they study through the medium of a second language and, by and large, have no option to study their own language as a subject. The use of language as a medium of instruction and its study as a scientific subject, are given as primary elements of corpus planning and without them, language development is difficult
- makes recommendations for the development of the vocabulary of the languages, for example, development of terminology lists, translation of learning materials, glossaries, dictionaries and literature (corpus planning) and promotion of



proficiency in these languages (acquisition planning) for both mother tongue and non-mother tongue speakers. It is clear that the recommendations, if they were to be implemented effectively, would change both the body of the language and the functional potential of the indigenous languages in higher education. It is over 10 years since the Ndebele Report was published, and development of languages in SA HE is nowhere near what was envisaged in its recommendations. While recognising the position of English as the dominant language of academia in South Africa, maintenance of the status quo is seen as a threat to equity and the success of students speaking languages other than English - those who have gained physical access to higher education but not 'epistemic' access. In education, epistemic access is generally understood as access to the conceptual platform from which the learner is able to construct new knowledge from pre-existing knowledge and knowledge presented in the learning process

- indicates that what is prevalent at South African universities is not nearly adequate to bring the indigenous African languages to the fore and to have them used fully as mediums of instruction or to support tuition presently given largely in English, the dominant language of teaching and learning at most universities
- notes that the conditions of language practices are not conducive to the growth of African languages. It confirms the view of many other scholars (Alexander, 2005; Bamgbose, 1991, 2002) that elevation of status (status planning) of a language is not adequate to ensure its use and value, but that there needs to be concerted effort towards language growth and that for the languages to grow, they need extensive literacy, expansion of vocabulary, development of scientific terms (corpus planning), etc. and teaching and learning by both their speakers and speakers of other languages (acquisition planning) because languages grow as they are used and they are used more as they grow
- states that it is not enough that these languages are declared official languages, but that they should also receive recognition of their status. Their use at all levels of education is of paramount importance as this encourages investment in the language

- states that with the era of technology, the use of languages in technological (and other so-called intellectual disciplines) is also significant in order to enable their growth
- recommends that, in the promotion and development of indigenous languages in higher education, South African universities should
 - ensure the sustainability of all indigenous South African languages
 - select, according to region, one or more indigenous language to develop for use as medium of instruction in HE, as well as short-, medium- and long-term implementation frameworks
 - promote communicative competence of students in at least one indigenous language and encourage the labour market to make such competence an imperative, especially for civil service or state institutions
 - promote partnerships between HEIs and the private sector in identifying and translating key texts into indigenous language/s selected for development by that institution
 - ensure institutional collaboration, especially where languages selected are common, to ensure acceleration of work and non-replication of effort.

Each higher education institution is required to develop a language policy with an implementation plan that needs to be reviewed periodically for its effectiveness.

The development plan of these languages should be within the provisions of the language policy of each institution. The Report suggests on which specific indigenous African language/s each institution should focus. Over and above the other legislation, this would require that it be done in the context of the provincial and regional legislation that exists on language. The linguistic composition of the region where the higher education institution is situated should also be taken into consideration in selecting the language for development.

The development of African languages at universities features strongly in the 2008 *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion*

and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions.
which

- notes the continuation of challenges faced by students who are not English first language speakers at universities
 - indicates that the implementation approach to the parallel-medium language policies in place in a number of historically Afrikaans medium institutions, need to be reconsidered as the present practices discriminate against black students
 - recommends that the Minister initiates a broad review of obstacles facing the implementation of effective language policies and practices in higher education institutions, including a study of the application of equitable language policies found in countries with more or less similar social difference to those of South Africa.
- *The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (2013) recognises the unfortunate position of African languages in South African HE, and consequently, in the Departments of African Languages, and acknowledges this as a threat to linguistic diversity in SA, as well as to the survival of African languages. The *White Paper* provides for African languages to be taught across disciplines at universities and proposes and recommends that
 - an African language proficiency should be a requirement in professional training (the Department of Higher Education and Training acknowledges that this is already a practice in some faculties at some universities and that the department will look at how this could be implemented across faculties at all universities)
 - universities should provide teacher-training that focuses on mother tongue education for teachers of African languages in order to properly implement the Department of Basic Education's mother tongue policy for primary school learners

- universities should encourage students to take a course in an African language as part of their curriculum (for proficiency as well as to elevate the status of African languages in the country)
 - it moves away from simply justifying teaching of African languages in HE and instead provides possibilities for how they can be included in various curricula
 - it also acknowledges some good practices and commits the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to explore how these can be replicated in other contexts
 - how indigenous African languages should be strengthened and developed in HE but there seems, however, to be a focus on African languages being taught as additional languages in university courses and in teacher-training. While this is important in facilitating social cohesion and effective mother tongue based education, first and foremost, the survival of African languages is based on these languages being taught at schools, as well as universities, as first languages. Only then will their status as languages of scholarship improve, and they will be developed and taught as languages of learning and teaching (Heugh and Mahlalela-Thusi 2002)
- *The Report for the Charter for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2011)* makes clear the centrality of language in learning, and expresses concern that the indigenous languages are on the periphery of the activities of higher education in SA. In that regard, it recommends, as one of its Catalytic Projects, the Concept Formation in Indigenous African languages which is a crafting space, not only in Humanities and Social Sciences, but in all disciplines in higher education, in a manner where HE should begin to rethink its own approaches to teaching and research efforts in ways that deliberately take the language issue into account as one of the considerations that should frame practices in HE.
 - The basis for the Project is that policies and practices of South African higher education have evolved from historical contexts deriving from colonial and apartheid legacies where knowledge from indigenous African languages and their speakers has been marginalised and misrepresented.

- For those speaking African languages, knowledge, lived experiences, and the process of teaching and learning for different subjects in HE might be understood and represented in quite different ways from those suggested by 'common' pedagogic discourses.
 - This Catalytic Project seeks to explore ways in which indigenous African languages can be drawn on as resources in the learning, teaching and research practices in South African higher education, more specifically, in the process of concept formation.
 - The Catalytic Project proposes the exploration of 'other ways of knowing', especially those that are embedded in indigenous African languages and their knowledge systems.
- An important objective of the South African legislative framework on language in higher education pertains to the necessity of developing a multilingual environment in which all languages are promoted and developed for use in education, and that the medium of instruction does not present a barrier to access and success of any students in higher education. Indigenous African languages are a focus because of them being relegated to a lower status in HE in the past. The primary objective, as illustrated above, is in line with the pedagogical value of language and with the vision of the Government for the South African nation where equity, equality and multilingualism are cherished.

Review of compliance of HE with provisions of language legislation

The *Higher Education Act (1997)* provides that, subject to the language policy determined by the Minister (subsequently published in 2002 and discussed above), councils of universities should, in agreement with their senates, formulate their institutional language policy. Such policy, as articulated in LPHE, should be published and submitted to the Ministry of Education or designated organisation (such as PanSALB) by the end of March 2003.

In their institutional language policy each institution should provide a plan on how they propose to advance, through language, the key goals of social transformation, particularly in relation to equity of access, success and participation in HE.

The Act acknowledges the autonomy of HEIs in South Africa but implores the institutions to design a policy in alignment with national and provincial policy on language. HEIs also need to account to the Ministry about such policy, as indicated in the paragraph above.

The universities have responded to this call, and their policy provisions are aligned, to a large extent, to requirements of the national policy. Comprehensive promotion of use and development of an indigenous African language does not reflect the provisions of policy. However, there is no plan indicating that the Department has been monitoring the extent of the adoption of the clauses/provisions of the LPHE through institutional policy.

Below is a table listing South Africa's 23 universities (the list excludes those universities that were not yet established at the time of the functioning of the MAPALHE). The table provides their language choices, as articulated in their institutional language policies.

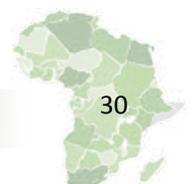
University	Official languages as stated in institutional policy			LP published?
	LoLT/LWC	Other language/indigenous language selected		
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	English	Afrikaans	IsiXhosa	Yes
Central University of Technology	English			Yes
Cape Town	English	Afrikaans	IsiXhosa	Yes
Durban University of Technology	English		IsiZulu	Yes
Fort Hare	English		IsiXhosa	Yes
Free State	English	Afrikaans	Sesotho	Yes
Johannesburg	English	Afrikaans	Sepedi, IsiZulu	Yes
KwaZulu Natal	English		IsiZulu	Yes
Limpopo	English	Afrikaans	Sesotho sa Leboa, Xitsonga, Tshivenda,	Yes

			Setswana, isiNdebele	
Mangosuthu University of Technology	English		IsiZulu	Yes
Nelson Mandela Metropole	English	Afrikaans	IsiXhosa	Yes
North West	English	Afrikaans	Sesotho, Setswana	Yes
Pretoria	English	Afrikaans	Sepedi	Yes
Rhodes	English	Afrikaans	IsiXhosa	Yes
Stellenbosch	English	Afrikaans	IsiXhosa	Yes
Tshwane University of Technology	English	Afrikaans		Yes
UNISA	English	Afrikaans	All 9 official indigenous languages	Yes
Vaal University of Technology	English			Yes
Venda	English			Yes
Walter Sisulu	English	-	IsiXhosa	
Western Cape	English	Afrikaans	IsiXhosa	Yes
Witwatersrand	English	Afrikaans	Sesotho	Yes
Zululand	English	-	IsiZulu	Yes

The table gives a general impression on language choices of institutions and where African languages are concerned, this is not an indication of the extent of the role of the indigenous language/s in the specific institution. Specifically, the following are observations regarding institutional language policies:

- SA HEIs recognise multilingualism in their policies. Institutions which provide for English as LoLT, still profess respect for multilingualism even though there is no clear articulation about which languages are involved, and how this multilingualism will be accommodated in the teaching and other practices of HE.

- Generally, all institutions with published policies have English as language of academic discourse and wider communication. There is generally an expression in policy of the commitment of institutions in facilitating English academic proficiency of students to whom the LoLT is an additional language.
- Institutional language policies are committed to providing multilingual language resources, including, but not limited to multilingual discipline terminology lists, glossary lists and dictionaries.
- As far as indigenous African languages are concerned, attention in most language policies is placed on acquisition of them as additional languages for speakers of other languages, and in facilitating academic proficiency.
- The role of African languages departments, as primary academic custodians of African language scholarship, is not highlighted in many of the policies, and there is a decline in interest in research in African languages evidenced by the gradual decline in student numbers at many of the institutions.
- Linked to the above is the common silence about medium- to long-term plans for the development of indigenous languages (identified as official languages at institutional level) as languages of academia/mediums of instruction.
- Missing in many of the institutional policies is a clear policy implementation plan that gives measurable goals of the policy, and steps on how these would be achieved over the short, medium and long term. There is also no process for their monitoring and evaluation. Implementation planning is an important aspect of language policy formulation and the absence of this therefore seems to indicate that policy formulation is only a matter of legislative compliance.
- Observation of institutional practices on issues related to language indicate that there has been research-based initiatives looking at the potential role of mother tongues in facilitating effective learning for students with languages other than English. However, these seem uncoordinated, and findings from such research do not seem to influence general institutional policy or teaching and research practices at these institutions.



The state of teaching, learning and research in indigenous languages in South African HE

Even though teaching, learning and research in indigenous African languages in higher education is affirmed through legislation, the general trend is that African Languages Departments, as traditional custodians of teaching of and research in African languages, are not reflecting the positive effects of the policy. The following are some of the observations of the Panel:

- Research that should be blossoming, is not reflected in any new trends in language studies. Some departments are threatened with closure, student numbers are generally not showing positive growth and therefore there is a threat to sustaining scholarship in African languages.
- A general overview shows that universities teach African languages in an asocial manner – reflecting less of the practices and worldview of the people who speak these languages. As indicated in the section on the history of African languages in higher education, this trend seems to show that scholarship in African languages has not broken away from the context in which it was conceived: the focus is on structural study of the languages and their literature.
- Except for a few instances, the general trend is that in historically white universities, the African languages are taught in English or Afrikaans for both mother tongue speakers and speakers of other languages, a matter of great concern for development of African languages, especially for the development of their meta-language.
- African languages in HE are taught in two streams: as home languages and as additional languages. By and large, there are relatively higher enrolments of students taking them as additional languages (but only at first year level) than those taking them at home language level. There is low retention, both for mother tongue and additional language speakers, beyond the first year level.
- Students studying African languages as home languages lack basic language knowledge and skills (i.e. basic literacy skills) that they should have acquired at

school, and teaching at university tends to focus on remedying the consequences of under-preparedness of students because of schooling.

- There is little teacher-training in African languages, i.e. teacher-training does not provide student-teachers with pedagogical knowledge and skills of teaching African languages as home or additional languages. While there is research providing narratives on pedagogic issues related to learning in multilingual contexts, there is a lack of credible research on how multilingualism can be used for cognition in contexts where an African language is a primary language for a learner or student.
- At post-graduate level, research presented is mostly through the medium of another language. There is a shift in focus in post-graduate research at university: a scan of theses examined at five institutions, focus on applied language studies and on sociolinguistics, particularly issues on language policy and planning in education but the findings and recommendations from this research do not seem to influence policy or practices at institutions.

However, mindful of the need to reposition the teaching of indigenous African languages, some universities have taken initiatives to formulate, design and implement programmes to advance scholarship in African languages.

Teaching and research practices in African languages include

- **African languages as additional languages** – a growing trend is the design and offering of a discipline-specific language learning curriculum (e.g. IsiXhosa for Health Sciences at UCT, IsiZulu for Nursing at UKZN, IsiXhosa for Law at Rhodes, etc.)
- **African languages as home languages** with a focus on traditional linguistics and literature
- **language-related subjects in the medium of African languages** themselves (e.g. Language Policy and Planning)
- **African languages as home languages with a focus on applied language studies** (e.g. Translation Studies, Lexicography)

- at post-graduate level, research encompassing all the above, but mainly presented in English
- language development efforts focused on **development of discipline-specific multilingual wordlists, terminology lists and glossaries.**

Various initiatives in repositioning African languages are driven by departments, especially African Language Departments. Some are driven by Language Centres or Language Units. The establishment of Language Committees in some institutions, whose role is to advise individual institutions on language policy implementation and revision, has been pertinent in creating and reclaiming space for indigenous African languages at those institutions. This, however, is very little, compared to what still needs to be done.

The amount of work to be done needs harnessing of resources, knowledge and expertise from all, especially African language scholars and experts, general university scholars, government, private sector, etc.

A review of the state of African languages departments as academic homes of indigenous languages at a university, needs to be considered and models of good practices in the promotion, development and use of indigenous African languages in HE, need to be publicised.

Student enrolments in African languages are a cause of anxiety. A census study at five historical white universities shows that there are high numbers of non-mother tongue students studying African languages for proficiency, but only at first year level. Studies to measure whether such learning lasts, or the extent of its long-term benefits, are absent.

The role of the publishing industry in the development of indigenous African languages in Higher Education

Education requires that it be supported by resources such as books, and the publishing industry is pivotal in the production of these resources. As illustrated in the development of Afrikaans, the development of any language to be an intellectualised language is expedited by corpus expansion which includes development of creative and non-creative works, dictionaries, etc.

In the context of universities, the dissemination of works is also generally through academic journals. In the South African publishing industry, this is highly commercialised and it readily publishes works in English and Afrikaans because it presupposes that consumers from these language are literate and are able, economically, to acquire books. Further, the industry focus on publishing in English, is fuelled by society's (including education's) overvaluing of the English language.

Publishing in African languages has to be segmented into two broad sub-sectors to be understood correctly. One sector includes African languages published for education purposes, which can be further divided into works published for basic and for higher education. The other is publishing for general reading and this can further be divided into early and adult literacy.

- Publishing for basic education is understandably meant to support the school curriculum. The main consumers are the Department of Basic Education and public libraries. In this area publishers do not seem to have major problems as the output is in response to the call for textbooks and other materials from the Department of Basic Education. Now and again there is an inadequate response to minority languages like Tshivenda, isiNdebele, siSwati and Xitsonga in submissions, but in general, enough books are available.
- A glance at catalogues of leading national publishers shows that publishing in African languages to support higher education, is lacklustre. Textbooks to support the curriculum in African languages are non-existent, regardless of the imperative from national legislation to accelerate production of books with the goal of developing African languages as intellectual languages.
- The reasons why publishers refrain from producing books in African languages for the HE sector reflect the commercialisation of the industry. Colleagues who are aspiring authors in African languages tell of the gruelling process of attempting to publish in an African language: before the publisher can assess the quality and value of the manuscript, the author has to account for the number of users of the potential book. Given the low numbers of students enrolling in African languages in HE, the future of publishing in African languages is bleak unless an intervention is made.

- Publishing in African languages for the general market is a problem area. There is a combination of reasons: firstly, there is generally a poor culture of reading amongst speakers of African languages, and secondly, the quality of published books for general reading leaves much to be desired.
- The situation regarding publishing in African languages for education proves difficult due to unreasonable prospect of selling the products. This is the case regarding the general African languages sector. To begin with, the general reading segment of the population in South Africa is alarmingly low. Secondly, the number of people who read for leisure in African languages is even lower. Be that as it may, it does not mean that publishing for general reading in African languages should be left as it is.
- Where publishing for HE is concerned, there have to be carefully-crafted strategies to publish with the objective of intellectualising African languages, and also to instil a culture of reading in children. There are exceptionally good classics in African languages for general reading and the Department of Arts and Culture has been republishing some of these.
- One of the strategies used by publishers in developing materials for publishing in African languages, is translation of English texts. Whilst this is commendable for the growing language corpus, translators for book publishing need to be trained professionally if the translated products are to add value to these African languages.
- It is clear that the promotion of African languages in education necessitates authorship and publishing in African languages, and publishers, educational institutions and the state need to adopt a strategy for marketing published materials in African languages to ensure sustained commercial viability. Viability should be derived from cognitive and socio-cultural benefits that can be gained by users from these texts.

General observations

South African HE policies and practices regarding the teaching, learning and research in indigenous African languages have evolved from historical contexts derived from colonial and apartheid legacies where these languages were marginalised and misrepresented, and not presented as valuable in high function domains.

Although there is abundant scholarly research that links academic success with the language in which one learns, the role of African languages in facilitating access to knowledge and success in the academic sphere has not been satisfactorily appraised in South African HE.

One of the main challenges in the development of African languages in higher education is at national level. While there is an outstanding policy that, at a glance, should ensure development of African languages, the policy lacks a plan of implementation, as well as directive on who should **lead or drive its implementation** (at both national and institutional level for those institutions whose policies have been studied).

The other factor related to implementation is **monitoring**. The LPHE and the *Ministerial Report on the Development of Indigenous African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education, 2003*, for example, state clearly what needs to be done by institutions in terms of repositioning African languages in HE. However, there is no monitoring regarding the extent of compliance with provisions of policy (also at both national and institutional level). The simple example is that of the formulation of an institutional policy, and the institution's submission to the Education Ministry of its five-year plan regarding the development of African languages as mediums of instruction. It would seem that none of the universities surveyed, have submitted this plan and it is now more than a decade since the policy was published. The essence of the argument here is that the policy is sufficient, but there is a lack of implementation plans and other strategies to monitor compliance to the provisions of the policy.

National policy is burdened with **limitation clauses** like 'where possible', 'where practical', 'may', etc. Policy at institutional level seems to follow national policy and, as such, institutions seem to be able to escape some of their responsibilities towards the use and development of African languages.

The study of African languages at university has been a challenge for the past two decades and as such, **African language departments have trained very few scholars** to sustain scholarship in African languages at university and to teach in schools. Very few students have been trained in conventional language areas like linguistics, literature, morphology, phonology, and in applied language studies such as translation studies, interpreting, socio-linguistics, etc. This is a threat to scholarship in African languages.

The point above is also linked to **low interest in post-graduate studies, including teacher training**, in African languages. A general survey links this low interest to lack of funding in African language studies. Some universities experienced a high number of post-graduate student enrolments as a result of scholarships offered the Government.

The state's **funding grid** for languages places languages towards the bottom in terms of state subsidy. Review of this subsidy policy, should ensure that it provides leverage for scientific development of African languages.

At times, and maybe many times, **institutional priorities** do not include development of African languages. The **poor state of the teaching of African languages at schools** means that universities inherit students who do not possess the expected competency for further study of these languages at university. All the above have an impact on the kind and **quality of research** that emerges from African languages departments.

There is emerging concern, across disciplines at universities, where teaching **staff is beginning to consider language as one of the contributing factors to student underperformance** at university. Consequently, there is a growing body of research in that regard but this research does not seem to influence teaching practices. There is the belief, even if inconclusive, that this is linked to the fact that the majority of staff in HE speak English only.

Linked to the point above is that there is **no pedagogy informing multi-language usage** to support concept formation in students for whom English is an additional language. Many institutions offer African languages as additional languages but there is **no clear indication as to whether learning an African language adds value to the learning experience of students**, or it is merely a course to fill the curriculum for a study programme. Students studying African languages as home languages appreciate the opportunity to study *their*

languages, and feel their identity affirmed in an otherwise alienating higher education environment. Contrary to popular belief, when students do not understand concepts in the language of instruction, they try to decipher meaning in their own language, but English monolingual staff do not often encourage or support this as a means to facilitate concept formation.

Four institutions surveyed, who **present models of best practices in implementation of multilingualism embracing African language, received donor-funding which enabled them to pilot and introduce multilingual programmes** that were simply institutionalised at the end of funding.

Some universities have **institutionalised language centres, units and committees** that seem to keep debates on multilingualism at the fore of their universities' agendas.

There is growing **interdisciplinary collaborative research** investigating the development of multilingual discipline specific glossaries, terminology, wordlists, etc.

Multilingualism at most institutions seems to favour second language speakers in that its focus is on facilitating proficiency of speakers of other languages in indigenous African languages, and less on mother tongue-based bilingualism for speakers of indigenous African languages.

The challenges given above need to be understood and weighed against the opportunities and prospects that favour the development of African languages in higher education.

- There is a general national interest in African languages in higher education.
- There are also initiatives supported by institutional executives, African languages departments, or by individual researchers within institutions to advance the study and development of African languages.
- Research also shows that there is growing consciousness from scholars in other disciplines who have an interest in the link between language and effective learning, and promotion of social cohesion in acquisition of additional languages in professional/vocation-specific disciplines.

- All these initiatives will be possible with availability of students to study African languages. Contrary to popular belief, students want to study African languages, but funding remains a challenge.

Recommendations

The higher education language policy and legislative environment created since 1994 is enabling, and complements the ideals envisaged for a South African society in the *Constitution*. It is clear that, by and large, institutions have complied with national language policy requirements to formulate institutional policy. However, this enabling environment is not matched by language practices prevailing in HE. The shortcoming is fundamentally in policy implementation. In this context it is strongly recommended that institutional language policies should have clear implementation plans regarding the development of African languages as languages of teaching, learning and research. Importantly, the processes of the monitoring and evaluation of such plans should be clearly indicated.

In this context it is recommended that processes be put in place to strengthen and enforce implementation. National and institutional plans should set, as part of their implementation plan, language policy goals which articulate, in no uncertain terms, development of indigenous ALs as subjects (home language, additional languages), as mediums of instructions and as support to learning. Structures within universities should be set up (e.g. Language Units, Equity and Transformation Offices) to monitor and evaluate language policy implementation, and report on the progress at intervals set in the LPHE. The DHET, in turn, should have a unit dedicated to monitoring and evaluation of institutional compliance to provisions of the LPHE.

At a national level, promotion of multilingualism is the responsibility of the national government. We should also consider promoting multilingualism according to the linguistic profile of a region.

Development of indigenous ALs should be a collaborative effort – institutions should collaborate regionally to develop a language/s with high concentration in that region, and advance hypotheses around the development and use of ALS in ALs. For example, the ‘Cape’ universities (UCT, UWC, CPUT, SU, NMMU, RU, UFH, WSU) could focus on isiXhosa and Sesotho and South East universities (UKZN, DUT, UniZul) could focus

on isiZulu and SiSwati. Collaboration could also be structured along the lines of the recommendations of the Ndebele Report (Par. 48.6).

This collaboration should encourage and support partnership between HDIs (historically disadvantaged institutions) and HAIs (historically advantaged institutions) but the objective of such collaborations should be clarified (i.e. development of ALs, not sustainability or maintenance of English/Afrikaans).

First and foremost, implementation of multilingualism, intellectualisation of African languages as languages of scholarship, and pedagogical issues around these, need to be undergirded by the theory of multilanguage acquisition, language development and mother tongue based bilingual education. The value of mother tongue based education which embraces African languages, needs to be backed up by credible research.

Comprehensive research needs to be undertaken to explore and document strategies for intellectualising African languages for use in HE. The focus of such research should be on strategies that could be adopted in HE to achieve quality education for historically disadvantaged students, as well as to promote multilingualism for speakers of other languages, including those of African languages. The DHET needs to dedicate funding to support such research and universities that have presented 'best language practices' should lead such research.

This research should take the African context into consideration – where minority languages (English and Afrikaans in the South African context) have a utilitarian value (in education, the labour market, etc.) but are unattainable to the majority of students who speak these languages as additional languages.

Recommendations from such research should take into consideration the fact that underperformance of students is generally linked to the language in which those students reconcile knowledge acquired in learning, and of the knowledge they bring into the classroom in the learning process.

Universities, as centres of scholarship, should play a critical role in development of indigenous African languages and as such, African language departments, as primary custodians of scholarship in these languages, should be supported (in terms funding, infrastructure and personnel).

Funding for research and development of indigenous ALs needs to be increased, and funding from primary funders of HE research, e.g. the National Research Foundation needs to consider dedicating funding to development of ALs in HE exclusively

The waning student interest in African languages and, consequently, the decline in student numbers and threatened closure of some African language departments, needs to be studied scientifically.

It is recommended that a national study should provide empirical evidence on the evolution of African language departments in South Africa and whether early history of African languages in HE has any effect on their present teaching, learning and research. The African Languages Association of South Africa could support such research.

The capabilities of students who study African languages in higher education, is low and this is an area of concern. The general perception is that this is the result of the under-preparedness from school.

It is recommended that a dynamic partnership is set up between the DBE and DHET in order to establish an all-inclusive and participatory exchange between the two ministries, and to rally support for meaningful multilingual education embracing indigenous ALs. Multilingual education should focus on proper vocational preparation of teachers for a multilingual context, with emphasis on teaching African languages, teaching in African languages and using them to support learning. Further, it is recommended that teacher-education should be monitored, particularly the training of teachers who qualify to teach indigenous African languages as first and additional languages in basic education.

Four institutions surveyed indicate that during the past 10 years the number of teachers qualified to teach African languages, is dismally low.

It should be the duty of structures such as the PanSALB, NLBs, etc. to provide advocacy on benefits of multilingualism and ensure the promotion and development of indigenous African languages.

The principle of Bilingual Learning (Additive Bilingualism) can be followed where learning materials are written in two languages (e.g. an African language and a common language that

is presently the medium of instruction) with the two languages facing each other on opposite pages.

HEIs should also be encouraged, through their executive management, to take up funding opportunities that could possibly enable the promotion and development of African language departments.

Escape clauses such as 'subject to affordability', 'subject to availability', 'where practical' and so on, should be removed or used with caution in legislative policy. Except for these escape clauses and lack of clarity on implementation plans, the language policy applicable to HE is aligned to other national goals.

Centres of learning (basic schooling and HE) should provide language learning opportunities for learners and students. All students should learn at least one African language as part of their degree. Initiatives such as those provided for in UKZN policy (where isiZulu was supposed to be a compulsory study requirement for any undergraduate degree from 2014) should be studied and successes and challenges in implementation should be made known.

In-service language learning courses should be provided for those who are already working. There also needs to be a relationship between HEIs and the labour market where skills developed by HEIs, are acknowledged and rewarded in the labour market. Proficiency in an African language should be a prerequisite, not a recommendation for a job.

Teaching staff at university are critical in the implementation of multilingualism in HE. Given the fact that the majority are English monolinguals, a language requirement should not only apply to students, but to staff as well.

DHET should undertake an audit of instances of good practices regarding production and translation of materials into African languages, intellectualise the process and replicate it in other contexts. Good practices should also include instances where indigenous African languages have been used as mediums of instruction, to support learning, or have been taught as subjects to mother tongue speakers, and to promote proficiency to speakers of other languages.

Higher education institutions can embark on a gradual, incremental process of bilingual education. Goals can be set for the short, medium and long term. As a first and immediate

goal, class/tutorial/practical notes can be in an African language and what are presently mediums of instruction in HE, for instance Sesotho sa Leboa, English or Afrikaans. Glossary and term lists can also be developed during this process.

A lot has been done at the different universities concerning terminology lists. If these are placed on their respective websites they can be shared or be used to supplement one another. Tutorials for undergraduate speakers of Sesotho sa Leboa can be presented in Sesotho sa Leboa by post-graduate speakers or lecturers proficient in the language. Likewise tutorials can be conducted for the speakers of the other languages.

Language Research and Development Centres (LRDCs) should be revisited. These centres are housed at universities and are playing a pivotal role in developing and verifying terminology. These Language Centres, together with National Language Services and National Lexicography Units should be driven by qualified language professionals and should drive the process of intellectualisation of African languages.

A strong publishing culture, not only for purposes of basic education, is a strong element of corpus development and is critical in implementing the use of indigenous ALs in HE.

It is recommended that the DHET supports funding initiatives around terminology planning in HE. There should be post-graduate studies funded to support the dedicated development of terminology/glossaries in African languages.

Publishing should be coordinated so that quality is ensured. Research and other outputs from any university should be published to facilitate dissemination and wider consumption of research resultant from development of indigenous African languages. It is imperative to establish journals that specifically publish scholarly works in African languages. Other platforms of publishing, e.g. e-publishing should be pursued, especially for HE.

Development of materials into African languages should not be arbitrary nor non-conditional, but should always be based on need. There is a vast pool of adult literature, published in African languages in newspapers which needs to be collected and re-published. Opland (2003) compares a well-known isiXhosa writer and poet to William Shakespeare, but only a small percentage of his work is known and in the public domain.

Institutional collaboration – sharing of knowledge, expertise, curriculum, etc. to enable acceleration of introduction of programmes on multilingualism, needs to be nurtured. It is

evident that some universities are active in research on AL. Collaboration will curtail duplication of effort, and financial resources can be stretched.

The value of African languages, as reflected in policy, should be reflected in society and embraced by its powerful institutions as languages of education, business and robust political debate.

It is recommended that each university should establish an infrastructure to develop and/or translate key texts in critical disciplines into indigenous ALs, and research their use in pedagogical contexts. Alongside this should be robust research on effective multi-language usage in pedagogical contexts. The DHET should attach timeframes to the implementation of this recommendation, at the end of which universities should report to DHET.

Conclusion

The history of the development of the ALs through the work of the missionaries, the language-based homeland system, and perhaps even the Bantu Education system during the apartheid period, demonstrates the meticulous work done by those concerned in the development of these languages.

However, the ulterior motives of all the different role-players at that time did not facilitate these developments to be embraced by, and to be of overall benefit to the language users.

In the missionary period, the focus of the development of the indigenous languages was on their use as a tool of conversion to Christianity and for the missionaries to teach them to speakers of other languages. Later on, their development limited their use to social communication, basic education and in the homelands, with Afrikaans and English upheld as languages of power.

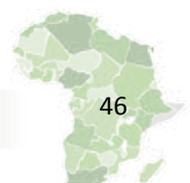
Their teaching and learning in higher education was also pioneered by speakers of other languages, through other mediums, and the focus was on structural linguistics. African intellectuals later participated in advancing the scholarship in African languages but within the framework provided by the pioneers. In essence, teaching of African languages in HEIs was detached from the speakers of these languages.

In the democratic dispensation, these languages are empowered in policy, but the implementation of their use is sluggish or is met with resistance from various role-players. There is an appreciation from various quarters that quality education is primarily facilitated by one's own language, and that it is also language that can facilitate social cohesion envisioned in our Constitution.

The history of ALs illustrates that it is possible for these languages to be developed, and used in domains where they have not been used before, such as HE. However, given the history of the development of these languages, and the supremacy of English, the process has to be handled in a manner that it does not disadvantage the speakers of these languages, especially regarding their access to quality education at university.

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