

Exploring intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages for academic purposes

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Language represents an individual's identity in many respects. It is a natural ability of any average person that they use to express thoughts and ideas, investigate their traditions and experiences, and better their community and the laws that govern it. The ability to choose the official language was acknowledged in the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution acknowledges that indigenous languages are a commodity which has not been fully used. By studying the difficulties of intellectualising indigenous languages in modern South Africa, this research aims to promote the usage and enhance the prestige of indigenous languages. The challenge in basic education in South Africa is that South African indigenous languages are not prioritised. Moreover, there appears to be a disconnection between language policy and implementation.

Contribution: A document analysis was undertaken to review literature on the possibility of intellectualising South African indigenous languages by considering various theories and methods of terminology development, including interborrowing within South African indigenous languages and adaptation of some English and Afrikaans words as already entrenched languages in education.

Keywords: intellectualisation; African languages development; terminology development; language policy and planning; word coinage; terminology theory.

Introduction

In as much as intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages may be considered a provocative and controversial topic because it advocates for a process, movement and development of languages (Kaschula & Maseko 2014:10), it has emerged as a crucial topic recently, especially in the realm of academic pursuits. The exploration of how these indigenous languages can be intellectualised and harnessed for academic purposes holds immense significance. This paper delves into the concept of intellectualisation, its implementation and the need to develop the academic potential of South African indigenous languages. We attempt to cast light on the significance of language intellectualisation in fostering an inclusive and equitable academic environment by examining the obstacles, opportunities and potential strategies for language development.

The concept of intellectualisation, to a broader extent, outlines the process of enabling language to perform advanced linguistic functions in society. Generally, intellectualisation refers to the process of developing, elaborating, rationalising and illuminating a language's terminologies to express valuable scientific precision and sentences that can logically convey accurate judgements to ensure full capacity to carry out scientific function in all domains (Havranek 1932:32-84).

This study will adopt Finlayson and Madiba's (2002:41) definition of 'intellectualisation' as a 'planned process of accelerating the growth and development of our indigenous languages to enhance their effective interface with modern developments, theories and concepts'. Furthermore, the study operates within the confinement that 'an intellectualised language is one which can be used for educating a person in any field of knowledge from preschool to university and beyond' (Sibayan 1999:229).

Exploring the intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages for academic purposes is vital in this modern era. Indigenous languages are enabled by intellectualisation to become instructional and academic discourse mediums. It promotes inclusive education by ensuring that students have access to information and can effectively convey themselves in their mother tongues. This helps to overcome the language barrier that frequently exists in educational settings and provides all pupils with equal opportunities. Moreover, it contributes to the production of knowledge in various domains. It permits the growth of scholarly literature, investigation and scholarship

in indigenous languages. This encourages indigenous epistemologies and methods, expanding academic discourse and generating novel insights from a local perspective.

The advancement of previously marginalised indigenous languages independently from their fellow languages elsewhere in Africa has been largely attributed to the South African apartheid regime's language policy (Finlayson & Madiba 2002:40). Considering that language boards were independent, numerous South African languages in Bantustans developed independently of one another, even though they belonged to the same linguistic community. For instance, there were three language boards for isiXhosa in the Ciskei and Transkei Bantustan and in the Western Cape Province in South Africa (Maseko & Vale 2016). The Nguni languages, which were created independently of one another, are also basic examples of this assertion (i.e. isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele and siSwati). The same holds true for the Sotho language group such as Southern Sesotho, Northern Sotho and Setswana. Because of these initiatives, an ethnolinguistic energy has developed that will eventually influence local politics and language planning (Gumbi 2019). During the colonial and apartheid eras, social engineering not only formalised political prejudice but also fostered linguistic hostility. Indigenous people's anger over the Afrikaans-English language policy sparked the 1976 Soweto youth uprising against Afrikaans.

The study aimed to explore the possibility of intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages by borrowing existing terminologies from other South African indigenous languages and further borrow through adaptation of English and Afrikaans languages as they are already entrenched in scientific and technical domains. The objectives of this study were to assess whether it could be possible to intellectualise South African indigenous languages' scientific and academic purposes, evaluate the steps and processes to be undertaken in furthering the development of South African indigenous languages and, lastly, explore the prospect of synergising these languages in terminology development and interborrowing within Southern Bantu languages.

Literature review

In this section, we will examine the existing literature on the intellectualisation of languages in South Africa, focussing on the historical context, current state and potential implications for language use and attitudes. Additionally, we will draw a comparison between South Africa and other countries as points of reference. We will also explore the role of education in promoting or hindering intellectualisation, and the potential benefits and challenges of intellectualisation in multilingual societies. Lastly, we will discuss the theoretical framework of the study.

The history of intellectualisation of languages in South Africa

Some of the scholars who ignited the phenomenon of intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages

define it as 'the planned process of accelerating the growth and development of our indigenous languages to enhance their effective interface with modern developments, theories and concepts' (Finlayson & Madiba 2002:40). This is in alignment with what Sibayan (1999:448) termed 'counterhegemonic', which refers to the objective to oust English as the sole dominant language.

The language framework that is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa acknowledges the previously disadvantaged languages and the use of South African indigenous languages and further urges government to take proactive measures to address these issues. The Pan South African Language Board is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of language policies. It seeks to foster the development and use of all official languages while ensuring alignment with the languages spoken by the majority of South Africans. This entails both the Draught Bill and the Language Policy and Plan (LPP). Given that non-English speakers find it difficult to comprehend the educational material, the youngsters in the township are largely illiterate (Magocha, Mutasa & Rammala 2019). Because they were unable to articulate their views and thoughts in English, they felt dislocated, excluded, underrepresented or as though their voices had been ignored. Classrooms should encourage literacy as it has historically been done, with the focus on reading rather than writing, as a progressive strategy to combat illiteracy. According to Finlayson and Madiba's (2002) research, the integration and intellectualisation of indigenous languages in academic settings is predicated on a well-researched theory of language development that necessitates a methodically coordinated effort. From the standpoint of language planning, it is important to start by fixing the current issues. The LANGTAG research emphasises several previously acknowledged community initiatives on linguistic matters pertinent to the intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages in different domains of usage. One of the issues is the scarcity of appropriate vocabulary to interpret thoughts and conceptions conveyed in complex languages such as English, as well as the lack of appropriate resources like glossaries, dictionaries, post-literacy material, common journals and qualified specialists like terminologists.

Prah (2009:102) suggested that the first step to take in terms of intellectualising African languages should be the 'harmonisation of orthographies of mutually intelligible speech forms'. Then, he also proposed the development of terminology and concepts to successfully inculcate modern scientific ideas. However, harmonisation of the orthography of mutually intelligible languages may not be feasible in South Africa 'because they appear to exacerbate divisions along ethnic lines or differences between languages, especially in languages which belong to the same group' (Finlayson & Madiba 2002:54). They made an example using different terms to refer to 'South Africa' in Nguni languages:

- IsiZulu – Iningizimu Afrika
- Xhosa – Umzantsi Afrika
- Siswati – Iningizimu Afrika
- IsiNdebele – Isewula Afrika.

Education is one of the most effective means of intellectualising indigenous languages. As a result, the government designated the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) to investigate, among other things, the language policy in education and the use of African languages at the tertiary level. It was revealed that English was the language of instruction in 15 of the participating universities, while Afrikaans was taught in 4. However, none of them supported or encouraged the use of African languages outside of African languages classes. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2001) found that 10 technikons (now universities of technology) used English as the language of instruction, while eight used Afrikaans. The commission recommended to the Minister of Education a plan of action to develop the language policy in tertiary institutions, known as the National Plan for Higher Education (South African Ministry of Education 2001).

Similarly, Maseko (2008:70) emphasised that indigenous African languages, historically, have never enjoyed various teaching acts in most disciplines in South Africa, for instance, as language of instruction or assessment. This appears as a disregard of the fact that evidence illustrates and supports that language of learning and teaching (LoLT) can enhance learner's comprehension and social cohesion (Dalvit, Murray & Terzoli 2009; Maseko 2011; Wolff 2003).

However, some critics argue that prioritising indigenous African languages in academia may hinder opportunities for students in the global job market, where English is the dominant language. Additionally, there are concerns about the lack of standardisation and resources for some of these languages, which could limit their effectiveness as mediums for academic instruction (Wolff 2018). Different stakeholders like National Language Services (NLS) and PanSALB, among others, are working hard to ensure that this is addressed.

The current state of intellectualisation of indigenous African languages

Despite various challenges, efforts towards intellectualisation of indigenous African languages continue to gain momentum. The importance of preserving and promoting linguistic diversity in academia cannot be overstated, as it allows for a more inclusive and representative education system. Relevant recommendations made by scholars and other stakeholders are being addressed.

In response to the appeal by the Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, Dr. Nzimande, who encouraged the use of indigenous languages as LoLT, the majority of universities in South Africa have formulated comprehensive language policies that address and accommodate African indigenous languages. Kaschula and Maseko (2014:26) noted that while 23 South African universities have adopted a language policy that favours the promotion of African indigenous languages, 'only a handful have implementation

plans and actively promote African languages in their teaching acts'. The University of Cape Town (UCT) is one of the few universities that requires medical students to complete isiXhosa and Afrikaans through onsite clinical examinations (OSCEs). These examinations involve linguists and clinical skills specialists evaluating students as they examine patients in their mother tongue, isiXhosa. UCT's implementation plan sets them apart as a leading university in this regard. In addition, isiXhosa and isiZulu language institutes and courses for academic purposes, such as engineering and law, have been established (UCT Language Policy 2013).

Furthermore, UCT's new Centre for African Language Diversity (CALDi) and Centre for Higher Education (CHED) are similarly innovative. The University of KwaZulu-Natal offers unique isiZulu language programmes for psychology and nursing (Hlongwa & Mazibuko 2015). Venda University was introducing minority languages like isiNdebele and building a degree in indigenous knowledge systems (Neethling 2010:71). The isiXhosa glossaries that are being built at Stellenbosch University are another example of great practice (Madiba 2014). The Department of Applied Language Studies in the Faculty of Arts at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University provides brief translation courses and a Translation and Interpretation Office. The University of North-West uses simultaneous translation and African language text editing programmes (Kaschula 2016:206). One of the best initiatives is the University of Limpopo's Bachelor of Arts degree in multilingualism, which includes Sepedi and English courses (Ramani 2011). This paradigm warrants additional study. The Rhodes Institutional Planning Committee adopted this concept on the 24th of March 2014. The Ulwimi Nentlalo (Language and Society) course for isiXhosa 1 at Rhodes University follows mother tongue-based bilingual education (MTBBE) models, but few universities have tried this approach.

Despite these efforts, Wolff et al. (eds. 2017) observed that national higher education institutions are some of the recent challenges to the development of indigenous languages. Even though these institutions have seemingly perfect language policies, their problem is lack of implementation strategy and guidance pertaining to who is going to lead and guide this implementation.

In Alexander's (2013:81) final publication, he presented a five-dimensional argument, namely, '(biocultural) diversity, (economic) development, (political) democracy, (human) dignity and effective didactics'. Pertaining to didactics, he indicated that it is necessary to intellectualise indigenous African languages at tertiary level to feed future teachers into Basic Education Department, because they will be familiar with the notion of 'mother tongue and MTBBE' (ed. Alexander 2005). Contrarily, Turner (2012) argues that the initiative needs to be headed by the DBE and not at tertiary level. These differences clearly show that intellectualising and promoting multilingualism requires both these educational levels.

Consequently, the DBE introduced the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades 1–12. The NCS made a provision

that ensures schooling in all official languages. This statement encourages basic education learners to use their native languages. Angie Motshega, Basic Education Minister, according to *BusinessTech* (2022) stated the following:

The Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) can be selected from any official language. The NCS and the LiEP advocate for an additive multilingualism approach that encourages learners to learn through their home language as long as it is feasible, as well as to learn other languages. (n.p.)

This may be regarded as a patriotic stance because it merely recognises the need for the use of indigenous African languages as a necessity, while also allowing students to choose their language of instruction and learning. Nonetheless, the indigenous African languages have not yet been developed as LoLT.

The benefits and challenges of intellectualisation of indigenous African languages for academic purposes

The LANGTAG (1996) report pointed out linguistic challenges pertaining to the intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages, particularly in domains that are already entrenched as significant activities in society. Among these obstacles are a lack of terminology to adequately translate concepts and ideas that were already articulated in developed and dominant languages such as English, a lack of relevant materials such as specialist dictionaries, glossaries, journals, post-literacy reading materials and magazines, and a scarcity of well-trained experts such as terminologists and terminographers.

These linguistic challenges in the process of intellectualisation require extensive research to chart different strategies and models. Finlayson and Madiba (2002:53) recommend that these linguistic strategies should pay attention to the process of terminology formulation and 'maximise their acceptance, how to collect and codify the terms that are already in existence and how these terms should be disseminated to their target users'. Several studies (Khumalo 2017; Khumalo & Nkomo 2022) have since been conducted and more are expected to establish different models and strategies. These will empower language planners and policy makers to develop previously marginalised languages.

Language planning has revealed that new terminology development involves 'the deliberate and conscious use of word-formation patterns or methods such as borrowing, compounding, derivation, loan translation or calquing, semantic shift, blending, clipping, etc.' (Finlayson & Madiba 2002:53). Methods and procedures are in place; they only require each language's developers to adopt the one that is suitable for their language's needs.

Another obstacle in the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages in South Africa is the negative attitude of their speakers towards their languages, particularly as a LoLT (Finlayson & Madiba 2002:45). Several studies (Marivate 1992; Webb 1994, 1995) found that many speakers of African indigenous languages do not see the significance and relevance of using them in

education. Alternatively, they regarded English and Afrikaans as languages of higher mobility or a ticket to job opportunities in the country. Regardless of constitutional rights for learners to choose the language of learning, English remains the favourite sole medium of instruction.

The argument that African languages lack the academic register necessary for teaching and learning in institutions of higher education is a significant barrier (Maseko 2011:8). Even though research demonstrates that language has a significant impact on conceptualisation, the use of indigenous African languages in higher education in South Africa is hindered by concerns about their inadequacy in scientific and modern terminology (Foley 2002:55–60). Maseko (2011) states that it is essential to comprehend the connection between language and learning and the possible role of African indigenous languages in overseeing:

[A]ccess, retention and success of their native speakers at university, there has to be concerted effort to accelerate their development; a process of their intellectualisation has to be set in motion. (p. 8)

The relationship between language and learning is worth exploring particularly because during terminology development such should be considered. Likewise, Munday (2001) notes that when studying language development, especially translation, paying attention to mutual relationships between languages activates the creation of meaning in any language. However, Wildsmith-Cromarty (2008:155–158) warns that it is not easy to transfer meaning of some scientific terminology into African indigenous languages. She recommends that terminology developers should possess superb linguistic knowledge of both the source and target language, cognitive and domain competencies to maintain intended meaning.

What has not been discussed in detail in most African indigenous languages' intellectualisation studies is a suggestion of a suitable strategy to adopt to intellectualise these languages especially in academia. Most scholars are aware and agree that for these languages to be fully intellectualised they need to be developed in terms of terminology, among other strategies. The study has identified this gap of knowledge by attempting to explore interborrowing within these indigenous languages and adapting English and Afrikaans words as already entrenched languages particularly in education.

Theoretical framework

In the African context, intellectualisation is closely linked to the development of terminology. One of the obstacles of intellectualising South African indigenous languages is lack of terminology and sometimes strategies to develop these terminologies. As such, the study has adopted terminology theory as a theoretical framework.

Terminology theory is defined as a 'discipline concerned with the study and compilation of specialized terms' (Cabr  1999:1). It

examines how these terms are created, organised and utilised for effective communication within many disciplines. In simple terms, terminology theory enables us to comprehend how specialists in various fields, such as law, medicine and technology, develop and employ their own specialised vocabulary. These specialised terms are crucial because they convey precise and specific meanings that are necessary for clear and precise communication within their respective disciplines.

Cabré (1999:4) submitted that terminology is determined by social changes that ultimately have a major impact on linguistic needs. She unpacked these linguistic needs as follows:

- Recent advances in science and technology have been accompanied by the emergence of numerous new concepts, and even novel conceptual fields necessitate new naming conventions.
- New domains of endeavour, such as the language industries, are emerging because of the rapid development of technology and the emergence of new modes of communication.
- The paramount significance of standardised products is both a consequence and a cause of mass production. The term 'handmade' is becoming obsolete.
- The exchange of knowledge and commodities generates new markets, multilingualism and the need to standardise the exchange-facilitating elements, such as systems and fundamental transfer units.
- Information has become increasingly vital, necessitating robust and efficient support. There is a need for easily accessible, multidimensional databases, as well as standardised systems for the transfer of data automatically.
- The pervasive dissemination of terminology made possible by mass communication has led to its incorporation into popular culture.
- The government's intervention in language resulted in the standardisation of terminology and the establishment of official organisations to administer this endeavour. To combat the unidirectional transmission of knowledge and new products, protectionist language policies are implemented. Many language specialists are required by small nations with unstable languages that engage in language planning. Specialised languages and their primary component, terminology, are one of the most vital aspects of language standardisation.

Ethical considerations

An application for full ethical approval was made to the Faculty Committee for Research Ethics (FCRE) and ethics consent was received on 2 August 2022. The ethics approval number is FCRE/APL/STF/2022/13.

Results

The academic intellectualisation of African indigenous languages

The study made use of the document analysis research method to arrive at these findings. The findings are arranged

in a thematic structure. The findings furnish valuable insights into the challenges and prospects of intellectualising African indigenous language in South Africa, particularly in the context of academic discourse. The findings will concentrate on the potential for African indigenous languages to be intellectualised, steps and processes to develop these languages, and a suitable terminology development approach.

There is significant progress in South Africa with regards to intellectualisation of indigenous languages, particularly in the fields of science and technology where new terminology has been developed. However, among other obstacles, negative attitude towards African indigenous languages is a stumbling block that hinders efforts to intellectualise them further and as a result it can discourage speakers from academic pursuits in their mother tongue.

It was found that the intellectualisation of African languages has always been on the government's radar. The Minister of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology (henceforth DACST) appointed the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) to establish a National Language Plan for South Africa in 1995. The intellectualisation of African languages was one area of focus for this Task Group. The Minister stated quite explicitly that the team should devise strategies for the development and maintenance of African languages that have been disadvantaged by past linguist policies (LANGTAG Report 1996). In the final report submitted to the DACST Minister by the Task Team in August 1996, it:

- acknowledges the delay in the historical evolution of native languages
- recognises the need to modify unfavourable perceptions of these languages
- indicates the need for organisational structures to manage the process.

Subsequently, the provision of resources was suggested, and finally, the advancement of research strategies toward language intellectualisation.

More recently, it became evident that the responsibility of developing indigenous languages lies with the institutions of higher learning as Alexander (ed. 2005) had recommended. As discussed in the literature review, universities are adhering to the call of developing language policies that prioritise the development and promotion of African indigenous languages. Some have already started with strategies to implement the development of these languages through compelling students to enrol for African languages as a prerequisite to graduate, while other universities are implementing multilingual glossaries to assist student to understand better in their mother tongue.

In October 2010, the Ministry of Higher Education and Training (DHET) appointed a panel that was responsible for African Languages in Higher Education to implement the recommendations that were made by stakeholders and propose a way forward. Even though legislation endorses

teaching, learning and research in indigenous African languages in institutions of higher learning, African Languages Departments, the conventional custodians of teaching and research in African languages, do not reflect the policy's positive effects, according to the panel. Below are some of the observations of the Panel in point form (DHET 2015:31):

- There are no new trends in language studies that reflect the research that ought to be flourishing in this field.
- Universities teach African languages through an approach that is asocial and less representative of the practises and perspectives of the speakers of these languages. African languages are taught in English or Afrikaans at historically white universities to both native speakers and speakers of other languages.
- More first-year students enrol in African languages as additional languages than as native languages. Low retention of African language speakers beyond the first-year level is a result of a lack of fundamental language knowledge and skills, a lack of teacher-training, and in contexts where an African language is the primary language, there is a dearth of credible research on how multilingualism can be utilised for cognition.
- At the postgraduate level, the majority of research is conducted in another language, with an emphasis shift towards applied language studies and sociolinguistics; however, the findings and recommendations of this research do not appear to influence institutional policies and practises.

Steps and processes in developing African indigenous languages

In addressing steps to be taken in order to develop African indigenous languages, Owolabi (2006) proposed a pragmatic approximating process (PAP), which is defined as the:

[P]rocess of painstaking thinking, discussing, explaining and approximating new words in translating scientific concepts and theories from foreign to an African indigenous language without any possibility of loss in meaning occasioned by cross-cultural translation.

This procedure includes three stages: the explanation stage, the pondering stage and the approximation stage.

Linguists, anthropologists, philosophers and educationists are required to be in attendance when these stages are unfolding. These professionals and experts are obliged to regard the three cardinal pillars highly as noted by Robins (in Owolabi 2006:5). The three cardinal pillars are as follows:

- *Exhaustiveness*: This is regularity that is involved in language as discovered by the language data or material; it must be accounted for without negligence.
- *Precision*: To achieve this outcome, always avoid lengthy explanations in favour of precise and shorter explanations containing fewer intricate terms that further complicate the statement.
- *Consistency*: Uniformity throughout is encouraged in this regard to ensure that the formulated or translated statements complement each other.

If the above-identified cardinal pillar stages of PAP are applied and practiced rigorously, this process will bear fruits. Nonetheless, this exercise is not without obstacles. Among these obstacles is the difficulty of translating cross-cultural concepts; therefore, Owolabi (2006) identifies 14 techniques for coining new terms to surmount this problem. These include semantic extension, composition, specification, dialect or internal borrowing, external borrowing, idiomatisation, straightforward equivalence, acronyms, explanation, coinage, translation, description, range extension and adaptability (Owolabi 2006:40).

The University of KwaZulu-Natal instituted the process of intellectualising isiZulu. The university has prioritised terminology development and necessary processes. Among the processes, they have established a model to adequately intellectualise isiZulu which is a predominant language in that university and Province. The model is divided into five stages, namely, (1) harvesting, (2) description and translation, (3) consultation and verification, (4) authentication and standardisation through PanSALB and (5) 'finalisation' by enrolling the terms in the terminology database (Khumalo 2017).

Comparison with international practices in intellectualisation of indigenous African languages for academic purposes

Intellectualisation of indigenous languages for academic purposes is not a new phenomenon, but it is gaining momentum in several countries as they realise the significance of preserving and promoting their indigenous languages. While concerns are genuine about the practicability and effectiveness of using these languages in academia, the advantages of linguistic variety and cultural inclusivity cannot be ignored. This is so because education becomes more accessible to indigenous languages speakers. It is therefore important to address the challenges and limitations that come with this initiative, while embracing the rich cultural heritage that these languages represent. Moreover, students would academically perform better in familiar language. Research has shown that students perform better academically when they use their mother tongue signalling the need for intellectualisation. Table 1 presents a sample of languages of learning and teaching in the world (Brock-Utne 2015; Kaschula 2015; Madadzhe 2019).

TABLE 1: A sample of teaching and learning languages around the globe.

Country	LoLT
The United States	English
Canada	English or French
Britain	English
Italy	Italian
France	French
Spain	Spanish
The Netherlands	Dutch or English

Source: Based on Brock-Utne, B., 2015, 'Language of instruction in Africa – The most important and least appreciated issue', unpublished lecture presented at the University of Limpopo, Polokwane, 13th August; Kaschula, R.H., 2015, 'Reclaiming our languages', *City Press*, 14 June, viewed 13 December 2022, from <https://city-press.news24.com/Voices/Reclaim-our-languages-20150612>; Madadzhe, R.N., 2019, 'Using African languages at universities in South Africa: The struggle continues', *Linguistics Plus* 58, 205–218. <https://doi.org/10.5842/58-0-843>

LoLT, language of learning and teaching.

All the countries included in Table 1 use their mother tongues for learning and teaching. Noteworthy, 'all these countries are regarded as economically and socially developed or advanced countries; and moreover, they rate very highly in literacy levels' (Madadzhe 2019:209). This does not come as a surprise because it is hardly possible that students cannot perform well while being taught in their mother tongue. Wolff (2018) noted that the Asian countries are ahead of Africa because they use their first languages for learning and development, both economically and politically. For example, in Japan, students learn in Japanese and then learn English as a second language. This allows them to maintain their cultural identity while also being able to communicate globally. Similarly, in China, Mandarin is the primary language of instruction, but English is also taught as a second language to prepare students for international opportunities (Wolff 2018). By valuing and utilising their native languages, these countries are able to promote both linguistic diversity and economic growth. Wolff (2018) asserts that:

Research has made it explicitly clear: if efficiency of learning and cognitive development is the target, the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction from primary school, through secondary schools and into universities. Other languages, like English, can be introduced as subjects from lower primary level. (n.p.)

On the other hand, Africa has a completely different story in terms of LoLT. In numerous African nations, colonial languages such as English, French and Portuguese are still used as the language of instruction, which can cause a disconnect between students and their cultural identity. However, there are efforts being made to change this, such as Rwanda's policy of promoting Kinyarwanda in education (Mugirase 2020). It is important for African countries to recognise the value of their indigenous languages and incorporate them into their education systems in order to promote cultural inclusivity and economic growth (Wolff 2018). Table 2 presents a sample of teaching and acquiring languages in Africa.

African countries continue to use the language of their former colonial overlords for teaching and learning, as depicted in Table 2. This is an unfavourable situation that further underlines the necessity of intellectualising these African languages to facilitate their use in academia. One main challenge is that African students are expected to compete

TABLE 2: A sample of teaching and acquiring languages in Africa.

Country	LoLT
Botswana	English
Ghana	English
Kenya	English
Nigeria	English
Uganda	English
Cameroon	English or French
Senegal	French

Source: Madadzhe, R.N., 2019, 'Using African languages at universities in South Africa: The struggle continues', *Linguistics Plus* 58, 205–218. <https://doi.org/10.5842/58-0-843>

LoLT, language of learning and teaching.

with the speakers of these former colonialists in their countries of birth (Madadzhe 2019). Hence Wolff (2018:3) observes that, 'this disadvantages mainly black African students and creates what South African educationist Neville Alexander called a kind of "neo-apartheid"'.

According to Mwansoro (2004) by the middle of the 20th century, Kiswahili had become a common language in East and Central Africa. Civil servants used it as a medium of instruction and a working language. Missionaries modernised and intellectualised it, and in 1930, the British colonial government established the Inter-Territorial Language Committee (ITLC). It emerged as a national and official language in 1963 and is currently utilised for the majority of government transactions. Upon attaining independence, a number of language planning agencies (LPAs) were created to modernise the language for specialised communication, including usage in educational settings. The Institute of Kiswahili Research (IKR) is in charge of all aspects of Kiswahili research, including the development of terminology.

Discussion of the implications of the findings for academic institutions and language policy in South Africa

In the literature review section, the concept of intellectualisation of indigenous African languages has been explored or defined based on the contribution of various scholars. This section also provides introductory information on higher education policies that have been implemented in South Africa since 1994, as well as historical and contemporary language policies. It included discussions of the present issues facing institutions of higher learning as they relate to the intellectualisation of South African indigenous languages. Additionally, researchers offered suggestions for effective approaches to intellectualising the indigenous languages. The authors' observation is that the government and higher education institutions lack the monitoring and enforcement strategies for language laws and the political will to make them effective. Only a hope that has yet to be realised is reflected in the South African Constitution. The marginalisation of indigenous languages persists, and diversity is not fostered.

The language policies must be adequately implemented by the government. The youngsters live in a world where English is a language that primarily provides access to many things; thus, some accepted it even if they pushed for a bilingual approach. With the use of several languages in basic education, the intellectualisation of the indigenous language is essential. The usage of the indigenous languages is slow or opposed by many stakeholders in the political process, notwithstanding their empowerment in political rhetoric. However, it is widely acknowledged in several domains that an individual's mother tongue plays a crucial role in facilitating high-quality education and has the potential to promote the South African Constitution and cultivate social harmony. Indigenous languages must be valued in society as languages of business, education and spirited political discussions. This value must be reflected in policy.

Adam (2010) argues, however, that in order to enable communities to actively participate in the information economy, advance education and increase prosperity, the democratic South African government should maximise the use of indigenous language and cultural capital. Therefore, it is essential for halting the transmission of intergenerational poverty to prioritise indigenous languages' educational and economic development.

Additionally, it is necessary to persuade South Africa's native speakers to support rather than oppose the multilingualism of the country's society. The government needs to analyse the costs and advantages of multilingual versus monolingual programmes, but this is not currently being done. They must believe that a multilingual approach has immense job-creating potential on top of its existing nation-building and political significance because it consequently elevates the language sector that includes interpreters, translators, publishers and media.

All involved stakeholders must consider the findings and recommendations by the LANGTAG while Minister Ben Ngubane was in office to establish the Advisory that will provide guidance on the urgently needed execution of a comprehensive language plan, to emphasise the value of strengthening and protecting indigenous languages, which are neglected by earlier linguistic strategies. The development of accessible, global language services is essential. The South African culture will drastically shift if this tactic is used. Alexander (2009) contends that the 'national unity' administration must have a detailed strategy and transparent schedule, inspire trust in its citizens, and specify how and when it will put the Constitution's stipulations on equality into practice. Even though it is well known that certain thoughts of great depth and significance reflect the ideals of the ruling classes, it is crucial that the national language agenda take into consideration people's attitudes towards indigenous languages.

The creation of educational resources and other applications is necessary for the execution of language policy. Focussing on corpus is necessary because the method is status-oriented and encourages coercive status in language. Words are used in the corpus preparation process in order to support socioeconomic growth. It necessitates the creation of fresh terminology and discourse, both of which will enhance instructional materials and other applications. The creation of corpus materials will eventually enable the functioning of historically underutilised languages in the majority of, if not all, socioeconomic communication spheres of South Africa (Ngcobo 2007).

As an alternative, Ngcobo (2007) proposes a pragmatic approach that would allow people to utilise their native languages in all contexts. They contend that via awareness and encouragement, South Africa must create a context and an inventive effect. The abundance of educational resources in all of South Africa's official languages functions as an instrument, promotes development and encourages the use

of those languages. The systematic construction of these languages should be undertaken prior to people embracing their languages for purposes of extensive utilisation in all professions. Such progress is crucial for gathering and disseminating the knowledge required for the operation of contemporary civilisations. A further option would be for linguists to utilise modern, technologically supported activities to develop and maintain each language in South Africa. Computers may play a crucial role in business planning, especially in the creation of dictionaries and the localisation of content.

Conclusion

This study concludes by emphasising the significance of language in forming an individual's identity and its potential to improve communities and the laws that regulate them. The research concentrates on the intellectualisation of indigenous languages in contemporary South Africa in an effort to increase their usage and prestige. The study identifies the difficulties encountered in basic education, including the dearth of prioritisation of indigenous African languages and the disconnect between language policy and its implementation.

Through document analysis and a review of the relevant literature, this study examines various theories and methods of terminology development, such as interborrowing among South African indigenous languages. These strategies seek to bridge the gap in education between indigenous languages and established languages.

This research aims to contribute to the advancement of indigenous languages and foster a greater appreciation for their cultural and linguistic richness by shedding light on these issues and proposing potential solutions. It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as a catalyst for change, prompting policy makers and educators to acknowledge the significance of indigenous languages and take proactive measures towards their intellectualisation and incorporation into the educational system. The study's ultimate objective is to promote linguistic diversity, inclusiveness and the preservation of indigenous languages in South Africa.

In future, a study pertaining to the development of African languages should strictly focus on a viable strategy for intellectualising these languages, particularly for academic purposes. This is in light of the concerns that were raised by some scholars that African languages are not equipped with enough terminology for academic use.

In closing, we echo Prah's (2009:103) observation that when we make the appropriate contributions and provide the necessary resources for a language's development, it grows. No language is fundamentally incapable of development. All languages evolve because societies and communities cultivate them deliberately and with political will. Any language that ceases to evolve has taken the first step

towards extinction. If we fail to intellectualise and develop these African languages they may face extinction.

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Authors' contributions

M.L.M. is responsible for initiating the idea, paper, investigating, and writing the original draft. T.D. is responsible for the conceptualisation of the paper, supervision, and writing – reviewing and editing. This article was written by M.L.M. and revised by T.D.

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