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THE STATUS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ONE UNIVERSITY IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the status of indigenous languages in the Zimbabwe Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation,Science and Technology Development's mantra of a heritage based- philosophy. The post-colonial theory was used to guide the study. This qualitative case study utilised self-administered interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. Purposively selected participants included 20 students, 10 lecturers and 5 administrators. The constant comparative method was used to analyse data. The findings were that Higher Education (HE) institutions in Zimbabwe do not have a national institutional language policy outside of the 1987 Education Act. The marginalisation of indigenous languages in higher institutions does not only privilege the English language, but it makes learning in a foreign language difficult and divorced from the utilisation of the local environment. The participants indicated that students learn better when they are taught in their mother languages in order to produce essential goods and services. Therefore, there is need for a HE institutional language policy, political will to provide requisite statutes and resources for making indigenous languages the media of instruction consistent with the Education 5.0 model.
Keywords: Indigenous languages; marginalisation; post-colonial theory; higher education; Education 5.0

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Zimbabwe's Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (HTEISTD) recently introduced the Education 5.0 model. The former model, namely the 3.0 was anchored on Teaching, Research and Community Engagement/Service and the Education 5.0 has added Innovation and Industrilisation. In a bid to address the discrepancy between what Higher Education (HE) institutions are training and the requirements of industry (Gomwe, 2019), the Ministry of HTEISTD realised the need for transition from 3.0 to Education 5.0, meant not only to industrialise the economy to a middle class status by 2030 but also to produce relevant goods and services. The Education 5.0 model of education is a heritage-based philosophy which emphasises that teaching and learning must focus on the local environment and locally available materials.

Research has indicated that indigenous languages in Africa are generally marginalised to such an extent that curriculum development in institutions of higher learning is not only western but also creates challenges to the African students (Brock-Utne & Skattum, 2009). Historically, higher education in Zimbabwe and Africa in general has relied on foreign languages. This has become the basis for social discrimination and inequality (Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014). At the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), a language policy recognises English and IsiZulu as languages of tuition. However,

Moyo (2018) indicates that although students of IsiZulu modules still write their assignments, dissertations and examinations in the English language, efforts by the University to promote IsiZulu are commendable. More efforts are under way to ensure that assignments, dissertations and examinations are offered in IsiZulu. Moyo (2018) further observes that non-IsiZulu lecturers are being offered free Zulu for beginners modules for them to have an appreciation of the language. Currently, all postgraduate dissertations and theses at the UKZN are supposed to have IsiZulu abstracts as a way of ensuring the language becomes a medium of tuition.

In a related study on indigenous languages as agents of change in South African universities, Phaahla (2014) established that while some students were positive and willing to learn in indigenous languages, others were reluctant. The study found that most of the students in the study preferred English as the language of education. This was due to the negative tag attached to indigenous languages as compared to the English language, where participants associate English with modernity and technology (Ndamba & Wyk, 2018).

In Zimbawe, Great Zimbabwe University has adopted and accommodated indigenous languages. For example, students are majoring in previously marginalised languages. There is a UNICEF-sponsored teacher capacity development programme in which teachers are being trained to teach Tonga, Shangani, Venda, Sign Language, Nambya, Kalanga and SeSotho using indigenous languages as media of instruction. Some of the teachers have already completed their degrees. Although Great Zimbabwe University has degree programmes offered in those 'minority' languages, the concern at hand is whether Zimbabwe's HE institutions have language policies which address the expectations of Education 5.0. This study, therefore, sought to find out the extent to which indigenous languages are being used, if at all, as media of instruction in HE. It further sought to investigate the views of lecturers, students and administrators at one university in Zimbabwe pertaining to the possibility of using indigenous languages in HE. The study proffers recommendations as way forward towards achieving effective and efficient Education 5.0.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study conceptually acknowledges the importance of looking at the status of indigenous languages in a post-colonial HE context as a product of circumstances created by colonialism. The post-colonial theory provides the theoretical framework for this study. Post-colonial theory describes how knowledge of the colonised people was marginalised at the expense of the coloniser's interests (McEwan, 2009). Chilisa (2012, p.12) argues that the post-colonial theory concerns itself with the "continuous struggle by non-Western societies that suffered European colonization, indigenous peoples and historically marginalised groups to resist suppression of their ways of knowing". Similarly, Dube (1999) contends that the post-colonial theory refers to cultural, economic and political contact of the coloniser and the colonised and the subsequent reactions emanating from this contact. The encounter led to the loss of land and mental colonisation through education in particular (Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014). The indigenous ways of knowing and languages were devalued. This study uses the post-colonial lens to re-value, re-affirm and re-assert indigenous languages as effective means of HE media of education that is not only from the local environment but relevant for the provision of goods and services, congruent with Education 5.0. The theory re-centres the indigenous languages, which, at colonisation, were marginalised and trivialised.

Dei (2012a, 2006) avers that the post-colonial theory provides a critical analysis of the colonial and neo-colonial agendas that are embedded in social and cultural institutions, in order to make sense of the current lived realities of the colonised. To this end, the post-colonial theory rejects the universalising tendencies of mainstream western knowledge traditions (Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014). This points to the notion that knowledge is socially and culturally constituted. Knowledge is never neutral and it serves certain interests (Wane, 2008). Using these ideas, the post-colonial theory is the right lens for this study, which assesses the use of indigenous languages in HE institutions of learning in Zimbabwe. The theory critiques the social and power relations embedded in the production, organisation, validation and dissemination of knowledge (Dei, 2006). Alive to the historical devaluation of the knowledge and languages of the colonised, the post-colonial theory calls for a radical transformation of the conceptual frameworks, syllabi, language policies, research methodologies, and other frames of reference in order to take into account the lived experiences of the colonised (Dei, 2012a, 2012b). It refutes and rejects attempts by colonialism and neo-colonialism to erase the contributions of the colonised to knowledge production as well as their languages (Finch, 1990).

It must be noted that the post-colonial theory does not call for a nostalgic return to the past. It is an ongoing, critical dialogue by which knowledge is constructed, and language is key in this process (Ndamba, 2017). It is argued that through language, "humanity can dialogue with one another and come to consensus about a new future" (Nabudere, 2011, p.90). This calls into question the need to recognise and develop African languages, which are the primary media of communication for the majority in Africa (Nabudere, 2011). Marginalising indigenous languages in Africa denies humanity the capacity to dialogue and have consensus about a new future. In this study, the post-colonial theory was used to assess the status of indigenous languages at one institution of higher learning. The major argument of the article, that is the need to mainstream indigenous languages for an effective implementation of Education 5.0, is anchored on the post-colonial theory that calls for the need to democratise, de-Westernise, de-Europenise (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020) indigenous languages.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The language of education has become a contentious issue among scholars in recent times in Zimbabwe (Magwa, 2015; Ndamba & Wyk, 2018). Greenhalgh and Shumba (2014) report that in Zimbabwe, failure to learn in the mother language was found to be a contributory factor to poor performance by rural primary school learners, particularly in mathematics and science. As the Ministry of HTEISTD's transformation takes place to achieve Education 5.0, there is need to assess the status and use of indigenous languages in teaching and learning in HE. No research known to us has been conducted to find out what institutions of higher learning are doing in aligning themselves to the most appropriate media of instruction for the new thrust on Education 5.0, which is anchored on a heritage-based philosophy. Against this background, the study investigates the status of indigenous languages in HE, with a view to establishing the extent to which the Education (5.0) model is getting support in terms of language use to achieve desired goals. This research was guided by the following research question: *What is the status of indigenous languages in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe in the light of the Education 5.0 model?*

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study design, informed by the post-colonial theory, was adopted in this study, where the HE institution was studied as a microcosm of

the macrocosm. The phenomenological approach was adopted to aid in thick descriptions of the respondents' views as well as to respect the respondents' views as obtained from them. One of the phenomenological principles utilised in this study is *epoche* (Cox, 1996; Chitando, 2010). This is where preconceived ideas about indigenous languages in academia were suspended with the intention to get the views from the staff and students at the university under study.

The participants of the study included 5 administrators (2 Deans and 3 department Chairpersons), 10 academic staff members and 20 students. The staff comprised senior lecturers of both gender who had vast experience in the teaching and learning processes at this institution of higher learning. Students were mostly those in their fourth year of study, because they had experienced the challenges and prospects in learning in a foreign language. The views came directly from the participants themselves as they had experienced the role (or lack of it) of indigenous languages in the teaching and learning process at the institution.

Data were collected through a qualitative semi-structured interview guide with 2 Deans and 3 department Chairpersons. These were selected because they are the custodians of the statutes and policies that govern their respective faculties and departments. They were presumed to be information rich sites (Patton, 2002). The questionnaire sought to gather from the adminstrators, among others, whether their faculties and departments had language policies, and to establish which language(s) was the medium of tuition as well as to establish whether Education 5.0 could be successful with indigenous languages. In-depth interviews were conducted with lecturers who were purposively selected according to seniority (long experience) and gender considerations. Two focus group discussions of 10 students each were done with students from the conveniently selected two faculties of Humanities and Law, to gather their views and experiences in language use at the institution.

The constant comparative method (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) was adopted for analysing data. Through this analytic technique, data are qualitatively compared and contrasted from various sources for purposes of developing categories and looking for patterns among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Data from questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were compared and contrasted and emerging themes and patterns were noted for analysis. As noted by Cohen *et al*. (2011), 'member check' audit was done with participants to heighten dependability and confirmability of the study.

Participants were informed of the intent of the study and participation was voluntary. They were told that they were free to withdraw from the study at will and that their answers would be held in strict confidence. To ensure privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms, numbers and letters were used instead of the participants' real names. Authority to interview participants was granted by the institution under study.

RESULTS

The majority of the participants agreed that the use of mother-tongues in the teaching and learning of the Education 5.0 model enhances quality education and promotes easy access to and comprehension of concepts. All the participants pointed to an implied English language policy which participants professed ignorance of save that they were urged to teach and learn in English, with no documents availed to them as to how, when and why they should use English as a medium of instruction. Most participants understood the meaning and requirements of Education 5.0 and were of

the view that the indigenous language could be the appropriate medium of tuition that could be used in the implementation of the new model.

The level of awareness of the requirements of Education 5.0

Most of the lecturers and administrators interviewed were aware of the existence of Education 5.0. The picture was different for students, a majority of whom professed ignorance of the model. This could be explained by the fact that the ministry carried out a series of workshops and seminars for university lecturers and administrators, and none for students so far. According to lecturers and administrators, the Education 5.0 model is a framework and roadmap that describes the important role of universities in the country's industrialisation agenda meant to achieve Vision 2030, an envisaged middle class economy status that the country aspires to be by then. The lecturers and adminsitrators' views can be summarised by the following submissions:

> *Education 5.0 is a model that is an extension of the former Education 3.0. Education 3.0 was premised on Teaching, Research and University Service, whereas Education 5.0 is now Teaching, Research, Community Engagement, Innovation and Industrialisation. From what the ministry is saying, the model is meant to produce goods and services that are relevant to the local environment.* (Lecturer B.)

> *The model is a recent one which is still in its infancy. It is meant to equip university graduates with relevant knowledge of the local environment. The main thrust of the model is to industrialise the country through bankable projects that are a result of innovation.* (Administrator 3.)

These affirmations clearly portray the idea that the lecturers and administrators understood the Higher and Tertiary Education 5.0 model and what it intends to achieve. What was clear was that the participants were not aware of any supporting mechanisms for this model. Some participants professed ignorance in terms of what the ministry is doing for the smooth implementation of the model, beyond workshops and seminars. They indicated that they were not aware of any policies that are meant to promote the implementation of the education model.

The use of indigenous languages in the implementation of Education 5.0

On whether there was a language policy to drive the recently introduced Education 5.0, the participants pointed out that:

> *The current Education 5.0, which is anchored on a heritage-based philosophy, may get challenges at implementation level because of language issues. Our heritage has its own jargon and translating it to a foreign language like English poses huge restrictions. It is time we begin to appreciate that our mother-tongues can do well in promoting a heritage-based education like ours.* (Lecturer G.)

> *Every culture and heritage has its own medium of expression. It will be very unfair to continue to use a foreign language in order to teach and learn our heritage. I think we need to embrace the constitution that has elevated the so-called minority languages like Ndau, Tonga, and many others and use them as media of instruction. We need to go beyond the 1987 Education Act (Amended in 2006) and change our mindsets and begin to appreciate that mother-tongues are an alternative media of*

> *instruction. Countries like China have done it and have very competitive economies.* (Lecturer D.)
>
> *It remains to be seen how far English as a medium of instruction in our curricula can be effectively and efficiently used in the current Education 5.0, where innovation and industrialisation are the key. There seems to be some thinking that indigenous languages are not appropriate for the innovation and industrialisation mantra. But I think we can still innovate and industrialise using our local languages. We need, in my view, to begin a mindset paradigm shift so that we use local languages in our innovation and industrialisation mantra. If the Asian countries like India and China are excelling in using their languages in these fields, I think we can do the same if the political will is there.* (Administrator 3.)

Indications from the above submissions are that the current Education 5.0 can benefit from a language policy that mainstreams the mother-tongues. A curriculum that is based on heritage benefits from the use of symbols, images, riddles and sayings expressed in local languages, which are first languages for learners.

Language circulars and policy guidelines at this institution

It was evident from both lecturers and students at the institution that there was a language policy somewhere since the lecturers were urged to teach in English and the students were supposed to do their work (assignments, dissertations and examinations) in English, but it appeared such policy was never made available to lecturers and students. This view was demonstrated by the following expressions, which represent the views of many participants:

> *We are not aware of any language policy in a written form given to us. What we are told often is that we must use English language as the medium of instruction in our teaching and learning processes. Some of us the lecturers are being accused of using vernacular (Shona) in our teaching.* (Lecturer D.)
>
> *We do our learning, assignments, projects and examinations in English. No one has ever told us why we do this, only that we have been using English from secondary and primary school level. Some of us are not very proficient in the use of English as a medium of expression, and this restricts our participation in lectures. Some of us are not even at liberty to make presentations in class let alone engaging in profitable debates.* (Kelly, FDG 1.)
>
> *We have an English language policy here as an institution because we are an international university. We urge our staff and students alike to always use English because we have students and staff who are not Shona. Am not sure whether we have something written down because when I joined the institution English was and is the official medium of expression in all our undertakings.* (Administrator 3.)

The above affirmations are indicative of the implicit presence of a language policy with no clear efforts to ensure the policy is known by both lecturers and students. It seems it is taken for granted that the policy is there and it is an English language policy.

Indigenous languages as the media of instruction

All the participants indicated that no module was being taught and learnt in indigenous languages despite their agreement that the mother-tongue is important in the teaching and learning processes of learners. Below are some key excerpts from the participants:

> *No. Not enough terms in vernacular; is against policy; no books; might lead to more confusion. The syllabus is in a foreign language… most of the indigenous languages are not yet fully developed for almost all disciplines to the extent that some indigenous languages are taught in foreign languages.* (Lecturer A.)

> *We are not sure whether indigenous languages can help the situation here. We have modules such as African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development and African Religions where the issues dealt with are localised issues but explained in a foreign language. We find it very difficult to translate what we know as Shona people into English. In addition, the translations do not capture exactly what is meant by the practising community. This has serious interpretation challenges.* (Smith, FDG 2.)

> *While it may sound plausible to teach and learn such modules in local languages, the problem lies in that we have been given the language to use. This has colonial dimension to it and people may need to unlearn and relearn in order to comfortably use local langages and still feel they are teaching and learning.* (Administrator 1.)

> *Yes. In developed countries, that is what they do, e.g. English in the UK and it works well. The same applies in countries like China. However, in African countries it might work for the benefit of the children since it is easier to learn in one's mother tongue. Foreign languages present a double problem. First, to understand the language and second, to understand the discipline, e.g Chemistry. But most of the indigenous languages are not yet fully developed for almost all disciplines to the extent that some indigenous languages are taught in foreign languages, e.g. Shona grammar used to be taught in English. I don't know now. Again, some indigenous languages are vague, e.g. some Shona words have more than 5 meanings.* (Lecturer F.)

The above excerpts indicate that the participants had different views on the applicability of mother-tongues in the teaching and learning of concepts and modules which deal with localised issues.

Intervention proposals

In line with the post-colonial theory, participants were asked to add their own views by suggesting intervention strategies to enable them to embrace the use of indigenous languages in HE. Data indicate that all the participants were of the view that language policies in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe must be unequivocally expressed. The following submissions, which are typical of many that were expressed, are worth citing here:

> *The laissez faire kind of scenario where there are no clear cut language polices which are made available to implementers like lecturers and students must be stopped. We need to have a clear position in our institutions of higher learning in terms of what language to use. Given the long period that*

has elapsed after colonisation and the introduction of a heritage based curricula at all levels of our education sector, we need to take decisive steps in mainstreaming our mother-tongues for a contextually relevant education. We need to innovate and industrialise using our locally available resources. In order to do this our mother-tongues must be part of the equation. Where is our problem? The 2013 Constitution is unequivocal on this. So why not go for it in our Education 5.0? They are talking about it but there is no clear language policy on it. (Lecturer B.)

We need a national position on our language policy. Although 1987 Education Act is still in use, it needs revisions in view of the new changes that are being witnessed in our education. Once this national position is taken, backed by the political will and funding, widespread dissemination workshops and seminars can be conducted to sensitise and conscientise the implementers. This will avoid the scenario where the policy says this and yet implementers are doing a different thing all together. (Administrator 1.)

What must happen is that the nation wholeheartedly embraces the provisions of the 2013 Constitution in terms of official languages. You will realise some people, implementers included are not even aware of what the position is regarding language policy in Zimbabwe. The provisions of the constitution must be backed up by requisite circulars and statutes for operationalising the provisions of the constitution. As it is, there is a gap in this regard. (Lecturer C.)

Evidently, the participants in this study recommended that language policies in institutions of higher learning must be brought to the attention of the implementers. It is also evident that the participants are held the view that the Education 5.0 needs to be supported by necessary language circulars and statutes that recognise the use of mother-tongues since it is a heritage-based philosophy.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study sought to explore the status of indigenous languages in HE institutions in the context of Education 5.0. It found that Education 5.0 was understood as a new model introduced by the ministry. The findings from the study further indicated that the language policy at this institution of higher learning is not availed to lecturers and students alike. It is implied, and English is the medium of instruction at the institution. Indications were that there were no steps to have indigenous languages in the institution's teaching and learning processes. English continued and continues to enjoy the status of being a medium of instruction. Students continue to access learning through English (Chimhundu, 2010; Magwa, 2015).

The above finding, where there is no intention to use indigenous languages in HE, may be linked to the post-colonial mentality of the English language hegemony (Ndamba, 2017). This position is contrary to other researches that found out that indigenous languages are effective media of instruction for indigenous students. Brock-Utne (2012, 2013) calls upon African countries, Zimbabwe included, to learn from Asian countries such as Sri Lanka and Malaysia. These countries have been able to use their indigenous languages to teach science and mathematics (Pitman *et al.*, 2010) with resounding success. Other countries that have followed suit are the Netherlands, Denmark, China, South Korea and

Thailand. They are developing on the strength of their own indigenous languages in a range of fields including information technology (Batibo, 2010). If this is the case, arguments that indigenous languages are not 21st century languages of commerce, information technology and world economies are premised on flimsy grounds. There are many examples that show that indigenous languages are languages of development. In Africa, *Kiswahili* in Tanzania, for example, is the official language of instruction. Even heads of states and governments in these countries make official addresses in *Kiswahili*. Kaya, Kamwendo and Rushubirwa (2016. p.24) argue that "the promotion of African indigenous languages and African scholarship in higher education will contribute to the building of a critical mass of human capital to advance Africa-led globalisation". *Kiswahili* is often cited as a shining example of how indigenous languages can assume a global status. Kaya *et al*. (2016) continue to argue that *Kiswahili* has grown as a language of choice by millions of people in East, Central and other regions of Africa and beyond. The number of people who are now able to speak *Kiswahili*, which is not their mother-tongue, is now greater than that of mother-tongue speakers of *Kiswahili* (Kaya *et al*., 2016). Zeleza (2006) posits that arguments that indigenous languages lack the vocabulary to capture technical discourses reflect the construction of Africa through Eurocentric categories and conceptual systems.

It also came out in this study that one of the reasons for the continued use of English is that the indigenous languages did not have the appropriate vocabulary in this era of technology, innovation and industrialisation. This presupposition is refuted by Chivhanga (2012) and Nyaungwa (2013) whose studies yielded results which indicate that it is feasible to teach Mathematics and Science in Shona. Mkhize and Ndimande-Hlongwa (2014, p.22) aver that "it is important to note that all human languages are social constructions and hence no single language is naturally endowed with scientific and technical vocabulary". They go further to argue that this has to be developed over time just like English was developed to have the current status.

The status of language policy at the institution of higher learning sampled in this study is due to a number of reasons. One chief reason is that the institution, as argued by the key informants, is an international university where English must be the medium of instruction. As this may sound plausible, it lacks the growing acceptability of indigenous languages in international institutions of higher learning. For example, *IsiZulu* in South Africa has found itself into higher education curricula (Moyo, 2018). The language policy issue is a political issue (Magwa, 2015). Leadership in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe was trained during the colonial era, where English was solely the medium of instruction. Moyo (2018) argues that during the colonial period, learners were forced to use English and using an indigenous language was a punishable offence. English was and still is associated with modernity, civilization and prestige. This resonates with what David-Erb (2021) found out in her study in Burkina Faso where social prestige was the main reason for choosing French as the language of instruction in schools. Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) states that a systematic destruction of indigenous languages eventually culminated in the destruction of indigenous cultures as well. The vestiges of colonialism still linger in the corridors of academia, and academics happen to be policy makers and implementers at the same time in these institutions.

It may also be necessary to mention that the curriculum in most British colonies was designed in such a manner that English was taken as *the* language. From a

Zimbabwean perspective, Shona and Ndebele were subsidiary languages. Passing Ordinary Level, for example, meant passing five subjects including English (Hungwe, 2007; Nhongo, 2013). If one had five subjects including Shona or Ndebele without English, one was presumed to have failed. One was not even admitted to Advanced level, let alone university. Passing English or being fluent in English, as Moyo (2018) argues, is associated with modernity. These are the reasons that seem to point to the continued use of English in most of the universities' curricula, despite the plausible arguments of translanguaging raised by Zhou and Landa (2019). HE institutions' leadership seem to take for granted that English as the medium of tuition is sufficient yet there are transformations taking place in HE. This lack of interest by leadership culminates in students' resistance to using mother-tongues in their learning. This resonates with what Phaahla (2014) found out in a study where most students were reluctant to use indigenous languages in their learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends the introduction of a quick language policy that augments the transformation that HE has embarked on and that speaks to the 2013 Constitution provisions. There must be a fit between the provisions of the constitution and what is happening in HE. There is also need to ensure that all stakeholders, students included, are conversant with the changes that are taking place in HE. There is need for leadership in HE to realise that learning in an unfamiliar language restricts access to quality education and results in limited scholastic achievements (Desai, 2012; Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014). If terminology in mother-tongues is a real issue, then there is need for government and non-governmental funding for research in terminography of the different targeted mother-tongues.

In addition to government and non-governmental funding for research in terminography, institutions of higher learning can incentivise studies in indigenous languages. There is need for the corporate world to sponsor research, teaching and learning of mother-tongues as UNICEF is currently doing at Great Zimbabwe University. Utilising post-colonial lens, the article calls for the mainstreaming and inclusion of indigenous languages and knowledge systems in curricula development in HE institutions in Zimbabwe. Adoption of local languages in the implementation of Education 5.0 needs more awareness and sensitisation efforts for it to be embraced by all stakeholders. For it to succeed there is need to heed Marupi, Tshotsho and Nhongo's (2021:139) argument for "the recognition of harmonious coexistence of languages in education where all the languages found in a geographical space are not restricted but are meant to function equally and simultaneously".

CONCLUSION

Findings indicated that participants were aware of the transformation that is taking place in HE. While participants did not refute the efficacy of mother-tongues in quality education, the English language at the institution of study continues to enjoy language policy status explicitly, though no official documents to that effect were handy to both lecturers and students. While this case study indicated thus, this could be the situation in most institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe, forty-one years after independence. The major setback in the inclusion of mother-tongues in HE language policies may be lack of political will by the institutions' leadership who resist change for fear of the unknown, thereby making it difficult to achieve Education 5.0 with contextually relevant languages.

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