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Intellectualisation of indigenous language Sesotho at a South African university and implications for the speakers

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Abstract

The persistent underdevelopment of African indigenous languages in South Africa denies students who are the speakers of these languages access to education in their mother tongues. Denying students access to education in their preferred languages is an infringement of their birth right enshrined in the Constitution. The circumstances are even worse when a foreign language English is the only language recognised for teaching and learning in South African higher education. Learning in a foreign language has been identified as a major barrier to effective learning, a cause for academic under-achievement and high attrition rates in higher education. Underpinned by the Language Management Theory, this conceptual paper discusses an institutional language policy plan of a university in South Africa, whose intention is to develop and intellectualise an African indigenous language Sesotho as an academic language so that it can be used by the speakers for epistemological access and success. There is limited literature on the intellectualisation of Sesotho. The paper draws from the work of other scholars who have written on the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages to strengthen the arguments on the importance of the intellectualisation of Sesotho in one university in South Africa, the processes followed, and the implications for the speakers. The paper hopes to make contributions to the ongoing debates on the intellectualization of African indigenous languages, especially in South Africa.

Keywords: language intellectualisation, African languages, Sesotho, Language Management Theory, terminology development, higher education.

Introduction

The exclusive use of a foreign language, English, for teaching and learning in multilingual South African universities continues to pose as a barrier to the meaningful learning and effective understanding of the content for most students who bring to the higher education classrooms competency in home language other than English. English medium of instruction is continuously cited as a major reason for the high attrition rates among African students in higher education in South Africa (Chiramba, 2023). On the other hand, the continuous underdevelopment of African indigenous languages and their persistent marginalisation as academic resources and tools for epistemological access for their speakers is increasingly frustrating students who are at the receiving end of English monolingual pedagogies (Ngidi, 2022). This frustration was clearly articulated during the 2016 #FeesMustFall where students from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds collectively demanded an urgent decolonisation and transformation of the curriculum through among other aspects, the use of African languages for teaching and learning (Chiliza, Adewumi, & Ntshangase, 2022). This outcry by students gave rise to the promulgation of the Language Policy Framework for Higher Education (LPFHE, 2020) which challenged all public higher education institutions to make visible progress on the development of African languages and their use in teaching and learning spaces (LPFHE, 2020). This is how the framework articulates the urgent need for change:

"The persistent underdevelopment and undervaluing of indigenous languages should not be allowed if public higher education institutions are to meet the diverse linguistic needs of their student population. Conditions must, therefore, be created for the development and the strengthening of indigenous languages as languages of

meaningful academic discourse, as well as sources of knowledge in the different disciplines of higher education" (p. 5).

Following this LPFHE (2020) call, the public higher education institutions began a process of revising and reviewing their language policies to align them with this mandate from the DHET. Furthermore, the institutions were expected to articulate clearly in their revised language policies the strategies their will adopt for the development of at least two African indigenous languages of which one should be a regional language of the province where the university is situated. While these efforts of the LPFHE (2020) are recognisable, however, there remains a huge gap between language policy intentions and its implementation which is what Bamgbose (2000) lamented about, especially is Africa. In the case of the LPFHE (2020), it is perhaps still early to judge if there is any transformations it will bring. However, Prah (2017) cautioned that no grand policies alone will drive the intellectualisation of African languages, but the conscious injections of funds, political will by the government and the institutional leaders, and willingness of speakers of these languages to use them in the academic space.

Despite many African scholars (Khumalo, 2017, Makalela, 2014, Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2017, Ngubane, 2022, and others) firmly advocate for the intellectualisation of African languages, especially in South Africa, and are already doing the groundwork through institutional and national language development projects, not everyone believe that African indigenous languages have a capacity of being academic languages, now or in the future. One those who share such thoughts is Olivier (2009) who maintains that "African indigenous languages do not have capacity and relevant terminology of being used as scientific languages and as languages of instruction. Ndimande-Hlongwa (2017) provides a counter argument to Olivier (2009) claims in the following way:

"Some people argue that African languages do not possess the relevant terminology and thus cannot be used as languages of instruction in, for example, in subject areas of science. The answer evidently resides in the effort to develop such terminology by using the languages creatively. A proper knowledge of a given subject area should enable an intellectual/linguist to explain the concepts under study using any of the African languages. As long as we rely on foreign scientists to teach us science, our languages will never be fully developed. Rather than blaming the language, we should blame ourselves for not developing it" (p.68).

The point that Ndimande-Hlongwa is trying to raise in her counter argument is that a large number of science concepts, for example, has been part of African indigenous knowledge system for many centuries. Indigenous communities and African intellectuals can explain the science concepts, for example, in their indigenous language. As a result, Khumalo (2017) argues that in fact African indigenous languages are intellectual languages, and as such, he calls for 're' intellectualisation of these languages for their use in the academic spaces. This is what Khumalo (2017) refers to (re) intellectualisation of African indigenous.

Another important point that Ndimande-Hlongwa (2017) is making in her counter argument above is that if universities in Africa, specifically in South Africa, are to make immediate progress on the development and intellectualisation of African indigenous languages, speakers of these languages including the linguists, terminologists intellectuals should take responsibility of driving the intellectualisation of their languages instead of waiting for foreign people to dictate when and how these languages should be developed. Prah (2017) concurs that the acceleration of the intellectualisation of African languages will come from the conscious willingness of the speakers of these languages and will come from using these languages in academic spaces instead of waiting for them to be completely developed. Prah (2017) argues that languages such as Afrikaans were developed from nowhere. Within a period of forty years or so this language is so advanced that it is used from primary education to a wide range of specific fields of higher education.

This conceptual paper argues that learning in a foreign language has been identified as a major barrier to effective learning, a cause for

academic under-achievement and high attrition rates in higher education. It also argues that the underdevelopment of indigenous languages in South Africa denies African students who are home language speakers of African indigenous languages an opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue. The paper contends that this is an infringement of their birth right as enshrined in the Constitution (1996). Underpinned by Language Management Theory, this paper argues for the intellectualisation of Sesotho in one university in South Africa. It puts forth that the development and intellectualisation of Sesotho will restore its dignity and elevate its status as an academic language. This will enable speakers of this language to have access to knowledge in the language their prefer (Constitution, 1996), to debate, discuss and participate meaningfully in their learning which will maximise their learning experiences and promote success.

This paper draws from the leading scholars in the field to conceptualise the discuss the concept of language intellectualisation in the context of South Africa, and to elaborate on the importance of the intellectualisation of Sesotho as an indigenous language that was previously marginalised and excluded from academic spaces. Currently, there is limited research on the intellectualisation of Sesotho, especially in the context of higher education. This paper hopes to make contribution.

Theoretical framework

This intellectualisation of Sesotho at one university in South Africa is underpinned by language management theory (LMT) developed by Nekvapil (2003) and later expanded by scholars such as Fishman (1987), Spolsky (2009) and Nekvapil (2016). The theory is less concerned with the 'management' of language from the linguistic perspective, but it recognises a language discourse within and across various cultural contexts as the root of societal language problems as Fishman (1987) suggests:

"For me, language planning remains the authoritative allocation of resources to the attainment of language status and language corpus goals, whether in connection with new functions that are aspired to, or in connection with old functions that need to be discharged more adequately" (p. 409).

In support of Fisherman (1987), Nekvapil (2016) calls for a language-planning approach to solve the language problems that emanate from the hierarchy in language, communication, and socio-economic levels of the language, thus, highlights that language management alone is not adequate. Therefore, in their model of language-planning Neustupný and Nekvapil (2003) identified three language-planning processes that exist in a social context such as a university: identification of a language problem in individual discourse; adoption of measures by a particular language-planning body; and the implementation of these measures at an individual and societal levels. Neustupný and Nekvapil (2003) formulate that:

"…..any act of language planning should start with the consideration of language problems as they appear in discourse, and the planning process should not be considered complete until the removal of the problems is implemented in discourse" (p. 66).

In other words, language management should involve a language planning process so that problems are not only identified, as this is an incomplete process, but proper ways of alleviating the problems are also implemented. Within the context of this paper, language hierarchy problems stem from the colonial language ideologies in which only two languages, English and Afrikaans, were deemed fit to be used as medium of instruction. While Sesotho, a language of the indigenous people of the Free State and a language of most of the students in the university remains marginalised from academic spaces. This marginalisation of Sesotho in academic spaces prevents the speakers from using the language where the language of learning, English, becomes a barrier to understanding the concepts. The LMT theory is relevant for this paper as it seeks to pave a way for the language policy developers to identify the ideological language issues as they occur within their university contexts. Secondly, to help them understand that identify the problems is only a first step, putting in place effective processes and interventions for solving these language hierarchies and associated problems issues is crucial. *ND South African Languages*.

Literature review

Language Intellectualisation

Even though the concept of language intellectualisation can be traced back to the Prague School of Linguistics, however in South Africa, the term was first brought into light by scholars such as Finlayson and Madiba (2002) and later by Kaschula & Maseko (2014), Prah (2017), and Dlamini (2022) to name a few. These scholars define language intellectualisation "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, p. 40). Khumalo (2017) argues that language intellectualisation, especially with reference to South African indigenous languages, refers to "a carefully planned process of hastening the cultivation and growth of indigenous official African languages so that they effectively function in all higher domains as languages of teaching and learning, research, science, and technology" (p. 252). On the same note, Kaschula and Maseko (2014) assert that the purpose of language intellectualisation is to develop the language or languages of people. These scholars further assert that language intellectualisation is connected to people or human development "as it expands human capabilities enabling access to both tangible benefits (like lecture halls in case of university) and intangible benefits (such as knowledge offered in these lecture halls)" (Kachula & Maseko, 2014, p. 10).

Byant and Liddicoat (2002) define language intellectualisation as "the development of new linguistic resources for disseminating conceptual materials at a high level of abstraction" (p. 1). Likewise, Havranek (1932), who is often referred to as the father of language intellectualisation, provides the following definition of language intellectualisation:

> "By the intellectualization of the standard language, which we could also call its *rationalization*, we understand its adaptation to the goal of making possible pre-cise and rigorous, if necessary, abstract, statements, capable of expressing the *con-tinuity* and *complexity of thought*, that is, to reinforce the intellectual side of speech. This intellectualization culminates in *scientific* (theoretical) *speech*, deter-mined by the attempt to be as *precise in expression* as possible, to make statements which reflect the rigor of *objective* (scientific) *thinking* in which the terms approximate concepts resulting in a language that has a capacity to function in different academic and social domains" (p. 32)

In essence, language intellectualisation refers to the careful process of language planning and implementation which involves the processes of advancing a language so that it can be used by the speakers across difference domains, including access to education.

Constitutional Provisions for the Intellectualisation of South African Languages

Even though there has been much progress on the intellectualisation of languages in the continent of Africa, when we zoom closer to home, South Africa, there is paucity of literature on the intellectualisation of the previously marginalised languages. However, this does mean that we should not applaud efforts towards the intellectualisation of IsiZulu at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Dlamini, 2022; Maseko, 2011; Kaschula & Nkomo, 2019).

The intellectualisation of the marginalised languages in South Africa has been on debates for more than 30 years. As early as in 1995, the then Minister of Art and Culture, Honourable Ben Ngubane appointed a Language Task Group (1996) to work on the intellectualisation of the African Languages, among other issues. The mandate of the task team was clear, they were to establish strategies on the African languages which were oppressed and disadvantaged in the apartheid system where they had to be developed and

maintained. One of the recommendations by the task team in their 1996 report to the Minister was the need to research on strategies for the intellectualisation of the African marginalised languages (Language Task Group Report, 1996). For the past 30 years, institutions of higher learning in South Africa, have been grappling with the effective strategies for the intellectualisation the African languages (Sotashe, 2016).

Nonetheless, in South Africa, specifically in the context of higher education, the DHET and the universities are obligated by the Constitution to make conscious and deliberate efforts to develop and intellectualise all previously marginalised official languages (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sesotho, Sepedi, IsiSwati, IsiNdebele, Setswana, Tshivenda, Xitsonga). In fact, Section 6(2) of the Constitution (1996) makes the provision for:

> "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 language" (p. 8).

The elevation and intellectualisation of historically marginalised indigenous languages will ensure that the speakers of these languages can receive education through such languages, if they choose to do so (Constitution, Section 29:2). In other words, if the African indigenous languages are to be used to facilitate access to knowledge, meaningful learning, and success for their speakers in higher education, there must be conceited effort to develop them, and a process of their intellectualisation must be urgently set in motion (Maseko, 2011). Likewise, scholars such as Ndimande-Hlongwa (2017) argue that even though there is a backlog in the intellectualisation of African languages there is no doubt that they can be developed within a shortest time to a level of English and Afrikaans. To achieve this mandate, this paper argue that the government must consciously and deliberately inject the required resources as was in the case with the intellectualisation of Afrikaans.

Intellectualisation of South African Indigenous Languages

The question whether African indigenous languages are intellectual languages beyond their sophisticated, well-structured grammatical systems, is a controversial one. This is because, for many decades African indigenous languages have been taught as curriculum subjects from primary to secondary schools. As for a few selected languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, and others, they are taught as modules and programmes within the departments of African languages in universities. Lately, there has been a rising number of dissertations and theses written in African indigenous languages, especially in South Africa (for example, Khohliso, 2020). Despite this progress of African indigenous languages in spaces of academia, none out of the nine African indigenous languages is used as a language of teaching and learning in secondary schools and at tertiary levels (Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2017). This is due to lack of corpus and status planning which are both critical if these languages are to be used as academic languages, especially in higher education. The development and intellectualisation of African indigenous languages is even more imperative in responding to the urgent calls by the Minister of Education, Honourable Blade Nzimande and by the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education (LPFHE, 2020) for the use of African indigenous languages in higher education.

Making a case for the urgent intellectualisation of African indigenous languages and their use as languages of teaching and learning (LoTL), Alexander (2005) argues that:

> "The use and development of African languages as languages of tuition in tertiary education can be made in terms of a five-dimensional argument that relates the matter to (bio-cultural) diversity, (economic) development, (political) democracy, (human) dignity and effective didactics". (p. 81).

Echoing Alexander's sentiments, Kaschula and Maseko (2014) asserts that it is

essential to intellectualise African indigenous languages in higher education so that teachers in the Basic Education Department can be fed and encouraged to promote multilingualism through mother-tongue education and have multilingual corpus and terminologies to support their multilingual practices. At the same time, Madiba and Finlayson (2002) look at the intellectualisation of our African indigenous languages as an important strategy, not only for accelerating the growth and development of these languages and modernise them as academic languages. But also, as a strategy to counter the hegemony and power of English as the only language of teaching and learning in African classrooms.

This paper is of the view that the implementation of the project of intellectualising African indigenous languages in higher education should be underpinned by the national policy frameworks such as the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education (LPFHE, 2020) which guides the use, roles and practices of official languages in higher education spaces. First and foremost, the framework acknowledges that the monolingual English LoTL continues to be a barrier to access and success for most students in South African higher education whom English is additional language. It is thus vital that the African indigenous languages are urgently developed so that they become academic, scientific languages and sources of knowledge to provide epistemological support to their speakers. Secondly, the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages will challenge their persistent historical marginalisation and undervaluing, which exclude the speakers of these languages from enjoying equal opportunities of participating in knowledge creation and knowledge production and success (LPFHE, 2020, p. 9).

All in all, the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages in South African higher education is advocated by the LPFHE 2021 which makes provisions for their development and intellectualisation so that they take the role of being academic languages alongside English (and Afrikaans) and support cognition of learning, equity of access and success for the speakers of these languages.

Language intellectualisation and access to knowledge in Higher Education

Thirty years into democracy in South Africa, a foreign language, English, continues to be the only language of instruction in multilingual higher education classrooms, marginalizing all other South African languages. Students whose native language is not English struggle to learn in a language they do not understand. Research has established that students who learn through a language other than their mother tongue face difficulties understanding concepts in a second or third language (Bamgbose, 2000). Similarly, Alexander (2005) argues that learning through English only is major reason academic underperformance of many students from African languages. Also, Boughey (2005) asserts that accepting students in higher education and then teaching them in a language they do not understand is like allowing them access to higher education but denying them access to knowledge and success. These arguments by Alexander (2005) and Boughey (2005) clearly link academic performance or lack of it to the language of teaching and learning. Currently, the higher education language policies have yet created a space for the use of African indigenous languages, the home languages of most students, as medium of instruction.

One of the reasons attributed to the marginalisation of African indigenous languages as medium of instruction, especially in higher education is their underdevelopment (Heugh, 2000). Heugh argues that for African languages to function as academic languages in higher education they urgently need internal and structural development. In other words, they need to be intellectualised so that they rise to the level of English and Afrikaans and be used for pedagogical functions in specialised domains of higher education. Scholars such as Kaschula and Maseko (2014) are of the opinion that intellectualization of African languages will help overcome learning barriers associated

with English medium in South African universities.

Finlayson and Madiba (2002) contends that intellectualisation of African indigenous languages is critical and significant process for their advancement. These scholars are concerned that even though all of the nine South African indigenous languages (Sesotho, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Setswana, Sepedi) are acquired written forms, however, they still lag behind in terms of sophisticated terminology, especially when compared to their colonial counterparts English (and Afrikaans). Intellectualisation is therefore a must for these African indigenous languages to enable their speakers to have access to knowledge in the languages they prefer and understand most (Constitution, 1996). Intellectualisation of African indigenous languages will enable students from these languages to participate meaningfully in their learning and this will maximise their learning experiences and promote success.

Discussion

Language Intellectualisation at a University in South Africa

The university is situated in the Free State region of South Africa. According to the South Africa Gateway (2024) statistics, the principal languages spoken in the Free State region are Sesotho (64, 2%) and Afrikaans (12, 7%). The university language policy approved by the university Council in 2023 has five languages: Sesotho, Afrikaans, isiZulu, South African Sign Language (SASL), English. All these five languages operate in various domains of the university. For example, English is the language of teaching and learning. English is also an official language of administration. Other languages such Sesotho and Afrikaans are used as languages of teaching and learning in the programmes in which these languages are studied.

The intellectualisation of Sesotho (and isiZulu which is the language spoken by most students in one of the university campuses) is enshrined in the objectives of university language policy (2023) section 2.1. (d) and section (e) as follows:

> d) promote the development and (re)intellectualisation of Sesotho, isiZulu as a resource for conceptualisation and meaning making in the disciplines.
>
> e) promote equitable access to knowledge and success for all students at the UFS

The policy (2023) which is interpreted as a ‘multilingual policy’ takes off from the premise that students who enrol at this university come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, of which the majority come from Sesotho language background. The policy also acknowledges that when these students join the university, especially at first year level, they are confronted by English as the medium of instruction which is not their language. It is thus understood that it creates a barrier to effective learning especially in their disciplines. The university policy then put at the forefront its intentions to develop and intellectualise Sesotho which is the language spoken by most students at the university. The policy (2023) believes that if Sesotho is intellectualised through strategies like terminology development, it can then be used effectively to support Sesotho students with their learning of new concepts and theories and thus reduce the burden imposed by English instruction.

Sesotho Terminology Development at a University in South Africa

The intellectualisation of Sesotho through terminology development began in 2023 as on initiative towards the development of Sesotho as an academic language. As a pilot project, a few disciplines (Psychology, Accounting, Law, Mathematics and Social Work) were approached and invited to participate in the Sesotho terminology development for their disciplines. The project of the intellectualisation of Sesotho at the university is coordinated by the Academy for

Multilingualism (AFM), which was established in 2019, to drive the implementation of the language policy at the university.

The processes, methods and strategies of terminology development are beyond the scope of this paper. However, is important to mention that the process of terminology development at the university was approached as a collaborative effort following suggestions from Batibo (2009) and Madiba (2001). Led by the Academy for Multilingualism, the institutional internal stakeholders of Sesotho terminology development in different disciplines includes head of departments who put together a team of field specialists, postgraduate students, and undergraduate students for the harvesting of terminology. Once the terminology has been thoroughly harvested, the Academy for Multilingualism coordinates the terminology development workshop which is normally a one week (5 days) meeting of internal stakeholders and external stakeholders such Sesotho linguists, indigenous and cultural language experts, terminologists and lexicographers. who all put their minds together to develop the new Sesotho terminology. During the Sesotho terminology development week all stakeholders engage in the terminology development processes of deriving, semantic expansion, compounding, blending, acronymy, coinage, loan translation, and borrowing (Batibo, 2009).

Once the terminology for a specific discipline has been developed, the Sesotho new terms go through the standardisation process which is led by the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) and Sesotho National Language Board (SNLB) who are authorised bodies for the standardisation of the new terms in Sesotho. Standardisation is a crucial process of language intellectualisation (Batibo, 2009). Standardisation by the responsible bodies ensures the uniformity, conformity and commonality of the newly developed terms (Madiba, 2001). To avoid duplication of Sesotho terminology development the PanSALB and SNLB collects all the standardised terms and become the sources of these terms for the purposes of dissemination to the users, in this case of Sesotho terminology development in this university, terminology is made available to students in printed forms or otherwise, for utilisation in their learning. The university hopes that, over time, the project of Sesotho terminology development will have a positive impact on epistemological access and success for the speakers. The university, through the Academy for Multilingualism, is already embarking on a longitudinal research to explore the impact.

The following table provides an example of Accounting Sesotho terminology development processes adopted by the university. The first column indicates an Accounting term in English. The second column shows a new Sesotho equivalence of the term. The third column provides the explanation of the term in English. It is important to note that this example of Accounting Sesotho terminology development was captured before the new Sesotho terminology undergoes the critical and essential processes of standardisation and verification by PANSALB.

Implications of Language Intellectualisation for the Speakers

First and foremost, the elevation and promotion of previously marginalised African indigenous languages and their development as academic languages is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa (1997). This was to ensure that a right to learn in one's language, which is also protected by the Constitution (1996) also becomes possible. Sadly, the continuous underdevelopment of African indigenous languages persistently denies students opportunities to receive education through their mother tongue and it is an infringement of their birth right. Students' rights are even more trampled when a foreign language is given a powerful status of being a LOLT over their indigenous languages. Over time, this linguistic domination implies that students' indigenous languages are inferior (Alexander, 2005). This leads to students developing linguistic inferiority complex since

their own languages which they have pride in are rejected. The intellectualisation of African indigenous languages, on the other hand, will reassure speakers of these languages that their languages, the ones they bring from home, are valued and can be elevated into the status of being scientific and academic languages. The intellectualisation of African indigenous languages such as Sesotho through terminology development has a potential to support the speakers with academic resources in their language. This can lead to an improvement in their access to knowledge and their improvement in academic performance (Khumalo, 2017).

Accounting English/Sesotho terminology (before the standardisation process)

ENGLISH	SESOTHO	DEFINITION
Accountability (n.)	Boikarabello	Being responsible or answerable for something. (Example: An accountant is responsible for the accuracy and integrity of the financial statements of an entity).
Accountant (n.)	Akhaontente	A professional who performs accounting functions.
Accounting (n.)	Akhaonting	The process of keeping track of all financial transactions (Recording, classifying and summarising of financial transactions) so that users of financial statements are provided with information that is useful.
Account (n.)	Akhaonto; Mokitlane	A record in an accounting system that tracks the financial activities of a specific asset, liability, equity, revenue or expense.
Accounting equation (n.)	Tekanyo ya akhaonting	The relationship between Assets, Equity and Liabilities (The foundation of the double-entry accounting system)
Accrued (adj.)	-sa lefuwang	To increase or accumulate over time.

If the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages continues to be neglected in universities in Africa and South Africa, these universities will become spaces where students from the African languages are put into boxes that validate their language inferiority while promoting the superiority of foreign languages (Ngubane, 2021). Neglecting the development of students' languages, especially in higher education, has been identified as a major barrier to effective learning and a cause for academic under-achievement and high attrition rates (Prinsloo, 2009). The learning of abstract concepts will never be mastered in a second language. As such, concepts can only be memorised and partially achieved. In contrary, when students' languages are developed and intellectualised to have the capacity of expressing these abstracts scientific concepts, then students will have linguistic resources in their languages to assist them in mastering the cognitive demanding knowledge. It can be said that failure of universities to develop and intellectualise African languages can be equated to them being complicit in perpetuation of academic failure among African students (Alexander, 2005).

When universities fail to develop African indigenous languages as academic languages for instruction, this may cause the extinction of these languages Scholars such as Prah (2009) argues that the key in the revitalisation and development of a language and the assurance that it continuously grows lies in the power of utilising it in academic and political contexts. The extinction of African indigenous languages has serious and detrimental implications for their speakers., This implies that, if students do not use their languages, they will lose their history, their voices, their cultures and identities. Thus, the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages is imperative not only for the academic agenda, but also for the preservation of these languages.

Conclusion

The intellectualisation of African indigenous languages is meant to promote these languages and elevate them to the status of academic

languages. This will result in the usage of these languages in the teaching and learning of complex subjects content and to effectively express theories and concepts. It is also an important project towards the preservation of these languages. In academia, lack of scientific terminology in African indigenous languages has always been named as one of the reasons why African indigenous languages are not able to contribute meaningfully to the global knowledge economy (Bamgbose, 2000). At the same time, lack of political will from the government to invest in the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages has been cited as major impediments. These challenges and many others, leave the project of the intellectualisation of the African indigenous languages in the hands of universities through their language establishments. We thus argue in this article that terminology development should not be exclusively a top-down and selective process involving workshops that often comprise of few discipline experts, terminologists, lexicographers and linguists which is a resource intensive task, but it must embrace a bottom-up approach through crowd sourcing (Batibo, 2009).

This paper attempted to show that the intellectualisation of the African indigenous language Sesotho is a possible task which requires proper planning, adequate human and financial resources and a conscious will from the university, especially from the university leadership. Citing scholars in South Africa (Khumalo, 2017; Finlayson & Madiba, 2002) who conducted research on the intellectualisation of African indigenous languages this paper has also argued that the task of intellectualising an African language cannot be effectively achieved without the involvement of the speakers of these languages, which includes the linguists, terminologists and the intellectuals. The above mentioned people should take responsibility of driving the initial efforts instead of waiting for foreign people to dictate when and how African languages should be developed. This sentence is very long! I suggest that you break it up

Furthermore, all the scholars cited in this paper agree that African students, those using indigenous languages, gain physical access to the English monolingual higher learning, but they do not gain access to knowledge that is offered because of the language barrier. Thus, the intellectualisation of African languages through initiatives such as terminology development, multilingual dictionaries and so on, provide an opportunity for students to gain access knowledge in the languages they understand and this will ensure better understanding and success.

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