Mokong S. Mapadimeng, PhD
Research Director
Human Sciences Research Council
Pretoria, South Africa
Email: mmapadimeng@hsrc.ac.za
mmapadimeng@gmail.com

Indigenisation of Education through Indigenous African Languages in SA: An Afro-Optimistic Perspective.

Introduction.

South Africa's colonial and apartheid past has been characterised by racial divisions and inequalities perpetrated through a web of policies and legislations with their attendant social institutions. To reverse this past legacy, the post-1994 democratically elected government made it its commitment to eradicate these past inequalities and divisions through transformative policies and legislations. Guided by the national constitution, the government introduced amongst such policies, both the Language Policy for Higher Education in 2002 and the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) policy in 2004. These were informed by the need to promote multilingualism through the development of the historically marginalised indigenous African languages, as well as the recognition that education is part of culture and that culture is transmitted through education. Hence the recognised need to integrate into educational curriculum, the historically repressed African indigenous knowledge not only as a measure of redress, but also as a strategic intervention that would give South Africa a competitive and comparative advantage in the globalising economy. This chapter provides a critical review of the existing discourse centred on these policy efforts aimed at supporting and developing indigenous African languages as scientific languages, as well as examines the progress made towards this, and implications for indigenisation of education through African languages.

The chapter starts off with brief outline of the nature of African Indigenous Knowledge System (AIKS) and the role it could play in Africa's development, including in transforming colonial education system through indigenisation. This is followed by an examination of the state of indigenous African languages in South Africa as important cultural sources and media of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK), and implications for harnessing them to indigenise the education system. Here, the views I would categorise as Afro-pessimistic would be brought

under scrutiny and critiqued. This would pave way for my argument, which I simply describe as Afro-optimistic, in support of the urgent need to support the development of indigenous African languages for the purpose of indigenisation of education. I argue that, while indeed both the colonial and apartheid systems in South Africa, did systematically employ strategies (mainly policy-driven) to marginalise indigenous African languages; it is not all lost but instead there is still hope to fully resuscitate and develop them into scientific languages for teaching and learning. A ray of hope is evident in the space that still exists for statutory structures such as PANSALB and the Department of Education to embark on policy implementation strategy for the development of indigenous African languages that should include a direct onslaught on the historically engrained negative perceptions about these languages, and especially amongst black Africans. It is however encouraging to see indications of support and embracement of indigenous African languages amongst young black Africans. Furthermore, I have argued that colonial and apartheid racist strategies that were aimed at marginalising indigenous African languages, had some unintended consequences. Rather than achieving the complete marginalisation and underdevelopment of these languages, they ironically provided a space for their growth and development, albeit limitedly or partially. All these suggest a basis for optimism that the colonial education system could still be indigenised though active and creative integration of indigenous African languages.

African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) - A Brief Overview.

The growing interest in AIKS was necessitated by the post-colonial condition (i.e. the prevailing circumstances in the post-independence period and the attendant priorities including the need to restore and revive the pre-colonial moral and social wellbeing of the people as well as indigenous knowledge systems that were systematically marginalised by the colonial system. As Khan and Mantzaris (2006: 279) rightly observed, initiatives in this direction of recovery of the lost knowledge systems and moral fibres were signified by the continent-wide strategy in the form of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the popularised idea of African Renaissance. The rationale behind the drive to promote and support AIKS is the understanding that AIKS and its related practices are highly adaptive to rapid changes as they are embedded in peoples' popular cultures. This is attributed to the nature of AIKS as aptly described by Katherine Odora-Hoppers as being "… about exploring indigenous technological knowledge in agriculture, fishing, forest resource exploitation,

atmospheric management techniques, knowledge transmission systems, architecture, medicine, pharmacology, and recasting the potentialities they represent in the context of democratic participation for community, national and global development in real time" (cited in Seepe 2001 by Khan and Mantzaris 2006: 281 and 285).

This points to the instrumental role that AIKS could play, if creatively harnessed, in helping to end what Bade Onimode (1988) termed Africa's dependent development syndrome. For Kwesi Kwaa Prah, the retrieval and recentering of AIKS in the African formal education system would greatly assist the continent in acquiring intellectual sovereignty. This is informed by his understanding of Indigenous Knowledge Systems as "bodies of historically formed and locally engendered knowledge that is distinctive, societally relevant and characteristic of a given culture or society" and defined by "age-long acquired practices, skills and proficiencies and know-hows of people, used in their everyday existence to sustain their mode of livelihood" (Prah 2018: 72).

Khan and Mantzaris (2006) too, echoed a similar view when arguing that AIKS appeals to collective shared cultures of the people and that it highlights the significance of historical contexts wherein past practices have relevance to today's era. This implies the need to tap into people, both as individuals and groups, as active agents of change to help with creative and innovative adoption and adaptation of AIKS to the modern era. This would however require of agents to have a reliable knowledge of the AIKS and therefore be fully accustomed to its past practices and their potential relevance.

As is the case with other forms of knowledge, African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) is culturally specific and thus much of its richness and wisdom not only derive from but are also proficiently expressed and articulated through culturally-anchored indigenous languages. This is in agreement with Prah (2018:64)'s observation that language, as a cultural attribute, "serves as the transactional grid on which the whole social process is operated" and "...articulates the social basis of culture as a shared and defining asset". This does not however imply that AIK or indeed any other knowledge and its relevance is necessarily limited to its cultural and linguistic boundaries. As Jimi O. Adesina (2006: 242-243) correctly pointed, all knowledge is context-specific and therefore endogenous by its very nature, while its universality is guaranteed through its relevance to humanity. This cements the point I made

above about the centrality of language to all indigenous knowledge and its development. My use of the concept of language is based on the broad understating as defined by Bocock(1992: 233) i.e. that language is the main cultural practice not restricted to the use of words but also includes all sign and symbol systems though which meaning is produced and communicated.

Thus if language is an embodiment of indigenous knowledge(IK), then any study that seeks to examine the question of indigenisation of education through integration of through IK, would remain incomplete if it fails to consider the question of the language, its present status of use and development and its role. What does the current body of knowledge say about the indigenous African languages in South Africa and what implications does this have for indigenisation of education through AIKS. This is examined below.

The State of Indigenous African Languages in South Africa

Key amongst the contributors on the subject of language in South Africa is one of the foremost language experts, the late Neville Alexander. In one of the earlier writings during the immediate post-1994 period, an historic period that was marked by transition from apartheid to democracy, Alexander (1997) notes with great concern the historical and continued neglect of indigenous African languages. This, he argued, led to a language crisis that manifested itself in Africans, who due to lack of proficiency in English and Afrikaans as "high status languages" could not compete in the labour market. This was compounded by the fact that, as far as indigenous African languages are concerned, no any serious links have ever been drawn with culture, science and technology; thus effectively reducing these languages to non-scientific and underdeveloped levels. This consequently led to a "syndrome of the colonised mind" evident in the lack of self-esteem and the belief that African indigenous languages "'do not have the words' for most of modern objects and scientific concepts" and therefore a perceived need to learn English to overcome the language deficit (Alexander 1997: 84).

This syndrome of the colonised mind is best exemplified by the Afro-pessimists such as Emmanuel Mgqwashu (2006: 298) who is highly sceptical about the introduction of indigenous African languages in the curriculum as media of instruction (i.e. languages of teaching and learning) and the likelihood of this helping to contribute to economic development and improvement of living conditions of all. According to Mgqwashu, those

advocating for indigenous languages are simply driven by their discomfort with English which they perceive as the language of slavery and oppression, and therefore are not in tune with practical realities on the ground. He argues that for the majority of ordinary people in Africa, English is the global language of economic opportunities they wish to learn and in which they want to become proficient. For Mgqwashu, any attempts to introduce and implement language-in-education policies for promotion of indigenous African languages would be made difficult by a "…strikingly powerful status of English in most of South Africa's educational institutions and in the world of business and commerce, and the accompanying limited and/or non-implementation of the new language policy-in-education…" (Mgqwashu 2006: 298). He is sceptical of what he calls a disjuncture between policy intentions and practical realities that attests to Jonathan Jansen's 'theory of political symbolism'. The realities he cites, based on the findings he made in some African countries (i.e. Namibia, Tanzania and Kenya) where English is preferred over indigenous languages as a medium of instruction, are both language related (i.e. that indigenous languages in Africa are underdeveloped and thus are lacking in technical elaboration and standardisation); and also lack of resources such as unqualified teachers, limited teaching and learning materials and shortage of class rooms and desks. These are the realities that he sees as obstacles to implementation of language-in-education policies that promote indigenous languages.

Other pessimists who echo Mgqwashu's analysis are Rajendra Chetty and Dominique Mwepu (2008), for whom English knowledge, if well taught "beyond transmission of basic linguistic skills" by integrating "issues of cultural heritage, personal growth, functional language studies, cultural studies and new literacy studies"; would have emancipatory effect on black leaners. This, they argue, is so since English "serves as an important vehicle for socio-economic cohesion" for people who are "susceptible to be divided along ethno-linguistic lines", "a linguistic bridge for communication amongst black South Africans in a changing society", and further that English "constitutes an essential tool for success in the global world"(Chetty and Mwepu 2008: 330-331).

The suggestions by the likes of Mgqwashu, and Chetty and Mwepu that English is an emancipatory language suitable for medium of instruction to non-English speakers is however not supported by evidence. My own experience as an academic in South African universities

suggests the opposite i.e. that English and indeed teaching in any additional language other than mother tongue or home language, is inhibitive to effective learning and intellectual development. I recall, while I was lecturer at the University of Free State, where the overwhelming majority of students are black African, my late fellow colleague and friend, Professor Phakiso Mokhahlane suggesting that we start reflecting on and writing about the experiences of our students with English. In an email that he sent to us (his colleagues in sociology department on 21st April 2015), he wrote:

> "Dear Colleagues,
> I'm marking SOCL 211 and I've come across some humorous sociological "gems".
> - The middle classes are the pretty bourgeoisie.
> - A mental disorder is when a person's mind does not operate 100%, but operate half. Sometimes this is caused by headache or meningitis.
> - Mental disorder make person very stupid person.
> - We study social problem using case study by looking first at the case study and afterwards we answer ourself by looking at the question and go back to the case study.
> - Experimental research study we use it to study social problem by looking face to face.
> - Conflicts and functionalist work at "macro-level", which deals with larger people, not small people.
> - Mental disorder is a serious social problem because people do things and expect the government not to punish them as they will say they did not see themselves when they were committing crime.
> - There are societies against women dressing trousers.
> - In America people most likely to be arrested for crime are African-Americans, Mexicans, Hispanics and xenophobics.
> **Proposed titles of the compilation: "**Humour in Sociology?, "Comic Relief in Sociology?" or "Sociological Gibberish?".
>
> Kindly add to the list as you go through your own marking." [1]

Evidently these "*gems*" as Mokhahlane humorously described, littered with spelling errors and other grammatical errors plus poor conceptual content, alert us to some very serious learning challenges for black African students presented by learning in foreign languages, and therefore discredit any view that promotes English as a or sole medium of instruction.

Again, between 2016 and 2019 while I was an academic at the University of Johannesburg, I observed just how much damage the promotion of English through our schooling and post-schooling system has subsequently inflicted on black African students' proficiency in their own indigenous home languages. This became all the more evident while I was a member of the Higher Degrees Committee that is responsible for quality assurance and assessment of students' proposal for masters and doctoral degrees. The Committee always insisted that all

---

[1] **NB**. I slightly edited the email by moving the last sentence from originally being second in the email to it becoming last where he proposed a tentative title; and I also moved what was the third sentence to the last where he was asking for more contributions towards writing the piece.

proposal for research amongst black communities, are ethically required include appendices of translated versions of their proposed research instruments i.e. questionnaires, interview guides and letters requesting access (be translated from English to the relevant indigenous African language of the targeted community). As members of the committee, we often noticed with deep shock how students battled to do correct translations such as from English to Sepedi, one of the indigenous African languages spoken in South Africa. Note for instance the following examples extracted from some of the proposals (Here I cite a few examples of both the English version and the wrong translation by the students and then highlight in italics the correct version):

> **Student's English version:** What are the services you offer to orphans and vulnerable children in the Centre?
> **Student's translation**: Senthara ya lena e nea ditirelo tsa mohuta ofe go bana ba ditswiwana le ba bokoa?
> *Correct translation: E ka ba ke ditirelo dife goba ditirelo tša mohuta ofe tšeo di abelwago ke Senthara ya lena go bana ba ditšhiwana le bao ba sa bolokegago?*

> **Student's English version:** What is your view on the use of African indigenous medicine to treat and care for HIV/AIDS?
> **Student's translation**: Naa kgopolo ya gago ke efe mo tsomisong ya dihlare tsa bogologolo tsa setso mo go okafatseng le go alafa bolwetsi bja hiv le aids?
> *Correct translation: Go ya ka wena, o e bona bjang taba ye ya go šomiša dihlare tša setšo sa Ma-Afrika go okobatša go ba go lwantšha le go alafa bolwetši bjo bja HIV le AIDS?*

> **Student's English version:** Do people in your community believe that African traditional medicines can help in the treatment and care of HIV/AIDS?
> **Student's translation**: Naa batho ba nale tshepo yeo e tletseng mabapi le tshomiso ye ya dihlare tsa setso gore ruriruri di ka okafatsa le go alafa bolwetsi bjo bja hiv le aids?
> *Correct translation: Naa batho ba motse wa geno ba a dumela gore dihlare tša setšo sa Ma-Afrika di ka thuša twantšhong le go alafeng ga boletši bja HIV/AIDS?*

That English as a medium of instruction presents serious challenges to black students was confirmed by the research report by Department of Education (DoE). The study, conducted in the Limpopo province in 2007, examined the literacy teaching and learning at lower primary school level, with specific focus on Grades 1 to 4. It was prompted by disturbingly poor results in literacy and numeracy amongst leaners in the Limpopo Province as well as nationally between 1999 and 2002; also by the global recognition of the "… social injustice whereby children from marginalised communities are required to learn in the language of the dominant (second or even third language) and the powerful". Also recognised, the report states, was the need to appreciate that for learners to realise cognitive development in bilingualism or multilingualism, they need a "solid mother tongue or first language development and consolidation followed by very sound development of the second language

...., but does not replace the mother tongue for cognitive development" (cited from Cummins 1982, Snow et al 1998 Baker 2002 in the 2008 Report: 30).

This overwhelming evidence against English or any other imposed foreign language might explain the irony of self-contradiction amongst those advocating for English and other foreign languages as media of instruction in Africa. These Afro-pessimists contradict themselves through statements that ironically affirm the views of Afro-optimists. Mgqwashu (2006:314) for instance implicitly acknowledges African indigenous knowledge when he argues: "It has to be acknowledged … that African's talent and potential lie dormant in most rural areas because brilliant ideas that could lead to social and economic upliftment of most local communities cannot be communicated and be taken seriously if they are not communicated in the language of the former colonizer." Noting, based on his observations in two schools in Namibia, that the use of English by both teachers and leaners to explain concepts was disappointing, he ironically still advocates for the use of yet another colonial language, being Afrikaans and which is not indigenous to Namibia (Mgqwashu 2006: 315).

Similarly, Chetty and Mwepu(2008) concur with Giroux and McLaren(1991)'s view that: "critical language teaching as a form of cultural politics speaks to a form of curriculum theory and application that stresses the historical, cultural and discursive in relation to classroom materials and teaching practices. It enables teachers to examine, dismantle, analyse, deconstruct and reconstruct pedagogical practices. Teachers are empowered to ask how meaning is produced, and how power is constructed and reinforced in the classroom". They go further with statements that continue to affirm the Afro-optimistic views they have been critiquing such as: "the experiences and social practices that students bring to the institutions (like indigenous languages and cultures) *(my emphasis)* should be validated. Such experiences should form the basis of the teaching programme thus ensuring that students have an active voice in the content taught instead of the traditional approach of silencing them by ignoring their cultural capital. The challenge remains with our tertiary institutions to educate future teachers to learn to appreciate their learners' languages, cultures and values" (Chetty and Mwepu 2008: 339).

Beyond Afro-pessimism.

Afro-pessimistic views discouraging calls for the reclamation and affirmation of African indigenous languages, and indeed the broader African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS), represent what Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2017: 34) has observed as a challenge in post-independent African societies marked by a reluctance to deconstruct inherited educational and curricula systems, which he describes as an "inertia and unspoken unwillingness, sometimes attributed to a 'lack of political'". For Prah (2017: 15) such Afro-pessimistic views are based on a deeply entrenched myth that knowledge can only be accumulated and imparted through colonial languages. Prah(2017) dismissed this myth when he argued: "The idea that worthwhile education … can only be acquired through English has got to be challenged and shown to be a pernicious brake on social and on individual progress". Alexander believed in a view widely held by other Afro-optimists that no nation can achieve highest levels of economic and cultural development through the medium of second or even third languages (Also see Prah 1993, 2017, 2018).

Countering the Afro-pessimists, a number of language scholars in South Africa provide some helpful suggestions on how best to advance indigenous African languages for educational and development purposes. Alexander (1997) called for a language policy to redress of language inequalities in line with the principle of multilingualism, since in South Africa; foreign languages (i.e. English and Afrikaans) acquired high status of development through subjugation and conquest. Such policy would need to support the development of the historically neglected indigenous African languages. He was optimistic about principle of multilingualism enshrined in the National Constitution and the 1995/6 Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) tasked with advising the then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (today known as Ministry of Arts and Culture) about the development of a National Language Plan. Evidently informed by these suggestions emanating from the scholarly discourse, and in further support to the 1995 National Constitution and LANGTAG, the democratic government introduced other measures towards the development of indigenous African languages. These included the establishment of the National Language Service (NLS) in 1994 and the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) in 1995 as statutory structures, the 2003 National Language Policy Framework, the Language-in-

Education Policy in 1997, and the Language Policy for Higher Education in 2002 and the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Policy in 2004.

Notwithstanding the elaborate policy and legislative as well as institutional support framework, later assessments however discovered a general failure on the part of government and its relevant statutory agencies to implement policy towards full realisation of the ideals of vibrant multilingualism, language equity and language rights, and their contribution to South Africa's development. Anne-Marie Beukes (2009: 43) attributes this failure to both "government's lack-lustre approach to policy implementation" as the work of statutory bodies in PANSALB and NLS "has not been entirely credible" and the "hegemonic position of English and negative attitudes regarding the functional uses of African languages". Beukes argues that this has led to great concern about the state and fate of indigenous African languages to the extent that the 2003 Ndebele Committee on the development of these languages as medium of learning and teaching arrived at a pessimistic conclusion that their future would remain bleak unless a comprehensive language plan is developed and effectively implemented.

This was aggravated by what Beukes correctly considers as a decisive factor i.e. the negative attitude amongst black Africans towards their languages and their instrumental value and high status functions. She sees this in the minimal use of indigenous African languages in government's legislatures where majority of parliamentarians are black Africans and yet the main language used is English; and in courts of law where English is a working language. This she also find evident in schools as black African parents prefer to send their children to former white schools for what they perceive as a "better education" through which their children would be able to acquire the language of aspiration, of social mobility that enhances better labour market opportunities, English (Beukes 2009: 45-46).

Prah's observation of the hegemonic position of English led him to a description of colonialism as having had a lasting, stubborn impact on contemporary Africa which manifested in neo-colonialism that continues to entrench the dominance of Western empirical culture with little resistance from amongst Africans. As Prah notes, "… the imprint of colonialism dies hard; neocolonialism or the extended lease on life of the structures and epistemological assumptions of the colonial era, linger on with little question"; leading him to conclude "… in Africa by and large, so successful has the imperial intent and colonial programme been that,

the native ruling classes, inheritors of the colonial state remain blissfully oblivious of the inhibiting and pernicious legacies of colonialism" (Prah 2018: 64).

While these challenges to the development of indigenous African languages may sound overwhelming, it is however not all doom and gloom. There are signs of hope such as the confident view expressed by Neville Alexander (1997: 85) when he proclaimed that history has shown that all languages are capable of being developed through liberal borrowing from neighbouring and high status languages as exemplified by English, which developed by borrowing extensively from Greek, Latin and French and from other lexical and morphological imports. Such development requires what Prah calls the intellectualization of or turning indigenous African languages into intellectualised languages. By intellectualised, and drawing from Bohulslav Havranek of the Prague School of Linguistics, Prah(2017: 11) refers to a language that has both the oral and literate social bases (be a written language). He argues that it should a technically and terminologically equipped language suitable for educational purposes. It should also be able to address scientific, technical, philosophical and abstract thought. To arrive at this level of development, Prah argues that the languages concerned should have elaborately developed discipline-specific terminology (e.g. for mathematics, chemistry, and psychology) to enable them into media of teaching and learning, and that they should be legitimised and applied by societal institutions e.g. schools, higher education institutions, judiciary and legislature.

While it is indeed true that indigenous African languages in South African have been historically underdeveloped, and therefore warrant concerted efforts towards their development into intellectualised languages, it would however be incorrect not to acknowledge that they were never completely neglected, even if it was not intentionally so. In my recollection, as one of the millions of black Africans whose schooling was through the Apartheid Bantu education, which was designed to be inferior in quality to white education, I can attest to the unintentional consequences of this education system, at least in terms of the opportunity it ironically provided for the partial development of indigenous African languages. For illustrative purposes, I would cite few examples of the evidence of development in my own language group, Sepedi, that was used in the former Bantustan of Lebowa (today integrated with the other former Bantustans then known as Gazankulu and

Venda into the present day's Limpopo Province). It needs to be emphasised this evidence of development, or at least partial language development, was not peculiar to Sepedi but was indeed a reality with all other indigenous African languages in South Africa under apartheid's separate development policies.

Under Bantu education, black African communities had an opportunity to develop some literary basis for their languages as evident from a wide range of written textbooks and novels used for teaching and learning even right up to matric or what is today, known as Grade 12. An example of some of the well-written Sepedi language text books are Mahlontebe(1986) authored by MJ Madiba which was used to teach grammar at primary school level. Other examples are grammar text books such as Segageso by M. Nokaneng and Marema-ka-Dika: tsa Sesotho sa Lebowa by JRD Rakoma(1979); and novels and poetry books by renowned, prolific author OK Matsepe such as Kgorong ya Mosate(1962), Lesita Phiri(, Todi ya Donose (1968) and Mahlatse-a-Madimabe (1981). Beyond the grammar textbooks, novels and short story books by Black African authors; there were also text books translated from English to indigenous African languages. These included textbooks on Mathematics (Dipalo), Natural Sciences (Thuto-Mahlale), Health Sciences (Maphelo), and Geography (Tikologo). The significance of this range of teaching and learning materials is that they highlight the existence of a scientific vocabulary within the indigenous African languages, for which however there has not been a concerted effort to further nurture and develop.

Today, serving as a further testimony to this, are books such as the one authored by Dr ZuluMathabo Zulu titled the Sesotho Dictionary of Mathematics (2012). As the author points out, the book serves as evidence "… of the African origin of mathematical knowledge…"with close to five hundred pages of mathematics texts that covers algebra, trigonometry and geometry as well as engineering mathematics such as calculus and differential equations and statistics in Sesotho language"(Power FM Interview Podcast – Sesotho Dictionary of Mathematics, 2016 on Zulumathabo on the Internet 2.0, https://zulumathabo.com/2016/07/08/power-fm-interview-podcast-sesotho-dictionary-of-mathematics/ accessed on 14 March 2020).

All this evidence provides me with the grounds to confidently, argue that Apartheid's separate development policies and its attendant Bantu Education, which were designed to marginalises black Africans to the positions of labour(manual, semi-skilled or even semi-

professional labour) for whites; turned out to be somewhat a blessing in disguise. They instead had unintended consequences as they provided a space for various black African language communities to develop their respective languages for educational purposes (teaching and learning). The result has been that these languages ended up meeting some of the requisites for intellectualised languages as articulated by Prah i.e. having both oral and literate social bases as well as some discipline-specific terminologies.

It should however be noted that Prah made a valid point about the need for institutional support for the indigenous African languages. Such institutional support, I also dare to argue, partially existed under apartheid despite the fact that Apartheid's policies were not intended to genuinely empower black Africans. The partial existence of the required institutional framework is evident in social institutions such as schools, Training Colleges, Bantustan governments, Bantustan judiciaries, Bantustan Universities(today known as Historically Black Universities), all of which made an elaborative use of indigenous African languages with some combination of English.

We need to build on these earlier foundations. In so doing, we would be seriously heeding to the advice that the late former President of the African National Congress (ANC), and the eminent leader of our liberation struggle OR Tambo once gave to ANC in 1977. The advice is herewith cited from the statement made by the Oliver and Adelaide Tambo Foundation (OATF) during the year dedicated to the memory of OR Tambo:

"Comrades, you might think it is very difficult to wage a liberation struggle. Wait until you are in power. I might be dead by then. At that stage, you will realize that it is actually more difficult to keep the power than to wage a liberation war. People will be expecting a lot of services from you. You will have to satisfy the various demands of the masses of our people. In the process, be prepared to learn from other people's revolutions. Learn from the enemy also. The enemy is not necessarily doing everything wrongly. You may take his right tactics and use them to your advantage. At the same time, avoid repeating the enemy's mistakes."(OATF, 06 April 2017).

Another sign of hope lies in the findings from a study amongst undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal by Khan and Mantzaris(2006). The study found that while majority of these students and mainly black Africans displayed a serious lack of awareness of African Indigenous Knowledge and cultural practices such as the knowledge of indigenous health practices and medicines; an overwhelming majority however supported the idea of learning and being taught through indigenous African languages at all study levels (Khan and

Mantzaris 2006: 290-291). This finding is affirmed by the developments in South Africa in the last few years whereby students, led mainly by black African students, embarked on nation-wide protests demanding an end to colonial education. The movement, which began at the University of Cape Town, through symbolic demands for de-colonialised education such as #RhodesMustFall, spread to other institutions.

Conclusion

This chapter, using an Afro-optimistic approach, examined the possibilities to indigenisation of education through indigenous African languages in South Africa. I adopted this approach in view of the apparent persistent dominance of an education system inherited from the Western colonial times, with little or no stronger presence of content derived from African indigenous knowledge systems. This approach is driven by the desire on my part and indeed on the part of other Afrocentric scholars to advance a counter hegemonic knowledge discourse that affirms and supports African indigenous knowledge systems as appropriate measure of redress of the injustices inherited from the repressive colonial and apartheid systems. This scholarship seeks to contribute to efforts aimed at bringing to an end Africa's dependent development. As the discourse on indigenous African languages reveals, no nation in the world has managed to attain highest levels of development while dependent for its education system on foreign languages. The examples I cited from my observations as an academic in two of the South African universities are a clear demonstration of the inhibitive effects that learning in a foreign language has on students' ability to acquire knowledge and requisite skills for sustainable development.

The approach used in this chapter is consistent with the calls from the South African student community in higher education for an end to colonial education and the need for knowledge anchored in real life experiences of Africans and yet still be able to contribute to global knowledge system from which Africans have been systematically marginalised. I argue that these students' calls are a positive development towards these efforts for reclamation of AIKS and support of indigenous African languages for education and science. They, together with realities such as the fact that any language can be developed into intellectualised language through borrowing; not only signify hope but also provide a basis for renewed interventions for development of indigenous African languages.

Indigenous African languages, despite their marginalisation under the apartheid and colonial systems, still however experienced some development into intellectualised and scientific languages. This was more accidental than planned i.e. it was an unintended outcome of separate development policies. While the partial development of indigenous African languages serves as a firmer basis for further development and consolidation, it was however noticed that the post-1994 policy implementation towards their development was done without requisite vigour, with the resultant effect of strengthening the hegemony of the inherited colonial languages i.e. English and Afrikaans. This has seen some Afro-pessimists advancing arguments in favour of the retention of colonial languages. I have challenged this view as it is not supported by evidence on the ground. Clearly, as was proposed by others before such as Beukes and Alexander, an elaborate National Language Plan led by PANSALB, is necessary for the development of indigenous African languages. As Beukes pointed out, PANSALB can best do this through partnership with the Departments of Education, backed up by marketing strategies for consciousness raising, and change of negative attitudes towards indigenous African languages.

References

Adésínà. 'J.O. 2005. Sociology Beyond Despair: Recovery of Nerve, Endogeneity, and Epistemic Intervention. Presidential Address delivered at the South African Sociological Association Annual Congress, University of Limpopo, Turfloop.

Alexander, N. 1997. Language Policy and Planning in the New South Africa. *African Sociological Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 82-92

Beukes, A. 2009. Language Policy incongruity and African Languages in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Language Matters*. 40. 1. pp. 35-55.

Chetty, R and Mwepu, D. 2008. Language. Policy and Education in South Africa: An Alternative View of the Position of English and African Languages. *Alternation*. 15.2. pp. 329-345.

HSRC Report. 2008. Literacy Teaching And Learning In Schools - Report on Limpopo Province's Primary Schools. Unpublished.

Khan, S. and Mantzaris, E. 2006. Indigenous Knowledge and the African Curriculum: A Case Study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *Alternation*. 13.1. pp. 279-297.

Mgqwashu, E. 2006. Language and the Postcolonial Condition. *Alternation*. 13.1. pp. 298-325.

Onimode, B. 1988. A Political Economy of the African Crisis. London and New Jersey. Zed Books Ltd.

Prah, KK. 2016. "Towards the Intellectualization of African Languages – Lessons from Asia" in Prah, KK. Creating Knowledge in Africa. School of Humanities and Social Sciences Annual

Lectures. University of Venda and Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) Publication.

Prah, KK.2018. "The Intellectualization of African Languages for Higher Education" in Prah, KK. The Challenge of Decolonizing Education. School of Humanities and Social Sciences Annual Lectures. University of Venda and CASAS Publication.

Prah, KK. 2018. "An Outline of Decolonized Education in Africa" in Prah, KK. The Challenge of Decolonizing Education. School of Humanities and Social Sciences Annual Lectures. University of Venda and CASAS Publication.

Zulu, ZM. 2012. Sesotho Dictionary of Mathematics. Johannesburg: Madisebo University College Press.