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Innovating for Inclusion: Lecturers' Perceptions towards the Integration of XiTsonga Language in Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the inclusion of previously marginalised indigenous languages in the Zimbabwean Teacher Education Curriculum, which is a step towards resuscitating the status accorded to them in the national constitution. Focus is on XiTsonga, the first previously-marginalised language to be taught at Bachelor's Degree level since Zimbabwe's independence. The inclusion of previously marginalised indigenous languages is a transformation from the colonial education design which only recognised Shona and Ndebele while marginalising the other thirteen (13) now nationally-recognised indigenous languages. Informed by the decolonisation project which aims to address ongoing impacts of colonialism, the study investigated lecturers' perceptions towards the development of XiTsonga. The significance and challenges associated with the recognition of XiTsonga in teacher education were explored using a qualitative research approach within a case study design. The researcher gathered data through interviews and document analysis from three purposively-sampled XiTsonga lecturers from Great Zimbabwe University (GZU). The research found out that lecturers were excited by the development though they faced several challenges which included shortage of resource materials, lack of background knowledge among students and overwhelming work for the three lecturers. The study, therefore, concludes that although the inclusion of previously-marginalised languages in teacher education is a major step towards addressing the imbalances in teacher education, a lot still needs to be done to ensure meaningful teaching and learning. Recommendations on uplifting the position of XiTsonga and other previously-marginalised languages in education were submitted. The study recommends the teaching of the language at the lower levels of education, production of teaching and learning materials and training of teachers from previously marginalised languages in various institutions.

Key Terms: Innovation, indigenous/African languages, previously marginalised languages, inclusivity, XiTsonga, Teacher Education.

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INTRODUCTION

The repositioning of indigenous languages in African education systems has become a thorny issue. Native languages remain largely marginalised throughout the systems, despite decades of the decolonisation calls and political freedom. Language policies, especially in African higher education, have continued to elevate foreign languages, with European languages such as English, French and Portuguese still dominating in teaching, learning, and communication. The adoption of a multicultural approach in African university education has been welcomed by a few, with many still frowning upon their own languages and viewing them as less privileged for academia. This has, however, led to post-colonial language marginalisation which has continued to disadvantage many speech communities in Africa (Ndhlovu, 2007). Ndhlovu (2007) adds that so many indigenous languages have been denied access to important positions economically, politically, spiritually and socially in Africa, especially by policy makers who happen to be speakers of dominating languages.

The noise for the promotion of indigenous languages has been amplified by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)'s proclamation of 2022-2032 as the international decade of indigenous languages. Although not much effort has been exerted so far, the resolution called for "urgent steps at both national and international levels" to "preserve, revitalise and promote indigenous languages" (Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (idiL2022-2032, p. 1). This implies a call for global action by member states, focusing on their indigenous languages that have been vulnerable to discrimination and falling into disuse in a bid to take every citizen on board towards national development. Inclusion of indigenous languages in education is one of the most effective and fast ways of giving protection to, and upgrading, the status of indigenous languages. On the other hand, their exclusion from the curriculum is extremely costly to both the native speakers and the nation at large as it risks hindrance to development and ultimate loss of the languages. This research, therefore, highlights the benefits and reactions that come with efforts to save, revive and raise the position of a people's own language and the areas that need attention in order for the languages to function significantly.

In Zimbabwe, indigenous languages like Chewa, Barwe, Kalanga, Khoisan, Nambya,

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Ndau, Shangani/Tsonga, Sign Language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa need recognition and serious attention for them to perform the same functions as Shona and Ndebele, the most recognised indigenous languages. According to Ndhlovu (2007), since independence in 1980, Shona and Ndebele speakers have had negative perceptions and stereotypes about these minority languages and speakers, hence, their inferior positions. These languages can only be uplifted through policies that recognise each group's uniqueness. This can be achieved through the creation of language policies that promote all languages and embrace all ethnic communities.

The introduction of XiTsonga at the Great Zimbabwean University in teacher education came as a breakthrough in the realisation of formerly side-lined local languages. Although there are other nine 'minority' languages being taught in teacher capacity training programmes at the university, XiTsonga becomes the first among the thirteen languages to be taught at a teacher training degree level. The move to teach the language as a subject is a critical step towards dignifying the local people and generations to come through education. The inclusion of the language in the country's teacher education curriculum is a pointer to the possibility of raising the other twelve to a high status. This paper, therefore explores XiTsonga lecturers' feelings towards the mentioned development in their mother tongue.

XiTsonga Language in Africa

The language is spoken and used by Tsonga or Shangaan people living across Southern Africa in South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (National African Language Resource Centre, 2017; Jenkins and Hooten, 2008). Jenkins and Hooten (2008) add that the language has at least five variants, namely Hlanganu (Ihlanangu), Dzonga (Xidzonga), N'walangu (Xin'walungu), Bila (Xibila) and Hlengwe (Xihlengwe). According to the National African Language Resource Centre Report (2017), XiTsonga is spoken by a population of nearly 2 million, with South Africa housing over half of them, 1,5 million in Mozambique, over 100 000 in Zimbabwe, and a few thousands in Zambia and Swaziland.

Madlome (2022) makes it clear that the groups of people who speak Tsonga are known by different names, which are Machangana, Shangani, Shangaan and Magaza. He adds that the name Tsonga is officially used in South Africa but has not

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been fully embraced in other countries where the language is spoken. According to the National African Language Resource Centre (2017), the name XiTsonga is believed to have originated from a place named 'Vutsonga', which was occupied by the VaTsonga in Mozambique before the arrival of Soshangana, the founder and first monarch of the Gaza empire.

XiTsonga is one of the indigenous languages that has assumed official status in South Africa and Zimbabwe. In South Africa, the native language has assumed official functions, for example in secondary education and public broadcasting. This paper discusses its recognition in Zimbabwe's teacher education.

XiTsonga in Zimbabwean Education

In Zimbabwe, XiTsonga is spoken primarily in Chiredzi and Mwenezi. Despite being recognised in the 2013 National Constitution, XiTsonga has not yet reached the level of linguistic development enjoyed by the colonially-advantaged Shona and Ndebele. Although the national constitution commits to promoting all official indigenous languages, in practice XiTsonga and other previously-marginalised languages remain underdeveloped. XiTsonga is taught as a subject in some schools. The teaching of XiTsonga started in the 1990s in some primary schools around Chiredzi area from Grade 1 up to Grade 3. Currently, the language is being taught in almost every primary school in the areas where it is spoken and is being slowly introduced in secondary schools. A significant rise in the number of schools teaching the language was noticed in 2011 after the Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) had introduced a teacher capacity programme for 'minority' languages including XiTsonga. However, in discussions with lecturers participating in the study, it became clear that some schools are still resisting the teaching of XiTsonga as an academic subject in their schools, especially heads of schools and parents.

XiTsonga was then added onto the Great Zimbabwe Universitys education degrees' list in 2021. To apply for XiTsonga Bachelor of Education Secondary Pre-Service programme, the entry requirements are relaxed in order to get students. Since most potential candidates do not have XiTsonga educational background, to qualify for the programme, they can be either first language speakers or should be able to speak and understand the language. As such, entry requirements include mature entry, Advanced Level ('A' Level) and sometimes

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relevant diplomas. This was the case with the first group of Bachelor of Education students who just learnt the language at primary level and had no secondary studies in XiTsonga.

Informal conversations with lecturers indicated that XiTsonga teacher educators got their XiTsonga qualifications in South Africa at the University of Venda. Some got the Bachelor of Arts qualification at Great Zimbabwe University but under the tutorship of South African lecturers from University of Venda and later left for South Africa for higher level degrees. These lecturers are now leading a teacher capacity-programme, enabling qualified teachers from XiTsonga speaking areas to obtain the XiTsonga degree qualification, a ground-breaking initiative for promoting 'minority languages' in teacher development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Marginalisation of indigenous languages remains a challenge in most countries across the globe. The proclamation of the decade 2022-2032 as an International Decade of Indigenous Languages and the ultimate assignment of the international organisations namely, UNESCO and other United Nations system entities, to lead the focus on indigenous languages, is a signal to the world of a serious crisis in the development of native languages. The perpetuated colonial label, 'minority languages' has disadvantaged many indigenous languages, with some gradually disappearing. XiTsonga, as one among many other languages that suffered, has struggled to get recognition in post-colonial Zimbabwean education. Its inclusion in teacher education in 2021 has, therefore, been characterised by challenges and emotions. Hence, this study seeks to explore the experiences among the pioneering XiTsonga academic staff and raise awareness for other opportunities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This inquiry sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do Great Zimbabwe University XiTsonga lecturers perceive the inclusion of the language in teacher education as native speakers?
2. Why is the teaching of XiTsonga in teacher education challenging?
3. What other opportunities can be utilised to develop the XiTsonga language in education?

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study on the elevation of an indigenous language that has suffered isolation for decades is informed by the Decolonisation Theory, which posits that colonialism had a profound impact on African cultures, minds and societies aiming at enslaving, dehumanising locals and destroying their identity and humanity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). As such, decolonisation is a process of overcoming these lasting impacts and reclaiming indigenous identities and cultures (Belfi and Sandiford, 2021). This is why Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) sees it as a liberation project. Through a gradual process, indigenous communities are in the process of redefining themselves in the various spheres of life that have been unjustly diluted by colonisers. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2019) is of the opinion that as colonialism was a vast process of invading all spheres of people's lives, decolonisation has to be similarly massive in transformation.

In the linguistic sphere, the marginalisation of native languages was one way of depriving the indigenous people of full humanity, bringing foreign human qualities which, in turn, damaged their personality (Ndhlovu, 2019). To decolonise languages, the focus is on the elevation of indigenous languages to a level where they can be accepted as academic languages, media of instruction as well as languages for general public communication (Ndimande-Hlongwa and Wildsmith, 2010). Mapara (2023) adds that indigenous languages should also be accepted as languages of development and determinants of certain ways of living for decolonisation to be considered complete. Through the Decolonisation Theory, the current study considers the inclusion of XiTsonga in teacher development as one step towards decolonisation of previously denigrated languages in Zimbabwean education.

METHODOLOGY

This research used the qualitative approach and the case study design. The methodology was meant to get an in-depth understanding of XiTsonga lecturers' opinions and feelings on the inclusion of their mother language in the teacher education curriculum. The approach also helped in exploring the reasons behind their thoughts and behaviours (Elo and Kyngas, 2008). The detailed, in-depth and intensive examination of the teaching of XiTsonga at the Great Zimbabwe University (case study) helped in capturing the context and lived reality of XiTsonga teacher educators (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The case study was very convenient to

the researcher, who is a lecturer there, which made her have a better understanding of the particular issue. A sample of three lecturers, who were the only XiTsonga language instructors at the institution, was purposively selected for the study. As pioneers of the programme, these practitioners had real experiences sought by this study (Flyvbjerg, 2011) and provided depth and quality data as emphasised by qualitative research. The lecturers were assigned labels A, B and C. While interviews were the primary source of data, the study also drew on relevant documents including module outlines, handouts and programme regulations. These documents, along with lecturers' written texts such as teaching notes, were analysed to validate and contextualise the interview findings. The approach allowed for a comprehensive capture of participants' ideas, views and beliefs on the significance and challenges coming with the recognition of the language in teacher education. Presentation and discussion of findings were done under themes drawn from the research questions and collected data.

Limitations

The study involved only three lecturers. This limited sample size may restrict the generalisability of the findings to other contexts or institutions. However, this limitation is mitigated by the fact that these three lecturers were the only XiTsonga language instructors at the institution. As such, they constituted a complete and representative sample for this specific case study, enabling an in-depth exploration of their experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, the study's focus on a single institution and language department may limit the applicability of the findings to broader contexts. Nevertheless, this narrow focus allowed for a rich and contextually grounded understanding of the phenomena under investigation which would have been difficult to achieve with a larger sample. The researcher's position within the institution could introduce potential bias in data interpretation. To address this, the insider status was leveraged to facilitate access to participants, enhance rapport and provide deeper understanding of institutional dynamics whilst upholding research integrity.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The research found out that because the language has previously been

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disadvantaged, lecturers were excited by the development though facing several challenges in the teaching-learning process. The lecturers interviewed then proposed potential solutions to address the challenges.

The Significance of Including XiTsonga in Zimbabwean Teacher Education

Lecturers indicated that the teaching of XiTsonga to student teachers is a major development in the area of education. According to Lecturer A, this has a positive impact in the teaching-learning process. He said:

The significance of the inclusion of XiTsonga in the educational curriculum is its development and using it as a medium of instruction in schools, enhancing the understanding of various subjects.

His sentiments imply that learners in XiTsonga speaking areas are going to benefit from the qualified XiTsonga teachers. This is based on the assumption that learners understand better when they are taught through the mother tongue (Viriri, 2017). The trained XiTsonga teachers will introduce the teaching of XiTsonga in the respective language and learners will understand more. Historically, Shona was predominantly used in schools and public communication in XiTsonga-speaking areas. This resulted in negative attitudes towards the local language, even among native speakers, to an extent that not many were comfortable to be identified with their own language. This is the scenario not only among the Tsonga people, but in communities whose languages have been side-lined due to various reasons (Viriri, 2017). As a result, almost everyone in the Tsonga areas can speak the language.

Lecturer C was of the opinion that the introduction of XiTsonga in the teacher education curriculum shows that the university has a policy that embraces and values all languages. By including the language subject, it shows recognition of cultural diversity and people of various identities. The act of including formerly-marginalised languages makes the speakers feel valued, welcomed, respected, included, and that they fully belong to the university community. He said:

The inclusion of XiTsonga as a formerly side-lined language is a reflection of inclusivity and a realisation of the need to revisit policy matters that have created the disadvantaging language stratum.

From the above sentiments, GZU as an institution whose niche is biased towards

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culture, has tried to pursue its mandate of promoting indigenous languages. Eight of them; XiTsonga, Venda, Kalanga, Nambya, Tonga, Sotho Xhosa and Sign language have Teacher Capacity programmes currently running whilst Ndau and Tswana have recently been introduced for the year 2024 to make a total of ten.

Lecturer C also expressed his joy for being one of the first teacher educator of XiTsonga. He feels that his contributions in shaping the Bachelor of Education Secondary Pre-Service XiTsonga programme are great since the process involved a lot of activities, for example crafting regulations, preparation of modules, researching and publishing in the language, preparation of teaching materials and the production of the first degreed XiTsonga teachers in general. These efforts can never be underestimated because they have taken the language to another level. He indicated:

One feeling that immediately grips me is that of been part of, and a contributor to the broader language family within educational circles, in the country and beyond.

Lecturer B had this to say:

The language is evolving and gaining recognition as an official language of the country

She felt that the inclusion of XiTsonga shows that the language is developing and slowly gaining recognition as an official language. Since its declaration as an official language in 2013, this has been one of the major developments in the language side by side with usage in courts and broadcasting.

The lecturers' sentiments highlight the positive impact of incorporating XiTsonga in teacher training. The inclusion of XiTsonga in the teacher education program promotes cultural diversity and recognition of previously marginalised languages. Lecturer C's statement emphasises the importance of inclusivity and valuing diverse identities, which can lead to a sense of belonging among speakers of formerly side-lined languages. The university's efforts to promote indigenous languages are evident in the introduction of teacher capacity programmes in ten languages, including XiTsonga. These initiatives underscore the significance of XiTsonga's official recognition, with the language evolving and gaining recognition through its use in courts, broadcasting, and education. The establishment of Avuxeni FM, a community radio station that

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broadcasts in XiTsonga, further contributes to the language's growth and promotion. The inclusion of XiTsonga in the teacher education programme at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) marks a significant milestone in the development and promotion of the language, reflecting the university's commitment to inclusivity and recognition of cultural diversity. This move can have a profound impact on the identity and self-perception of XiTsonga-speaking students and communities, enhancing their educational experience and contributing to the preservation and development of Zimbabwe's rich linguistic heritage. Ultimately, the introduction of XiTsonga as a medium of instruction can help challenge historical language policies that have disadvantaged certain groups, promoting a more inclusive and equitable education system, and positioning the language to play an increasingly important role in Zimbabwe's social, cultural, and economic development.

Challenges Faced by XiTsonga Lecturers

Lecturer C felt that they were being drawn back by the denigrating language used to refer to their language (XiTsonga), and felt that it worked against efforts being made to elevate all indigenous languages to the same level as Shona and Ndebele. He said:

We are products of politico-linguistic marginalisation and there remains, notoriously, such hangovers like still being referred to as minor(ity) groups, 'other' languages while Shona and Ndebele remain the Zimbabwean 'major' languages. Such talks are resistant to socio-academic erasure and thus disturbing.

These results concur with Ndhlovu's (2007:129) comment that speakers of 'minority' languages are labelled using derogatory terminology that describe these communities as groups whose "linguistic and cultural identities are inherently substandard, inferior and backward."

Lecturer B had this to say:

Lack of enough sources, we usually use English texts. This reduces the terminology development especially in our students since they are supposed to read for themselves from different language texts. We end up spoon feeding them trying to make them develop their terminology quickly.

Not enough resource materials have been developed in the language. This is because the language subject is new in the curriculum. Both lecturers and students, therefore, used reading material on languages that is written in English and apply to their own. Translation

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skills are therefore a prerequisite which the students do not possess. An analysis of their programme regulations showed that there is no module on translation studies too. Evidence showed that lecturers would, therefore, prepare notes for students. This becomes a cause for concern since the teaching learning process ends up being teacher-centred. One would then ask whether there can be meaningful learning when learners are being spoon fed. Does spoon feeding quicken terminology development? Besides reducing the terminology development in students, it minimises understanding among students. The use of unfamiliar language used to publish material forced the lecturers to use ineffective and teacher-centred teaching techniques which undermined their efforts to teach and students' effort to learn, leading to low academic achievement (Moyana, 1989; ADEA Newsletter, 2005).

Lecturer A emphasised lack of online resources:

As lecturers, in the teaching process we face challenges of resources in this language, especially the digital ones.

Another equally disturbing challenge was the calibre of students taught. The normal route in Zimbabwe is for one to go through Advanced Level where a foundation for degrees studies is laid. One can only study a degree that is related to areas studied at Advanced Level but as for this programme, students did not have the required background. One then wonders if students can be groomed to become effective XiTsonga teachers within four years of study when they enter university when they are unable to write the language and speak it fluently. There is, therefore, need to align and effect policies throughout the education system so that they feed into each other. This is one major challenge being faced by the practitioners according to Lecturer A, who said:

Also some of the students we get for Bachelor of Education do not have a strong background in XiTsonga language, some are just speakers who do not know how to write, while some are not even fluent in the language and yet we are meant to teach content rather than proficiency

This was confirmed from their modules in which lecturers are expected to teach content, pedagogics and professional issues. What then will happen to these student teachers with weak backgrounds when they practise real teaching? Is the quality of the product not

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compromised? Dividing the students into two groups can be a solution rather than mixing students who already understand, speak the language fluently and can write the language with those with weaker backgrounds (Valdes, 1995).

Lecturer B pointed out heavy loads as one of the challenges faced. He said:

Lecturers are overwhelmed because they have the in-service capacity programmes too which have large numbers of students.

Lecturer A added:

There are only three full-time XiTsonga lecturers.

Lecturers described a scenario whereby their teaching loads are heavy and they are expected to supervise all the students in research too. The lecturers also have other duties besides teaching and supervising research which include research and publication, community service, innovation and industrialisation and teaching practice supervision.

Lecturers' perspectives offer valuable insights into the complexities of teaching XiTsonga, revealing challenges that impact the language's development and the students' learning experiences.

XiTsonga lecturers face numerous challenges, including linguistic marginalisation, resource constraints, lack of student preparedness, and workload issues. Linguistic marginalisation is a significant challenge, where the language is described in denigrating terms, perpetuating negative attitudes towards its speakers. This marginalisation can lead to a lack of recognition and support for the language, affecting its development and use in academic and professional settings. Resource constraints are another major challenge, with a scarcity of teaching materials, particularly in digitalisation, and reliance on English texts. This hinders effective teaching and learning, and the absence of a module on translation studies in the program regulations exacerbates the issue. Students' lack of background in XiTsonga and insufficient language proficiency also pose significant challenges. Some students enter the Bachelor of Education program without a strong foundation in XiTsonga, which can compromise their ability to teach the language effectively. Furthermore, workload issues, including heavy teaching loads, research, and supervision responsibilities, can compromise the quality of work. With only three full-time XiTsonga lecturers, the workload can be unsustainable, leading to

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potential burnout and decreased productivity. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to promote the language, develop resources, and support lecturers and students

Suggestions

The experts encouraged support from already developed indigenous languages. Lecturer C said:

Conscientising speakers of formerly privileged languages to rethink their attitudes towards Xitsonga by doing away with connotation-loaded talks along corridors. Such attitude insidiously erodes self-esteem in our students making them aspire to escape to other programmes.

Members of the various indigenous speech communities should come to understand that all "indigenous languages are foundations of minority inclusion, providing a basis for equality and effective participation in public, economic and social life" (Valdes, 1995). These speech communities should be pillars in the development of every indigenous language. It is also prudent for both students and lecturers to be exposed to events and efforts that educate on the value of languages such as the International Decade for Indigenous Languages and Mother Language Day celebrations to decolonise minds.

Lecturer C opined:

The University should consider such area as componential of its niche, review viability downwards and incentivise.

To participate in this function, XiTsonga lecturers are appealing to the University to downsize the number of students required to take off a programme and accommodate small classes for the language. This is because the language is still new in the curriculum, attracting very few students, has a very limited pool of speakers and is still developing. Apart from that, the lecturers require financial support to motivate them when performing tasks related to language development such as developing lexicography and preparation of teaching and learning material for the language which is still scarce. They also need research funds as suggested by Lecturer B. XiTsonga lecturers need to participate in marketing strategies such as recruitment campaigns and conduct follow-up activities on students on Teaching Practice and guide them as many times as possible since they are the first group to practise teaching XiTsonga in schools.

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The lecturers' suggestions for promoting XiTsonga include conscientising speakers of formerly privileged languages to rethink their attitudes towards the language, emphasising the importance of indigenous languages in promoting minority inclusion, equality, and effective participation. They also suggest exposing students and lecturers to events such as the International Decade for Indigenous Languages and Mother Language Day celebrations to decolonise minds. Furthermore, the university should consider reviewing its policies to support the growth of XiTsonga, such as accommodating small class sizes and providing financial support to lecturers for tasks like developing lexicography and teaching materials. Additionally, lecturers' participation in marketing strategies, recruitment campaigns, and follow-up activities can help increase interest in the language program and ensure its sustainability. By implementing these strategies, the university can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for the development of XiTsonga and other indigenous languages.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that including previously marginalised languages like XiTsonga in education is a positive step, but more work is needed to make a real impact. The introduction of XiTsonga in teacher training has improved teaching and learning, and speakers feel more included. However, challenges like negative labelling, limited resources, and heavy workloads for lecturers need to be addressed. To move forward, support from other language groups, flexible policies, and funding for development projects are essential. By working together, we can promote linguistic diversity and support the growth of previously marginalised languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Compulsory Teaching of XiTsonga**: XiTsonga should be made a compulsory subject in lower levels of education in XiTsonga-speaking schools to promote language proficiency and cultural identity among young learners.
- **Collaborative Works**: Collaboration among indigenous language intellectuals should be encouraged to share knowledge, resources, and best

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practices in language development and education. This can include joint research projects, workshops, and publications.

- **Support for Minority Language Intellectuals**: Support and resources to minority language intellectuals, including training, mentorship, and funding for research and language development projects should be provided.

- **Introduction of Previously-Marginalised Languages**: Previously marginalised languages, including XiTsonga, in various teacher training institutions should be introduced to ensure that future teachers are equipped to teach these languages and promote linguistic diversity.

- **Meaningful Implementation of International Policies**: Meaningful implementation of international policies on indigenous language development, such as the International Decade for Indigenous Languages, to promote linguistic diversity and support the rights of indigenous language speakers should be ensured.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can work towards promoting linguistic diversity, supporting the development of indigenous languages, and ensuring that language speakers have access to quality education and opportunities for language development.

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