Language Identity and the Development of Multilingualism in South Africa

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ABSTRACT Eleven languages have been declared official in the South African Constitution, which was adopted in 1996. Some citizens, especially Blacks, fail to acknowledge that the African languages are just as good and official as English. Black South Africans were to a greater extent made to believe that it is civilized to speak a "prestigious" European language. It is very important to develop all official languages into functional languages in all spheres of life. Terminology plays a pivotal role in language development and the promotion of multilingualism. Terminology, as a discipline, is governed by the language policy of the country. Language and culture are inextricable. Through language, people convey their sense of belonging, solidarity and some cultural practices, for example, educational child-rearing norms. If African languages in education are phased out, their users' social identity as South Africans is also phased out.