

## Arguments For and Against the Use of Indigenous African Languages in South African Schools

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**ABSTRACT** The continued use of European languages in African classrooms has been labeled by some as 'linguistic imperialism' in the literature. Questionable arguments have been advanced to justify the official neglect of indigenous African languages in education, but the reality is that such arguments are no longer valid. Efforts by some African governments to remedy the situation have been mediocre at best. For instance, South Africa has 11 official languages but English and Afrikaans remain the *de facto* mediums of instruction in schools. No significant efforts are being made to develop and encourage the use of indigenous African languages in schools. In addition, Departments of African languages are being scaled down in South African universities, and the colleges of Education which were at the forefront of teaching these languages have been closed down. This paper attempts to look at the challenges and prospects of making the concept of 11 official languages a reality in South Africa classrooms.