

The Importance of African Languages and Indigenous Knowledge in Higher Education Curricula: Towards Cultural Preservation and the Exploration of New Phenomena for Social Wellbeing

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Abstract: The inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the curricula of higher education can help students develop the intellectual capacity to understand the relationship between people and their environment. Indigenous knowledge is information produced within indigenous cultures, which includes social interaction, language, cultural beliefs, natural remedies, spirituality, history, and another indigenous knowledge. Integrating indigenous knowledge into teaching and learning can help to promote indigenous knowledge and strengthen transmission from one generation to the next. It will also assist modern scientists in scientific innovation and progress, notably in herbal medicines and other social natural resources. Understanding the components of indigenous knowledge is important as it can lay the foundations for cultural sustainability and has a positive impact on communities. The importance of understanding aspects of indigenous knowledge can be the basis for cultural sustainability and its positive impact on society. Including African languages in curricula would strengthen the language and help preserve the African identity. He draws on Lev Vygotsky's theory of social analysis, which emphasizes the need to learn supplementary information and to build on one's own knowledge. The document argues that the integration of indigenous languages and knowledge in higher education would strengthen the human mind, foster the spirit of ubuntu, strengthen social cohesion and the sustainability of knowledge development, and strengthen the use of indigenous languages.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge sustainability, cultural identity, science and technology development, and supporting indigenous language

Introduction

Teaching and learning indigenous languages and skills would help students to gain a deep understanding of themselves and the world around them. Teaching and strengthening indigenous languages, as well as having indigenous knowledge, can all help to preserve history. Besides, the indigenous language of a human being is everything to him or her. The language of a person reveals his or her identity, including personality, thinking process, history, geographical origin, nationality, and relations with other ethnic groups [1]. It is the language in which the mother communicates with the child when the child is in the womb of the mother, and it is the language in which the child is accepted after birth. This is why it is commonly called a mother tongue: it is the language in which the child is taught by the mother and raised. It's the language of his tribe, bestowed upon them by the creator [2]. Students should therefore not be separated from the language they speak and should be taught it even in higher education, as it carries the customs, history, and other values of the ethnic group [3]. The importance of preserving the languages and traditions of the original languages and of preserving valuable intangible cultural heritage. This helps the nation to remain forever, not disappear, and to perpetuate its history and its richness forever. Studying languages and indigenous knowledge helps to preserve the cultural, humane, and respectful heritage of an ethnic group and to restore the sense of pride in one's nationality [4]. South Africans should be proud of their mother tongues. Unfortunately, people feel shame for not being able to communicate in English. Apartheid has had a profound impact on the inability of the Zulu language to be treated with dignity [5]. In 1976, youth protested the need to discontinue the teaching of all subjects in Afrikaans. The government preferred the apartheid system to other languages. Students won and gained freedom of

English, leaving behind Zulu and other indigenous languages. English is the language of communication; however, many South Africans appear to prefer English to their own [6]. This may lead to the loss of indigenous languages, which in turn may lead to the disappearance of a nation or ethnic group.

This article argues that most students who enrol in higher education institutions are still relatively young, having reached the age of 18 or less. This means that they need to be further strengthened so that they can grow up knowing the value of language and indigenous knowledge and be able to learn more about the world [7]. In other words, they must continue to be armed with the weapons of their own language and the indigenous knowledge that is associated with their tribe.

The Significance of Indigenous Languages and Knowledge

Each state has a unique cultural value that differentiates it from the other states. A nation is defined by its religious traditions. In other words, a nation should maintain its norms, customs, and traditions. Loss of cultural heritage is tantamount to loss of a nation's history. Preserving cultural values and standards for the next generation can be achieved by introducing indigenous languages as an issue in higher education institutions [7]. Including indigenous language courses can play a key role in preventing the language and heritage of a nation from disappearing. The cultural value of an ethnic group extends to everyone born in that nation. There is a value in each person that affects him or her personally, that affects the family, which may be clan names, veteran's names, and a value that affects the ethnic group, which is the festivals that are celebrated all over the country. A national treasure or heritage is what unites a nation to be united and to grow in dignity, knowing who they are and where they come from.

- **To preserve the history of the nation or ethnic group-** The nation's language carries on the nation's history and origins, revealing the nation's origins and its linguistic ties to other nations [8].
- **To preserve a rich language** - Proverbs, idioms, and metaphors make up a rich language. This makes people aware of their language's richness. This contributes to the preservation of the language and nation, preventing them from disappearing and ensuring that they remain eternally [9].
- **To preserve the customs and cultural values of the nation or ethnic group-** Culture and tradition are compatible with the way of honoring that nation. This impacts respect, including the use of respectful language, the preservation of historic nature (mountains, rivers, woods, etc.), and the celebration of national ceremonies [10].
- **To improve language skills-** Language and language comprises verbal art, which is a way of using words figuratively using idioms, proverbs, metaphors, and other forms of speech [11].

This allows you to explore languages, such as writing poetry and other genres, to coin new words as technology advances, and to invent new idioms and sayings that are relevant to the times. Skills include the naming of new words, the metaphorical use of words for writing poems and hymns, writing and singing national anthems, creating stories based on memories or events, writing songs, and many others.

The Importance of Studying Indigenous Knowledge in Higher Education

Every ethnic group has considerable knowledge of its environment. Protestantism is everything to them. A nation depends on it for its environment. Protestantism is everything to them. Indigenous knowledge is based on the environment around them. They can feed nature and find food, clothes, and things to use so that life can continue based on nature. Indigenous knowledge refers to information, skills, and ideologies that societies develop through significant contact with the environment [12]. Local expertise helps rural and indigenous peoples to make decisions on key aspects of their daily lives. The person who lives in this geographic place has a way of life that works with others by looking at life as a resource, by looking at the environment as a resource. Sometimes, after studying weather and nature, a wonderful idea occurs to you. Indigenous knowledge includes beliefs based on natural phenomena.

This belief spread and eventually became the belief of a whole nation or ethnic group. These beliefs become traditions. Indigenous knowledge can be described as complex knowledge systems that are built up over time by a particular group of people in a particular area and passed on from one generation to the next. It includes environmental, scientific, and agricultural information, as well as teaching and learning methods. In human interaction, ideational factors are widely held or interdependent beliefs that are not reducible to individual personalities. These common beliefs create motivation for thoughtful individuals and motivation for thoughtful individuals. However, indigenous knowledge can manifest itself in different ways. It may appear to someone who has been told it in a dream or as a sign of the ritual to be performed [13]. It can start with one family, then spread to other groups, and eventually to a whole country. Some

people may continue to practice the custom without fully understanding its origin. But indigenous knowledge reveals the intelligence of the people who live in a particular area by showing how they use the environment as a resource for their livelihood.

Functions and Relevance of Indigenous Knowledge

Reviving the knowledge, religion, or belief of a whole nation or ethnic group. Every nation has its religion, and it has its way of influencing the environment. Every nation is protected by its traditions. Thus, there is a process that is followed when communicating with the ancestors of a tribe [14]. This practice is becoming a national religion. Example: A Zulu tribe often goes to the mountain for prayer and to ask for rain from their ancestor, *uNomkhubulwane*. Every year, the country celebrates its unique achievements. These ceremonies are considered a national religion or a prayer. We pray and communicate with the ancestors of our nation. Religion is a form of prayer that helps people connect with their ancestors and their creators. It is believed that ancestors are responsible for preserving and controlling the environment in which humans live. Spirituality encompasses everything we do to communicate with our ancestors. This faith or belief has been passed down by previous generations. It's considered an indigenous wisdom, transmitted from the ancestors.

To empower indigenous peoples with knowledge of nature and healing plants - To educate and teach them about the value of nature in traditional medicine. Understanding how to exploit the natural environment, including trees, medicinal herbs, grasses, and animal parts [16]. This is all-natural human knowledge, based on nature.

Learning and teaching about preserving culture, customs, and practices are compatible with certain environmental concerns. The customs of a nation or ethnic group shall be regarded as the customs of that ethnic group or nation. Some customs, such as *Umkhosi Womhlanga* (Zulu reed ceremony), which involve the whole of the nation and customs performed for specific people, each person or family, must therefore be preserved for future generations. This custom has a reason, and there are rational reasons why it is practiced. However, there are also reasons and beliefs why this custom is practiced.

Reviewing Literature

The importance of learning the mother tongue. A mother tongue or indigenous language is a weapon that can be used to defend oneself, such as speaking and expressing oneself in any situation, earning money by rhyming poetry, interpreting, etc. This means that the person must be nurtured by studying the language and growing up with it to learn more about the culture of the language. Language is everything to a person or a nation. or ethnicity. Languages convey what comes out of a person's mind and is reflected in their behavior, which reflects their beliefs. Virtue is all about language. When speaking one's language, one can express oneself more effectively [17]. Consequently, students must be taught the importance of originality. Children should learn and develop their indigenous language in ways that help them to retain their mother tongue forever. Language can be seen not only as a tool of communication but also as a symbol of social or group identity and a symbol of group solidarity. This underlined that the language is not only a means of communication but is also considered to represent the nationality or ethnic origin of the speaker. Language is a symbol of citizenship, allowing people to distinguish languages by nationality [17].

Resistance to change is more important because South Africa is a democracy, which means that all languages are equal, and all languages have a place; no one language is better than another. In the absence of the inclusion of languages in the curriculum of higher education, it remains a case of the inferiority of indigenous languages. This is no different from the policy of the apartheid era on education. During the apartheid and oppression era in South Africa, the educational system was set up in a discriminatory and discriminatory framework for other languages, which ultimately resulted in many black students being excluded from high-quality education [18]. This was particularly true of the higher education process, as can be seen from the choice of skin colour, which ultimately created the difference in higher education, the so-called black universities and the white universities. Although there are universities specifically designed for black people, such as books and textbooks are available in English, and the activities of the class are in English.

Before the university, the languages spoken were English and Afrikaans. Indigenous languages were taught and ordered by adding modules in black universities, and there was no serious interest in indigenous language teaching in the period [18]. After the publication of the Democratic Constitution in 1994, the government pledged to improve the quality of education. This commitment is deeply rooted in the objectives of the democratic constitution, which promotes equality, freedom, respect for the dignity of the individual, and non-discrimination (South Africa, 1996). However, in higher education, there appears to be no change in the respect for indigenous languages.

The Importance of Preserving Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge is the source of wisdom for a nation or ethnic group that is relevant to how to live or be alive in harmony with nature. Indigenous knowledge is based on natural resources that people exploit for a living. Nature means everything to a person or a nation. However, every person is born into a world surrounded by natural resources for them to earn a living. All indigenous knowledge and livelihood strategies rely on nature as a tool to be used to preserve livelihoods [18]. It is therefore vital to conserve knowledge that shows the wisdom and practice of those who came before us (in the primitive world) in terms of how they earned their living. This may help people today to see what they can gain from techniques used before the development of the current way of life and from the strategies and knowledge used in primitive times. Not only do they know, but they've developed this knowledge through the practice of many other livelihoods besides piracy.

The Significance of Indigenous Knowledge Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Teaching and learning about indigenous cultures can inspire students to take pride in their national identity. They also benefit from approaches to the development of livelihood activities compatible with modern technologies. Higher education is a knowledge base that can help students learn more about different aspects of self-development through indigenous knowledge. This may help preserve the origin of knowledge about archaic human intelligence. It can also help children to distinguish between customs and ethnic group religions that impose sanctions on individuals to change their behaviour because of certain cultures that continue to oppress people. The Zulu people have a variety of traditions that date back to ancient times. When one looks closely at the customs of the Zulu people, some of them are oppressive towards women. By studying deeply and gaining a broad understanding of cultures, we can help break the shackles of the past. In universities and colleges, courses are taught that are linked to work. There are no courses to teach students more about their language and indigenous knowledge. According to the three-year NCV programme, levels 2, 3, and 4 of the programme are available.

To achieve each level, the student must take seven subjects, which require a full year of study. The three required core subjects students must take are language, life orientation, and mathematics or mathematical literacy. In addition, students are enrolled in four vocational courses, from which they can choose between business, engineering, or general studies [19]. This means that the NCV certificate is studied for three years and is implemented at the second, third, and fourth levels. Each level requires one year of study. The student must enrol in seven courses for each level. The certificate contains three compulsory courses: Mathematics (Mathematics and Mathematics literacy), English language, and Life Orientation. Then, the student must complete four courses in his preferred field of commerce, engineering, or general studies. This quote shows how indigenous languages are neglected in schools and institutions.

Research Design and Methodology

This study used a qualitative research method focused on the interpretive paradigm to examine the use of indigenous languages and the integration of indigenous knowledge in higher education institutions. The transcendental paradox is also known as the phenomenological approach. It's an approach that's used to better understand individuals rather than just to monitor the behaviour of their populations. The interpretative paradigm, therefore, focuses on evaluating the social actions of communities to achieve understanding. The aim is to describe and analyse everyday events, such as habits and other phenomena, as well as other factors that affect social structures and human values. Qualitative research collects information on what is being studied or answers key research questions from participants in the environment in which they work or live. A researcher can assess the meaning of what he has seen if he has seen the participants perform a task as they normally would. Data for this study were purchased through interviews with both native speakers who study languages at university and those who study other fields at university. They were deliberately selected as participants to include relevant and informed individuals who could answer questions and provide relevant information for the study. A point of purpose is often to gain access to knowledgeable individuals, that is, persons with significant knowledge of a particular subject due to their work, their position, access to networks, their expertise, or experience. Data for this study were collected at two universities: the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Technology in Durban. The participants were students. Analysis of data is an essential part of the process of differentiation. The process of evaluating and identifying research data involves reviewing, arranging, and dividing it into parts, seeking parallels and differences, to reveal patterns in the data. This is what the scientist did after he collected the data. The researcher then wrote subtopics to differentiate between them.

Strategies to mitigate bias and ethical considerations and approval

Researchers must actively recognise and address any possible bias they may have, including personal, political or cultural bias, before starting their research. Awareness of these biases is essential for ensuring the objectivity and

integrity of the entire study. The survey used multiple data collection methods to enhance validity and to reduce the risk of bias. In particular, the study combined participant observation with in-depth interviews with both lecturers and graduate students. This methodological triangulation allows cross verification of data sources and thus minimizes reliance on any single potentially biased view. Involving diverse participants students and lecturers ensured a broader representation of viewpoints, further enhancing the robustness of the findings. Additionally, the researcher rigorously maintained participant anonymity and confidentiality, upholding ethical standards and fostering an environment conducive to honest and open responses. Methodological triangulation: Using multiple data collection techniques to cross-check and validate findings. Diverse participant inclusion: Engaging varied stakeholder groups (e.g., lecturers and postgraduate students) to capture multiple perspectives. Ethical safeguards: Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality to promote trust and reduce social desirability bias. Together, these strategies enhance the credibility, reliability, and ethical rigor of the research by systematically addressing potential biases.

Theory of Lev Vygotsky

For this study, the Vygotsky theory of constructivism (1896) was chosen to analyse the data collected from the participants. Vygotsky (1978) studies the processes of social learning and learning retention. The theory is based on studies of how people learn. meditation. It states that people develop their awareness and knowledge of the world by doing things and reflecting on those actions. When we discover something new, we must reconcile it with our past experiences, which can mean changing our beliefs or dismissing the new knowledge as insignificant. In any case, we are actively creating our knowledge. To do this, we need to question, investigate, and evaluate what we know. The theory is based on observations on how people learn. It claims that people acquire awareness and knowledge of the world through understanding and reflection on their own experiences. When we encounter something new, it has to be consistent with our previous beliefs, which can cause us to reevaluate our beliefs or discard irrelevant information. This theory emphasizes that we create our knowledge through meditation. To do this, we need to ask questions, find out, and figure out what we know. It also highlights the relationship between the student's previous knowledge and the culture of the place where he is learning, which is in line with the research under consideration. Universities are based on the principle that students should be actively involved in their education, particularly in higher education institutions [20].

Data Collection Method

Research data was gathered from two KwaZulu-Natal universities: the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Durban University of Technology. Participants are chosen via purposive sampling.

Table 1: The illustration depicts the division of participants as follows

Participants	University	Participants classification	Number of participants
Students	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Students are studying the indigenous language (isiZulu) as their native language.	5
Students	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Students of different disciplines are studying the isiZulu language as an added module for one year.	5
Students	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Students of different races are studying basic isiZulu for one year during their studies.	5
Students	Durban University of Technology	Three students from different fields whose native language is their native language, and two from another race	5
Total number of students.			20

A set of semi-structured interview questions was employed. The researcher and the researcher collected information by speaking with students they met on university grounds. There is no set number of participants. The study was aimed at all students of all races, including Zulu students who do not study in Zulu, students who speak other indigenous languages, students who speak English as their indigenous language, and mixed-race students (Indian, Muslim).

Data Presentation, Discussion, and Analysis

The Importance of Indigenous Languages in Higher Education

According to the survey, most students believe that indigenous languages, especially those that have an impact on culture, should be studied in all fields of higher education. The black students admitted that they were struggling. Here are some of the problems students face: lack of knowledge of rich vocabulary in indigenous languages - Students find it difficult to learn proverbs and idioms. They do not use idioms and expressions in proper language.

Nobuhle: *I do not know how to distinguish idioms and proverbs. Despite that, I don't know proverbs and proverbs and I can't explain their meaning.*

This shows that African students face a major obstacle in not using idioms, platitudes, and metaphorical discourse in their indigenous language. This shows the erosion of the richness of the Zulu language, especially in metropolitan areas where English is spoken alongside Zulu.

Failure to distinguish between cultural and Christian religions - A lot of people are confused about what traditional religion is and why they should adhere to it. They ask why there are two religions.

Zinhle: *I don't know which religion is more important than the other, as the elders promote the traditional religion. Do other tribes in other countries also have two religions, as is the case in South Africa?*

The questions about students' confusion show that they need to learn about black religion and practice. They make no distinction between culture and Christianity. They are confused about which religion to follow as experts in both fields offer conflicting opinions. The most striking aspect of this study is their ignorance of human religion and its meaning. Cultural and religious beliefs clash. Students have reported a rift between these religions.

Misunderstanding the importance of culture in the phase of human liberation- There is a misunderstanding about the importance of culture in the phase of human liberation. Every nation has its traditions, which we follow. These rituals are performed on a living person, on a dead person, or on someone who died long ago. In the Zulu people, customs begin when one is born, and one custom is established, and others follow as one grows up.

Pearl: *I still don't understand why cows and goats must be slaughtered when they are performing certain ceremonies. If those ceremonies were not performed, what would happen in my life?*

These questions show that there is much that students need to learn about the knowledge that influences the language of their traditional cultural knowledge. Include customs and the importance of carrying out cultural rituals. According to research, students of all races study isiZulu language at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. However, it seems necessary to add courses in other indigenous languages to the three stages of the one-year course.

Indigenous knowledge acquisition and teaching: Comments from university students

Comments by black African students on tuition and the transfer of indigenous knowledge. They said that although there are courses that integrate indigenous knowledge, they do not specialize in it. They expressed an interest in learning more about the country's past in terms of indigenous knowledge and many of its strategies and survival methods.

Nonhle: *Ancient people were able to live without hospitals and clinics; they were able to give birth to children without hospitals, and they were able to raise children without medicines available in the clinic. however, that information must be taught to compare it with the use of Western medicine.*

They pointed out and emphasized that those who lived in the ancient world had a great deal of knowledge of weather and the natural world. They said that the search for indigenous knowledge would help them compare it to what was written and recorded by scientists.

Other Ethnic Groups' Perspectives on Learning South African Indigenous Language and Knowledge.

They said they wanted to learn about South African indigenous languages. Others want to know how to tell the difference between the isiXhosa and the isiZulu languages and what they have in common in terms of indigenous knowledge.

Aakifah: *I would like to learn about language rules, euphemism languages, and why they should be utilised, as well as other ways to respect South African indigenous people.*

This shows that other nations or races want to learn more about South African indigenous languages and knowledge. Therefore, other ethnic groups must learn their mother tongue in higher education. In interviews, they also said that they wanted to know the language used in the royal houses of Africa for respect (for example, in the Zulu king's palace, you must bow as you come in, as if you were kneeling) and other South African royal customs, and how and why they were done. the desire to learn about the adoration of the king and the importance of clan names, courtship rituals, the custom of burning incense and candles to invoke ancestors, and the importance of traditional healers in terms of the use of medicinal herbs and their relationship with Western medicine and the influence of indigenous knowledge. According to the study, the University of KwaZulu-Natal is the only university where every programme has an IsiZulu language programme in all areas of study. According to the report, the University of KwaZulu-Natal is the only university with an IsiZulu language programme in all faculties. But this is not enough; the Zulu language must be studied for three or four years in any one of the faculties of all the universities of South Africa. A year's study is not enough time to specialize. The students are arriving without training, as expected. Most of them seem to have started learning Zulu at university. They need adequate time to learn to understand the language and other cultural, social, and sociological phenomena associated with this indigenous language. They also noted that some students seemed to disregard the importance of learning indigenous languages. This could lead to discouragement and a lack of recognition of the teaching of indigenous languages in the study. Students majoring in isiZulu may hesitate to participate in traditional tuition. Some of them don't even attend classes, but they show up when there's an emergency, such as a dispute over grades or assignments.

Problems facing students of other ethnicities who study the Zulu language

Comments from students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Some elements of the Zulu language have been difficult to understand when reading or studying.

Charlotte: *I fail to distinguish between singular and plural words (noun grouping and their object links), parts of speech, separating verbs and nouns, dividing words according to their categories, creating a connection between the words in a sentence, changing the tense, creating a negative sentence (changing present tense verbs from positive to negative) and pronouncing other letters, and so on.*

This shows that although some ethnic groups are learning Zulu, they still face barriers since the language is more prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal. Unfortunately, some Zulu speakers are not willing to learn and respect the Zulu language. The result was that the Zulu language lost its richness.

Regarding the study of indigenous knowledge, students said they wanted to learn more about human culture and why it developed. This will enable them to compare and differentiate their own culture from that of South Africa. In the Zulu tribe, for example, you don't look at the elders; you look down as a sign of respect. And the British people think you should look into your eyes. It's like reading people's minds, and they think that a person who hides his eyes is a criminal.

Learning about the knowledge contained in each culture - They said they wanted to learn about a culture to gain more knowledge of its techniques and then compare them to their own. they wish to study briefly the important cultural aspects of philanthropy. Studies for the purpose of celebrating national and international festivals. to know the importance of the circumcision of boys and the circumcision of girls, which is sacred. Learning is just a cultural phenomenon that is expected of you by virtue of your nationality. Issues encountered by students of different races studying Zulu (the mother tongue) in higher education: Students have reported difficulties communicating with those who only speak Zulu and Zulu. This is a challenge for them, working with people who don't speak English every day. Some have expressed a lack of understanding of the complexities of the African continent. They complain that they cannot see the saintliness of the saint. They stressed that African people are different when it comes to sentient thoughts. Some people joke when they're angry. But they want to know the symptoms of psychosis. [21] defines the expression of emotions through words, stating that language is defined as the communication of ideas and feelings through a system of arbitrary symbols, such as speech, sounds, or gestures, and that the system has rules on how to mix the elements of language, such as words. Language is a means of communication. It states that language is the communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of appropriate indicators, such as speech, sound, and physical contact. Students find that they cannot see the positive aspects of Africans, while others discreetly deny the rumours. This is problematic because we don't know what kind of person the martyr is. That leads to disagreeing and disagreeing with the kind of person. The inability to understand human emotions causes alienation and resentment.

Discussion and Findings of Research

Research shows that there is still a significant gap in the proficiency of languages other than English. Despite the achievement of democracy, the languages of the motherland continue to be victimized by violence. This is evidenced by the fact that indigenous peoples are unwilling to learn their language. The socio-political history of South Africa has largely contributed to the exclusion of indigenous languages from many workplaces and higher education settings. For many years, English and Afrikaans have served as the official languages of South Africa, to the detriment of the black languages. Based on interviews with participants in the study. Languages of origin should be taught in all academic fields of higher education. Miscellaneous. This can help preserve national history because the language carries a lot of baggage. Remembering the language is tantamount to the preservation of the state. Language unites a people; they can live together in peace, and together they can find solutions to poverty, crime, and other problems. The integration of indigenous languages into higher education can improve language skills. It can also help people reclaim their dignity [22]. People remember their nationality. It also allows people to see what is required of them as indigenous peoples in terms of preserving our national history for future generations. The language needs to be revived for the purposes of modernization. nonpartisan. The language needs support, which will be renewed and developed as technology advances. The Constitution of South Africa recognises 12 official languages, including sign language. The official languages of South Africa, besides English and Afrikaans, are Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swazi, Sotho, Pedi, Tsonga, Tswana, and Venda (South Africa Constitution 1996). The national language policy (1997) and other government documents stress the importance of national languages. Although every citizen is encouraged to learn and teach their indigenous language, it is also recommended that they learn other languages, especially the South African languages.

Conclusions and Suggestions

According to the study, teaching and nurturing students can trigger many skills in their lives: speech, name, writing and reciting poetry, writing short stories based on memories, composing musical pieces, and much more. This underlines the importance of developing indigenous languages in educational institutions and communities. Language can be improved by having poetry contests, plays, and theatre performances that show the life of the past, girl-favouring games where the boy uses exact words, and other games that help to improve language. The study shows that it is important to study languages to become proficient in them. It also restores the ability to use language and to communicate (creating a narrative). Higher education institutions are institutions that can help to teach and develop African languages and indigenous knowledge. On the other hand, indigenous knowledge contains rich information that reveals how people lived in the past, which can help us today if we update our methods of subsistence with technology. This study shows that studying languages and indigenous knowledge in higher education institutions can help to preserve national heritage, knowledge of human culture and nature, and their use in various fields, craftsmanship, traditional medicine, and many other disciplines. This knowledge can also help scientists to develop new ideas based on indigenous knowledge.

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Topic: The Importance of African Languages and Indigenous Knowledge in Higher Education Curricula: Towards Cultural Preservation and the Exploration of New Phenomena for Social Wellbeing.

Research Questions for the Lecturers

General Perspective

1. How do you perceive the current role of African languages and indigenous knowledge in higher education curricula?

2. In your view, what are the primary benefits of integrating African languages into university programs?

3. How can incorporating indigenous knowledge in higher education curricula contribute to preserving cultural heritage?

4. Can you share examples of how teaching African languages has impacted students' cultural identity and awareness?

5. What challenges do you encounter when trying to include African languages and indigenous knowledge in your courses?

For Postgraduate Students

Understanding and Experience

1. What motivated your interest in African languages and/or indigenous knowledge in your academic work?

2. How have African languages and indigenous knowledge been represented in your current studies?

3. In what ways has learning about African languages or indigenous knowledge influenced your understanding of cultural preservation?

4. How do you think your expertise in African languages and indigenous knowledge will influence your future career or academic path?

5. What changes would you like to see in higher education to better include African languages and indigenous knowledge for societal benefit?

