Challenges in Intellectualizing Sesotho for Use in Academic Publications

JOHANNES SIBEKO AND MMASIBIDI SETAKA-BAPELA

Abstract: This paper explores challenges in intellectualising Sesotho for academic works beyond literary-based theses. Italso overviews resources for the intellectualisation of official indigenous languages of South Africa, focusing on national translation projects for terminology development. Furthermore, it highlights efforts by the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources in creating and collecting corpora for all official languages, including Sesotho. Challenges in Sesotho lexicography, especially with corpus-based approaches, are discussed. Additionally, the paper reflects on the authors' experiences with publishing academic articles in Sesotho in South African journals. It discusses obstacles faced, and strategies employed, including dialogues with reviewers on creating new terms and choosing between Lesothan Sesotho and South African Sesotho orthographies. Finally, the essay addresses challenges posed by limited publication avenues for indigenous languages in southern Africa and academic pressures for citations and research impact. It aims to shed light on lesser-known indigenous languages in Southern Africa by spotlighting challenges and solutions to academic publications in Sesotho. Overall, the paper concludes that efforts at intellectualising Sesotho and other South African indigenous languages are evident. Even so, there is far less emphasis on using Sesotho and other indigenous languages for academic discourses.

Keywords: Indigenous languages, Intellectualisation, Sesotho, Language Resources

Introduction

The landscape of publishing in South Africa is primarily influenced by the prevalence of English and Afrikaans, despite the country being recognized as a multilingual and multicultural nation. According to Rosalie Finlayson and Mbulungeni Madiba (2002), there are between 24 and 30 spoken languages in South Africa. Of these languages, the South African Constitution officially recognizes a total of 12 languages, namely Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Siswati, isiNdebele, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, English,

https://doi.org/10.3998/jep.5408

Xitsonga, Tshivenda, and South African Sign Language (Republic of South Africa 1996). The 11 official written languages are typically grouped into five categories. The language groups are illustrated in Table 1 below. Note that the groupings in Table 1 include the South African Sign Language, which is not a spoken language.

Ongoing debates persist regarding whether Afrikaans should be considered an Indigenous language of Southern Africa or an adopted foreign language (Webb and Kriel 2000). However, for the purposes of this article, we define Indigenous languages as the nine officially recognized South African Bantu languages. The Nguni group languages, as well as the Sotho-Tswana languages, are largely mutually intelligible. That is, the speakers of these languages can understand each other without difficulty. However, it is important to note that Tshivenda and the languages in the Sotho-Tswana language group have limited spoken mutual intelligibility. Similarly, Xitsonga and the Nguni group exhibit very limited mutual intelligibility.

There exist published written materials in all official languages of South Africa. Even so, it is noteworthy that publishing is not confined solely to official languages. As such, there also exist publications in numerous Southern African languages that have yet to attain official status. Unfortunately, despite the available language options for publishing in South Africa and the affordances brought by the democratic government of the country since 1994, there have not been many developments in multilingual publication (Möller 2013). Instead, English and Afrikaans are still at the forefront of publications of all types in South Africa (Morgan 2006).

Academic publications in Southern Africa are also primarily authored in English and Afrikaans. Consequently, the Indigenous Bantu languages, primarily utilized for oral communication before attaining official status in 1996, continue to experience limited usage in written communication. Thus, the underrepresentation of Southern African Indigenous languages in both academic and non-academic publications persists as a pervasive issue, with these languages remaining marginalized across various aspects of linguistic expression.

To address the marginalization of previously overlooked Indigenous languages, Finlayson and Madiba (2002) advocate for a deliberate process of intellectualization. It

Table 1: South Africa's official languages and the language groups

Language group	Nguni	Nguni-Tsonga	Sotho-Tswana	Sotho-Makua-Venda	West Germanic	Signed
Languages	isiZulu	Xitsonga	Sesotho	Tshivenda	Afrikaans	South African Sign Language
	isiXhosa		Setswana		English	
	isiNdebele		Sepedi			
	Siswati					

is worth noting that we use the term "intellectualization" cautiously, recognizing the controversy surrounding its application in the context of Indigenous African languages (Kaschula and Maseko 2014). We align our understanding of intellectualization with Irina Turner's (2023) perspective, wherein intellectualization is seen as a means of catching up and closing the language resource gap resulting from years of neglect. This perspective challenges the notion that intellectualization serves as a method to catch up with linguistic complexity. Instead, an intellectualized language has the capacity to embrace the intellectual complexities of modernity and advanced contemporary thought, thereby aligning itself with sophisticated linguistic techniques (Prah 2007). Moreover, an intellectualized language gains empowerment, an enhanced status, and versatility across various domains (Letsoalo 2021). Desirably, an intellectualized language should have the capacity to discuss any issue regardless of its complexity (Khumalo 2017).

The lack of Sesotho terminology in our research presented a challenge when conveying complex concepts. We discovered that some ideas were easier to express in English than in Sesotho. Intellectualizing Sesotho will enable us to convey these concepts more easily in the future, facilitating discussions at the conventional register levels associated with complex issues.

It is important to note that the process of intellectualization is not isolated; instead, it must commence as languages develop, with the languages becoming intellectualized through active usage (Maseko 2011). As such, although Indigenous Southern African languages were previously confined to home use and excluded from public domains (Koai and Fredericks 2019), their recent integration into various public domains such as government, mainstream media, academia, and publishing signifies an elevated status and expanded scope of use. In this article, we consider the intellectualization of Sesotho across multiple fronts: the public education system, accessible dictionaries, university-level classroom instruction, and academic publishing.

In an effort to achieve the intellectualization of Indigenous languages, the South African Constitution has mandated a language board, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), to focus exclusively on the intentional development of previously marginalized languages of South Africa, including those that have been afforded official status and those that are yet to be afforded official status. The board has since released numerous policies to guide the intellectualization and the esteemed use of all official languages. Even so, Russell Kaschula and Pamela Maseko (2014) highlight the policy fatigue in South Africa whereby a lot of policies have been developed but relatively little action has been undertaken. Nonetheless, we expand more on evidence of action to intellectualize the Indigenous languages of South Africa.

In this article, we are particularly interested in the language resources that are available for Sesotho and the efforts to improve publications in the language. Apart from the comprehensive survey reports generated by the South African Centre for Digital

Language Resources (SADiLaR) for all official languages in South Africa, there is also a specific analysis of the basic language resource kit (BLARK) content for Sesotho (Sibeko and Setaka 2022). In their findings, Johannes Sibeko and Mmasibidi Setaka (2022) concluded that while Sesotho has experienced some development in terms of language resources, there remains a considerable need for further development. In this article, we highlight the need to further develop Sesotho for academic publishing.

Our Objective

The objective of this article is two-fold. First, it seeks to highlight the challenges associated with publishing academic materials in languages other than English within the South African context, with a specific emphasis on Sesotho. Second, the article aims to provide an overview of initiatives designed for the intellectualization of Indigenous languages in South Africa. The overarching goal is to identify resources utilized for the intellectualization of Indigenous South African languages, including Sesotho, in order to explore opportunities for their use in academic discourses.

While our discussion is centered on Sesotho, we acknowledge that the conditions described are not unique to either Sesotho or the broader Sotho-Tswana, or even the Sotho-Makua-Venda, language groups. Instead, they resonate with the broader context of many Southern African languages. Nevertheless, we give particular emphasis to Sesotho as it serves as our regular working language of focus and offers a platform for authentic reflections.

The subsequent sections of this article will present a background on Sesotho, address challenges related to Sesotho as a low-resourced language of learning, explore the dominance of English, and discuss challenges related to publishing in Sesotho. Our article ends with a concluding section, wherein we suggest recommendations for the composition and publication of works in Sesotho and other, particularly African, languages facing resource constraints, marginalization, and reduced usage.

Background on Sesotho as a Language

Sesotho serves as the home language for over 10 million individuals across South Africa, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe (Mojela 2016; Ndlovu 2011; Van Heerden et al. 2010). Like other Indigenous languages in the region, Sesotho underwent a development process, including written forms, primarily driven by Christian religious initiatives. The Christian missionaries introduced writing and reading in Sesotho in the 1830s to assist them in carrying out their religious missions (Lekhetho 2013; Nhlapo 2021). In fact, the orthographies of Sesotho were determined during the translations of the Christian Bible

(Moleleki 2012). Since then, like other official languages in Southern Africa, Sesotho has evolved into a language of instruction in educational settings within these countries. The use of Sesotho in print has over time extended to include, among others, the creation of newspaper articles, magazines, media, government communications, educational texts, and literature (Koai and Fredericks 2019; Moeketsi 2014; Sibeko and Setaka 2022).[1] It is also used in politics, media, religion, culture, and other domains (Marjie 2021).

Sesotho is also a subject of academic and educational inquiry. Note that the teaching of all 12 official languages as language subjects is incorporated into both elementary and higher education institutions in South Africa. In the South African basic education sector, Sesotho is taught at three proficiency levels: first language (L1), first additional language (L2), and second additional language (L3) levels. At the tertiary levels, Sesotho is taught from linguistics, applied linguistics, translation, communication, pedagogic, and literary perspectives. Consequently, there is a body of research on Sesotho from these different perspectives. This aligns with Turner (2023), who asserts that higher education drives intellectual transformation. Unfortunately, the majority of the findings from academic investigations are presented exclusively in English regardless of the language repertoires of the authors and possibly intended benefactors. For instance, the majority of journal articles on the structures of Sesotho and Sesotho infant language acquisition are written in English regardless of the authors' expertise in Sesotho.

Despite the interest in Indigenous African languages, it is disheartening to note that the practice of publishing original research in the Indigenous languages of Southern Africa remains exceedingly rare and continues to be overlooked and undermined (Letsoalo 2021). In South Africa, this worrisome condition is not exclusive to Sesotho. For instance, it took almost two centuries of writing in isiXhosa before the first doctorate theses were produced in the language, a development that materialized in 2017. This timeline of publishing theses in isiXhosa is particularly poignant as it unfolded 23 years after South Africa gained freedom from oppression and 21 years since the Constitution underscored the significance of using all official languages and fostering equality and respect among the diverse official languages of the country.

Challenges Against Sesotho as a Language of Learning

The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) of South Africa advocates for additive bi/multilingualism (Plüddemann 2017). Additionally, the LiEP permits schools to tailor their school-based language policies to their specific contexts. While one provision of the LiEP allows schools to introduce a new language of instruction when at least 40 learners from grades 1 to 6 and 35 learners from grades 7 to 12 require access to that specific language (Department of Basic Education 1997), the default policy mandates the use of English for teaching from grade 4 onward (Chitapi 2018). Furthermore, education stakeholders (including parents and the school governing bodies) are prone to showing a preference for English as a medium of instruction (Gordon and Harvey 2019). Consequently, Sesotho, like other Indigenous languages, is confined to being taught solely as a language subject and is not officially utilized as the medium of instruction in other content subjects such as mathematics or the sciences. For this reason, our subsequent discussion of the Sesotho curriculum is limited to its role as a language subject.

---

[1] For examples of newspapers, magazines, and media, see the Maseru newspaper accessible at https://www.maserumetro.com/sesotho/; the religious magazine published by the Jehovah's Witnesses organization that is available at https://www.jw.org/st-za/laebrari/dimakasine/; and the Lesedi FM radio station at http://www.lesedifm.co.za/sabc/home/lesedifm.

According to Omphile Marupi and Erasmos Charamba (2022), schools in the Gwanda region of Zimbabwe are dominated by Sotho home language learners, and as such, the learners are reported to have insufficient command of English, which is their medium of instruction (Charamba and Marupi 2023). As a solution, Marupi and Charamba recommend that Sesotho be the official medium of instruction alongside English in the region, instead of a monolingual English medium of instruction.

Mosisili Sebotsa and Malefane Victor Koele (2020) argue that the teaching of Sesotho in Lesothan schools remains traditional, employing grammar translation methods, despite Sesotho being the home language for approximately 97% of the population in Lesotho. In fact, they identify several deficiencies in the curriculum and the traditional teaching approach of Sesotho. The use of traditional language pedagogies in the Lesothan Sesotho classes indicates the negligence of Indigenous languages in Lesothan's basic education. Additionally, Nkonko Kamwangamalu, Richard Baldauf, and Robert Kaplan (2016) note that parents of learners in Lesotho are generally dissatisfied with the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and prefer English. It is important to note that in both Lesotho and South Africa, the first three school grades are taught in the mother tongue before transitioning to English as the medium of instruction starting in the fourth grade (Kolobe and Matsoso 2020; Maodi 2018).

The curricula for Indigenous languages in South Africa, including that of Sesotho, face shortcomings as they are translated from a generic English curriculum. Although efforts are made to adapt the different language curricula to the specific contexts of the distinct languages, they continue to fall short in addressing other aspects of the specific Indigenous languages that are not covered in the English curriculum. Furthermore, the use of the translated English curriculum in South African schools underscores the hegemony of English and the lower status accorded to Indigenous languages, which lack the space for the development of their own individualized and context-specific curricula.

To address the limitedness of the Sesotho curriculum, consideration could be an incorporation of non-standardized varieties of the Sotho languages, such as Sepitori.

Sepitori, serving as a lingua franca among Black residents in the Pretoria region of Southern Africa, has the potential to contribute to the enrichment of Sotho languages, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and within the teaching and learning contexts (Ditsele 2014, 2019, 2022; Ditsele and Mann 2014; Wagner, Ditsele, and Makgato 2020). In this way, learners with non-official varieties of Sesotho can also participate easily in the Sesotho classrooms.

Furthermore, we are convinced that the inclusion of non-standardized varieties may contribute to the preservation of these languages. For instance, Sheena Shah, Letzadzo Kometsi, and Matthias Brenzinger (2022) report a decline in the number of speakers of SiPhuthi, a non-official Sotho language, with only a few hundred speakers remaining. While factors that influence the decline of SiPhuthi language users extend beyond this article's scope, integrating SiPhuthi into the Sesotho curriculum may aid in enhancing it and simultaneously contribute to the preservation of SiPhuthi.

The Dominance of English

As people seek interconnectedness, they move towards global languages like English (Adelson 2021). According to Dean Odeh (2016) such an over-embracement of English in African contexts makes it a predator language, as it drives out and replaces the Indigenous languages. Unfortunately, such a replacement leads to the death of Indigenous languages in a process called linguicide.

One of the issues that arise from the dominance of English in African contexts is the ignorance of other languages in a multilingual country such as South Africa. For instance, Kathleen Heugh (2021) discusses the prevalence of multilingualism as a medium of instruction in various African countries, including South Africa, where innovative approaches such as translanguaging and code-switching are gradually finding a place in classrooms. Unfortunately, as illustrated by previous studies, societal perceptions of English proficiency contribute to associations between linguistic inadequacy in English and presumptions of illiteracy (Alamu 2017; Alexander 2009; Mda 2010). The negative effect of this perception is worsened by the reference to Indigenous languages as vernaculars (Mda 2010). Nonetheless, the enhancement of education in non-English first-language contexts is central to the promotion of literacy in local Indigenous languages.

The introduction of marginalized languages to academic scholarship is important for language development and the empowerment of Indigenous language users. However, Mark Fettes (2023) highlights the absence of explicit mentions of language learning in the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Even so, a connection can be drawn between language learning and the fourth SDG, focusing on quality education

(Bekteshi and Xhaferi 2020; Vuzo 2018). In this regard, drawing attention to the pivotal role of language as a medium of instruction in the pursuit of educational excellence aligns with the examination of quality education, emphasizing the significance of the language used in the learning and teaching process.

The potential decolonization of curricula by developing Indigenous languages as mediums of teaching and learning has been examined in previous studies. However, there are concerns when curricula are translated from English, as exemplified in South Africa where the basic education language curricula are derived from the English generic curriculum (Sibeko and van Zaanen 2021). This issue of inauthentic language subject content through translated curricula raises important considerations about the cultural relevance and authenticity of educational content. Thus, the use of Indigenous languages is pivotal in decolonizing both our mindsets and pedagogical approaches.

Publishing in Sesotho

Mojalefa Koai and Brenton Grant Fredericks (2019) argue that despite efforts to elevate Sesotho to the status of an intellectual language, Sesotho continues to face marginalization, even in regions where it holds official language status.[2] In the Free State province of South Africa, for instance, where Sesotho is both the official and home language for the majority of residents, English remains the primary language of communication (Koai and Fredericks 2019; Moeketsi 2014). This situation persists despite the implementation of a language policy aimed at addressing the marginalization of Sesotho in the province (Koai and Fredericks 2019). Regrettably, Sesotho is often relegated to an ad hoc role alongside English and Afrikaans, rather than being utilized as the primary medium of communication, resulting in its limited usage. Consequently, we find it unsurprising that Sesotho faces a gradual adoption rate, particularly in the realm of both academic and non-academic publishing.

In our exploration for this article, it appears that academic publications in Sesotho are predominantly limited to the realms of theses, dissertations, and journal articles. According to Kaschula and Maseko (2014), the use of Indigenous African languages in the publication of postgraduate research in the form of theses and dissertations is vital in the intellectualization of African Indigenous languages. Furthermore, the incorporation of Indigenous languages into thesis publications within the South African context is a pivotal step in the process of decolonizing education (Mbamalu 2018; Mahlakoana 2017).

---

[2] Various regions in South Africa have adopted at least three official languages for communication with the public. Policies prioritize giving preference to Indigenous languages in these communication strategies.

At this point, it is clear that publishing in the Sesotho language remains a challenge. The rest of this section explores the obstacles that hinder the development of Sesotho as a language suitable for academic publications. First, we address lexicographic challenges, followed by translation challenges and considerations of national and infrastructural contexts, target audiences, accessibility, and recognition. To conclude the section, we offer a brief reflection on our encounters with publishing academic texts in Sesotho.

Lexicographic Challenges

The role of lexicography in protecting languages and giving them status in society cannot be denied; dictionaries play a crucial role in preserving languages and providing education (Rehg 2018; Garrett 2018). Lexicography, as a discipline, depends on the availability of terms to carry out its mandate. As such, there is a close relationship between terminography and lexicography as both disciplines involve the construction and modification of dictionaries. While terminographers record specialized terminology, lexicographers focus on terms in the general language lexicon (Alberts 2012).

Mmasibidi Setaka and Danie Prinsloo (2020) highlight the limited attention given to Sesotho lexicography in literature. In their critical evaluation of three Sesotho dictionaries, they note that the most recent Sesotho dictionary was published in 2015, and it is a monodirectional, bilingual paper dictionary. The complete list of dictionaries for Sesotho is presented in the appendix. Since 2015, no further dictionaries have been created or updated for Sesotho, and this leaves Sesotho at a disadvantage of not being intellectualized, with Sesotho speakers bearing the brunt because many words that they are mostly likely to look for will not be available in the old versions of the dictionaries. For instance, existing dictionaries do not contain terms related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This gap in word coinage and accessibility underscores the importance of regular updates to dictionaries to reflect evolving language needs.

The list in the appendix indicates that most existing dictionaries for Sesotho are in print form. However, as noted by Danie Prinsloo (2001), many lexicographers believe that the paper dictionary has reached its maximum potential. This perspective is particularly relevant with the advent of technology-based dictionaries that offer ease of updating compared to traditional paper dictionaries. Despite these opportunities, Sesotho has been slow to embrace technology fully, lacking a formal online/electronic dictionary that is continuously updated to include new words or trending words.

While various term lists have been developed for Sesotho, they fall short of being considered dictionaries due to the absence of essential dictionary properties. Mairo Kidda Awak (1990) underscores this point by highlighting that, over a span of 350 years, approximately 2,600 African lexicons have been compiled. However, more than half of them are essentially word lists rather than comprehensive dictionaries—a situation that resonates with Sesotho as well.

Terminology development plays a crucial role in multilingual South Africa, with various stakeholders actively contributing to this effort. In the early 1950s, the Department of Education initiated terminology development projects (Moleleki 2012). The National Language Service, operating within the Department of Arts and Culture in South Africa, assumes a key role in shaping policy and legislation related to language while also fostering language development. This includes the creation of specialized terminology for official languages, such as the development of multilingual parliamentary/political terminology lists and multilingual terminology for information communication technology (National Language Services 2021).

The demand for terminology in South Africa has prompted various universities to take proactive measures in creating specialized terms. Individual universities often initiate the development of terminology lists based on perceived needs within their institutions. Notably, at the Central University of Technology, terminology lists for fields such as civil engineering and biomedical technology were created; translated into Sesotho; and subsequently verified, authenticated, and endorsed by PanSALB.[3] Another instance involves the School of Music at North-West University, where Indigenous terminology was developed.[4] However, there are challenges related to the accessibility of these terms, with some being readily available, whereas others face accessibility issues.

The development of terminology by universities aligns with the Department of Higher Education and Training's call for increased support for the usage of Indigenous languages in teaching and learning spaces within higher education. The Language Policy for Higher Education emphasizes the promotion of South African languages for instruction in higher education, addressing sociolinguistic issues such as the language of instruction and learning in public higher education institutions. The policy acknowledges the fundamental right of individuals to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice and underscores the importance of encouraging and fostering the growth of officially recognized South African languages that have historically been marginalized. Additionally, it aims to produce an adequate number of interpreters, translators, instructors, and other language professionals to meet the demands of a multilingual and diverse society in South Africa (Department of Higher Education and Training 2020). This framework is consistent with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, ensuring equitable use of all official languages, including the promotion and development of historically marginalized Indigenous languages (Republic of South Africa 1996).

---

[3] See https://www.cut.ac.za/writing-centre for the project outline.

[4] See https://humanities.nwu.ac.za/music/Indigenous-terminology for the project outline.

In South Africa, various offices and national departments actively engage in terminology development, as highlighted by Mariëtta Alberts (2012). However, the scope of intellectualization initiatives appears to be primarily focused on learning and teaching contexts, with limited attention given to other language uses such as leisure reading and writing. Notably, the need for intellectualized Indigenous South African languages in academic publications by authors from Indigenous language backgrounds is often overlooked. Additionally, it is noteworthy that reports from terminology development projects are typically presented in English, further marginalizing the very Indigenous languages targeted for development.

Translation Issues

Language studies, linguistics, and literature studies have been prolific academic research areas for publishing in Sesotho, particularly in postgraduate works such as treatises, theses, and dissertations, and to a much lesser extent in academic journals. Notably, there exists a prevalence of literary analysis dissertations composed entirely in Sesotho, outnumbering dissertations in the realms of linguistics or applied linguistics within the same language. The research outputs constitute a significant portion of the limited existing Sesotho academic literature. As indicated earlier in this article, the research output is presented in English. Even so, challenges arise in the translation of Sesotho research into English publications. One recent example of translating linguistics and literary terminology between Sesotho and English is the University of Pretoria's project titled the African Wordnet and Multilingual Linguistics Terminology project, which included the translation of 500 linguistic terms from English to the other 10 official spoken languages of South Africa. The challenges witnessed in the translations were highlighted by Johannes Sibeko (2023a) in his presentation at the conference of the South African Translators' Institute in 2023.

In short, Sibeko (2023a) identified a few concerns from their experiences in the Sesotho language group of the translation project. Of particular interest for this article are the creation of unconventional words, the necessity for using multiple words to translate single English words, and the use of definitive translations where single words might be insufficient. Other interesting findings included the challenges that emerged in translating linguistic terms referring to structures absent in Sesotho, exposing a possibly unintended colonial bias in the selection of words for translation in the project. Despite efforts to create a multilingual list of linguistics and literary terminology for South African languages, it reflected a skewed representation of Indigenous languages.

That is, the resultant multilingual list represents the language structure of English to the neglect of Afrikaans and the nine Indigenous languages.

The multilingual list translation project highlighted the intricate nature of translating linguistics and literary terms from English to other official languages in Southern Africa. Additionally, Sibeko (2023a) reported that the quality assurance phase for the 500 translations in their Sesotho subgroup of the translation project took at least 120 hours, despite involving a team of four participants. It can be inferred that the challenges and time-intensive nature of translating specialized terms, such as those involved in the multilingual list translation project between English and other official spoken languages, contribute to authors' preference for publishing in one language, namely English. This preference for publishing in English is not surprising given that basic and tertiary education is completed in English in South Africa.

The need for translations from English to the other 10 official languages is not limited only to academic publications in South Africa. Despite the official status of Indigenous languages in the country, there is a notable absence of policies or legislation originally written in these languages. Access to government gazettes is primarily facilitated through translated texts. This raises concerns, indicating that official documents are exclusively developed in English, with other official languages serving a secondary role as translations. Essentially, it implies that the entire process of thinking, planning, and discussion is conducted exclusively in English, marginalizing the role and significance of Indigenous languages in these critical domains.

National and Infrastructural Contexts

The South African government has officially designated PanSALB as a regulatory body, tasked with overseeing the language development process and ensuring the protection of language rights in accordance with constitutional provisions. One of the functions of the language board has been the development of orthography guides for all official languages.[5] Many of the guides including that of Sesotho were released in the year 2019. Unfortunately, the Sesotho orthography guidelines were not well received by the participants in the project on translating English linguistics terminology into Sesotho (Sibeko 2023a).[6] The consensus from the quality assurance project for the Sesotho subgroup for the multilingual list project was that the guidelines were introducing major changes to the writing system of the South African Sesotho and that the guidelines introduced unexpected word forms into the language.

---

[5] It is important to note that before this project, there were no officially accepted national orthography guidelines for many of the Indigenous official languages. While there were school language textbooks and language learning study guides available for most official languages, none of them had achieved national acceptance as a standard.

[6] The quality assurance workshop for the Multilingual Linguistic Terminology Development project was held from July 14 to July 15, 2022.

One of the efforts by the government of South Africa to promote and intellectualize all official languages is the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR). The Department of Science and Innovation has established SADiLaR as an entity for governing the development of digital language resources and the archival of existing language resources (Sibeko 2023b). SADiLaR serves as a vital resource for research and development in language technology and related disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. Operating through six nodes at different institutions, SADiLaR facilitates the development, administration, and dissemination of digital language materials and applications that are openly accessible for academic use.[7]

In addition to guiding the development of language resources, language resource surveys have been conducted since the year 2010 (Grover, van Huyssteen, and Pretorius 2010, 2011; Moors et al. 2018; Wilken et al. 2018). The latest language resource audit took place recently (Khumalo, van Dyk, and Wolff 2023).[8] The surveys target tertiary institutions of learning to collect information on at least three areas of interest: namely, (1) the existing language resources, (2) needed language resources, and (3) language practices and related matters as observed from each institution. SADiLaR's survey reports have consistently indicated resources that are available in different official languages of South Africa, including both Germanic and Bantu official languages of South Africa. However, the reports are general in that they indicate the total number of resources available and do not indicate the specific resources for the different languages.

SADiLaR also hosts a repository which plays a crucial role in hosting a diverse range of language resources, including multilingual terminology lists, electronic texts, voice data, multimodal resources (such as word lists, dictionaries, translation memory, domain-specific text collections, and aligned multilingual corpora), platforms, tools, and applications designed to aid data processing and the development of new technologies.[9]

---

7. One of the nodes of the center is the Language Resource Development Node that is hosted by the University of South Africa. This node is dedicated to the development of language resources, with a specific focus on terminology development. It aims to deliver a Multilingual Linguistic Termbank, incorporating terms from literary studies and contributing to the expansion of the African Wordnet. See https://sadilar.org/index.php/en/2-general/298-african-wordnet-and-linguistic-terminology for more information on the development of the termbanks.
8. TA report of the findings of the language resources audit conducted by SADiLaR can be accessed at https://repo.sadilar.org/handle/20.500.12185/667.
9. See https://repo.sadilar.org/discover for a full overview of the offerings in the SADiLaR repository.

While significant strides have been made, particularly in terminology development, there is a recognized need for more comprehensive efforts to enable Sesotho to be effectively utilized in various spheres, including socioeconomic, political, and educational contexts, as well as in advanced natural language processing tools. The limited accessibility of fundamental language resources, particularly annotated corpora, poses a significant challenge to the intellectualization of Sesotho. As highlighted by Langa Khumalo and Dion Nkomo (2022), the scarcity of specialized texts in African Indigenous languages hampers the creation and implementation of sophisticated electronic corpora, hindering progress in terminological and lexicographical tasks. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the continued growth and development of Sesotho and other African languages.

As per an analysis of the Sesotho basic language resource kit (BLARK), the majority of textual resources archived in the SADiLaR repository for Sesotho, as well as those indexed through the repository, predominantly consist of translations into Sesotho rather than texts originally written in Sesotho (Sibeko and Setaka 2022).

Despite the limitation of translations, the development of South African Indigenous languages has witnessed their integration into various platforms, including Google Translate, Wikimedia, artificial intelligence, voice-to-text platforms, automatic sentiment analysis, and others. Regrettably, the accessibility of these resources across different Southern African languages is not uniform, leading to discrepancies in resources among various languages. For instance, isiNdebele, spoken in South Africa and Zimbabwe, has only recently been incorporated into Wikipedia, while languages such as isiZulu have seen more extensive development on Wikipedia over previous years.

The developmental stage of Sesotho poses challenges due to limited dictionaries, spelling, grammar, and orthography guides. Furthermore, similar to other Indigenous languages of Southern Africa, the initiatives for intellectualizing Sesotho as actioned in South Africa continue to be carried out in isolation and without consultation with initiatives in neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe and Lesotho (Finlayson and Madiba 2002). Also, the limitation posed by the scarcity of writing resources is exacerbated by the variations between the frequently used and widely recognized South African and Lesothan orthographic conventions. That is, it is not always easy to transfer resources between the two orthographies as it sometimes causes confusion. For instance, syllable information gauged from the international dictionary of Sesotho (Chitja 2010) was not able to be readily used in the development of syllable-annotated word lists for Sesotho as it used a fusion of South African and Lesothan orthographies. As a result, it exaggerated the number of syllables when the Lesothan orthography was considered (Sibeko and Setaka 2023).

Audience, Accessibility, and Recognition

Typically, South African academic journals provide an option to publish monolingually in English. Additionally, some bilingual journals also welcome submissions in Afrikaans. Furthermore, we are aware of at least two language, literature, and linguistics societies–based journals that also allow publications in all official languages of Southern Africa. These journals require an extended English summary to accompany any submission that is not in English. Moreover, the journals provide an option to publish a translated English version of the non-English submission.

During a previous instance, an article that was independently published to complement a doctoral thesis was deemed unusable by the doctoral project supervisor due to language constraints. The article was written in Sesotho to explore Sesotho linguistic properties that were relevant to one of the sections in the thesis. The dismissal by the doctoral supervisor resulted in a sense of time wasted on the part of the author. The assumption that the extended abstract would suffice for the review of the article was met with disinterest, as the supervisor required access to more comprehensive information than the extended abstract provided. Consequently, a decision was made to allocate time more efficiently in the future by writing articles in English and supplying an extended abstract in the non-English language.

Publishing in a nascent language like the Indigenous languages of Southern Africa limits the potential audience reach. As a result, only those proficient in the Indigenous language can fully access the content, leaving others reliant on the extended English abstract. Opting for a language such as Sesotho already implies lower citation potential for two primary reasons. First, there is a limited pool of scholars actively involved in Sesotho linguistics. Second, the language barrier may discourage interest. This situation hinders the acknowledgment and recognition of scholarly contributions, as the article remains accessible exclusively to a confined community of researchers.

Reflections on Publishing Issues

We recently published a journal article in one of the two aforementioned linguistics, applied linguistics, and literary journals mentioned earlier in this article. Subsequently, we identified three major issues with our submission. First, feedback from reviewers on our submission disproportionately emphasized orthography concerns rather than focusing on the substantive content of the article. Although the submission underwent a double peer review process, it was clear that one of the reviewers was expecting Lesothan orthography. We consequently had to write to the editor and explain our position that we were unable to incorporate the orthography suggestions. The editor does not have access to Sesotho and was unable to detect the suggested orthographic changes when they first received the review from the reviewers.

Another significant issue identified was the nascent state of academic writing style in Sesotho. That is, we could not access standardized academic terminology for Sesotho. Observation of prevailing academic texts written in Sesotho revealed a predilection for conversational styles. This tendency to use conversational language is expected given that these texts are based on literary works and are thus inclined to use glossy, creative, and figurative language. As a result, we explored English academic language conventions. Specifically, emphasis was placed on common expressions in English academic discourse.

The limited number of existing publications in Sesotho could not provide guidance on how to title the sections of the article. For instance, there was disagreement between the reviewers on how to label simple sections such as an introduction which we had initially labeled as "*tlhekelo*" and later changed to "*selelekela*" upon recommendation from two of the reviewers. We debated what these word options entailed for the article. However, without proper standardization or track record precedence, it becomes difficult to decide what is more acceptable.

Noteworthy among the strategies adopted from academic texts in English was the experimentation with nominalization. The reception from reviewers varied, with two expressing reservations about the use of nominalization, deeming it to render the article somewhat challenging to read. Conversely, one reviewer commended our attempt at employing nominalization, acknowledging its atypicality in the context of Sesotho. This reviewer extended special commendations, highlighting the potential for such an approach to establish a novel academic writing style in Sesotho.

Admittedly, although we write in Sesotho using Sesotho, some of the terminologies that we utilize are often translated from English. As a result, some of the words are difficult to introduce to Sesotho. Nonetheless, we employed typical translation strategies and obtained usable words for our article. As indicated in the introduction, the lack of Sesotho terminology in the context of our research posed a challenge when trying to convey complex concepts and ideas effectively. We found that some of the complex ideas were easier to convey in English than in Sesotho. As a result, we had to write such sections first in English and then translate them into Sesotho. However, in the end, we only published the Sesotho version as we had not translated the whole article.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This article highlighted the challenges associated with publishing academic materials in languages other than English in the South African context. The discussion focused on the specific case of publishing in Sesotho. Our interpretation of intellectualization aligned with Turner's (2023) perspective, viewing it as a way to bridge the language resource gap rather than catching up with linguistic complexity. In this way, we focused our discussion on the language resources that are available for Indigenous languages in the South African context.

Among others, we reviewed attempts at intellectualizing South African official languages, paying special attention to Indigenous languages. The intellectualization of African Indigenous languages for contribution to academic scholarship remains an important venture. This article has demonstrated through the relation of a few projects and initiatives undertaken in the South African context that measures are being taken to address the marginalization of Indigenous languages in South Africa. While measures have been taken and resources developed for Indigenous languages, including Sesotho, there is a notable absence of specific initiatives addressing academic publishing in these languages.

The current state of disseminating academic research findings in Sesotho is dominated by the use of English. Although there are valid concerns with publishing in Sesotho and other Indigenous, marginalized, and historically oppressed languages, the negligence to publish in these languages further marginalizes them and slows down the rate at which the languages can be intellectualized. In this way, although there are many projects for developing terminology for Sesotho, if these are not strategically used in academic texts for Sesotho, the language will remain marginalized and under-intellectualized for academic discourses.

There are concerns when authors translate terms for their specific manuscripts, as was the case for our recent article in Sesotho. For instance, the translations raise concerns regarding reader comprehension when new terms are coined and presented without accompanying definitions, which is typical when terms are coined for specific journal articles. Moreover, given the historical context of English-based education and the potential challenges in understanding newly coined terms in Sesotho, authors may find it more accessible to publish in English.

The national and infrastructural context of South Africa facilitates the development of official languages. However, our concern lies in the dependence on translations into Indigenous languages. While translation projects may aim for equity and equality, they inadvertently introduce texts that may not resonate with the specific context of the Indigenous languages. Relying on English material raises the risk of resources for Indigenous languages continually being colonized and non-African, a sentiment shared by Prinsloo (2015). Through looking at lexicography, Prinsloo mentions that a further feature of early African language lexicography is often criticized by researchers for being Euro-centric. For example, many of the resources available for Sesotho in SADiLaR's repository have been created with the use of government texts, which are genre specific.

As far as our knowledge extends for this article, there are no policies actively promoting the use of Indigenous languages in academic discourses. We have identified only two journals accredited by the Department of Higher Education in South Africa that permit and encourage publication in Indigenous languages, particularly in the context of linguistic and literary research. This limited scope, focusing solely on linguistic and literary research, suggests a need for a policy that advocates for a broader inclusion of Indigenous languages in discourses across various disciplines. Such an expansion would be crucial in showcasing that Indigenous languages are equally intellectual as English or Afrikaans in the Southern African context.

As previously mentioned, there is an issue regarding academic writing standards for Sesotho, and we assume a similar situation may exist for other Indigenous languages where academic publishing is not yet standardized. As a recommendation, we propose the development of a style guide for academic publishing in specific Indigenous languages. This guide could address simple issues, such as difficulties in finding titles for specific sections of papers, as well as more advanced concerns, such as specific sentence structures. By providing clarification on these academic writing matters, the guide would significantly assist interested authors in navigating the complexities of academic writing in Indigenous languages more effectively. Moreover, simplifying the writing process for authors could encourage more publications in Indigenous languages, contributing to the intellectualization of these languages for use in diverse academic discourses.

Currently, there are no repositories for publications in non-English languages in Southern Africa. We assume that establishing such a repository is crucial for the region, as it would simplify the discovery and access of works published in Indigenous languages. This access could highlight the volume of publications produced in Indigenous languages, providing authors writing in these languages with the recognition they deserve. Furthermore, the repository could serve as a catalyst for additional authors to publish in Indigenous languages, facilitate collaboration, streamline the identification of reviewers proficient in specific Indigenous languages, and discern trends in non-English publications across Southern Africa.

References

Adelson, Michael. 2021. “Linguicide in the Digital Age: Problems and Possible Solutions.” *French Summer Fellows* 3. https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/french_sum/3.

Alamu, Olagoke. 2017. “Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria: What Role(s) for Nigeria’s Indigenous Languages?” *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences* 5 (4): 1–13.

Alberts, Mariëtta. 2012. “Terminology in South Africa.” *Lexikos* 9 (1). https://doi.org/10.5788/9-1-912.

Alexander, Neville. 2009. “The Impact of the Hegemony of English on Access to and Quality of Education with Special Reference to South Africa.” In *Language and Poverty*, edited by Wayne Harbert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, Amanda Miller, and John Whitman, 53–66. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Awak, Mairo Kidda. 1990. "Historical Background, with Special Reference to Western Africa." In *Lexicography in Africa*, edited by Reinhard Rudolf Karl Hartmann, 8–18. Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press.

Bekteshi, Edita, and Brikena Xhaferi. 2020. "Learning about Sustainable Development Goals through English Language Teaching." *Research in Social Sciences and Technology* 5 (3): 78–94. https://doi.org/10.46303/ressat.05.03.4.

Charamba, Erasmos, and Omphile Marupi. 2023. "Language Contact, Contamination, Containment and Shift: Lessons from Multilingual Gwanda South, Zimbabwe." *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching* 11 (3): 515–25. https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v11i3.7598.

Chitapi, Itai Tatenda. 2018. "Analysis of the Constraints to the Realization of the Aims of the Language-in-Education Policy of South Africa." Master's thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

Chitja, Madiela. 2010. *Phatlamantsoe Ya Sesotho Ya Machaba*. Maseru, Lesotho: Mazenod Publishers.

Department of Basic Education. 1997. "Language in Education Policy." Policy. July 14, 1997. South Africa: National Department of Education.

Department of Higher Education and Training. 2020. "Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions." Government notices. Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.

Ditsele, Thabo. 2014. "Why Not Use Sepitori to Enrich the Vocabularies of Setswana and Sepedi?" *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 32 (2): 215–28. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2014.992652.

———. 2019. "Assessing Social Media Submissions Presented as Sepitori on #LearnPitori." *Arusha Working Papers in African Linguistics* 2 (1): 1–21.

———. 2022. "Locating Sepitori in Relation to South Africa's Youth Language Practices: An Overview." In *Global Perspectives on Youth Language Practices*, edited by Cynthia Groff, Andrea Hollington, Ellen Hurst-Harosh, Nico Nassenstein, Jacomine Nortier, Helma Pasch, and Nurenzia Yannuar, 105–20. Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Ditsele, Thabo, and Charles C. Mann. 2014. "Language Contact in African Urban Settings: The Case of Sepitori in Tshwane." *South African Journal of African Languages* 34 (2): 159–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2014.997052.

Fettes, Mark. 2023. "Language and the Sustainable Development Goals: Challenges to Language Policy and Planning." In *Language and Sustainable Development*, edited by Lisa J. McEntee-Atalianis and Humphrey Tonkin, 11–26. Language Policy. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24918-1_2.

Finlayson, Rosalie, and Mbulungeni Madiba. 2002. "The Intellectualisation of the Indigenous Languages of South Africa: Challenges and Prospects." *Current Issues in Language Planning* 3 (1): 40–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664200208668036.

Garrett, Andrew. 2018. "Online Dictionaries for Language Revitalization." In *The Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization*, edited by Leanne Hinton, Leena Huss, and Gerald Roche. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315561271-25.

Gordon, Steven Lawrence, and Jaqueline Harvey. 2019. "Choice of Language in Education: Do We Know What South Africans Want?" *Language and Education* 33 (3): 226–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2018.1488865.

Grover, Aditi Sharma, Gerhard B. van Huyssteen, and Marthinus W. Pretorius. 2010. "The South African Human Language Technologies Audit." In *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC'10)*, 2847–50. European Language Resources Association.

———. 2011. “The South African Human Language Technology Audit.” *Language Resources and Evaluation* 45 (3): 271–88. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10579-011-9151-2.

Hanslo, Ridewaan. 2021. “Evaluation of Neural Network Transformer Models for Named-Entity Recognition on Low-Resourced Languages.” In *Proceedings of the 16th Conference on Computer Science and Intelligence Systems (FedCSIS)*, 115–19. IEEE.

Heugh, Kathleen. 2021. “Southern Multilingualisms, Translanguaging and Transknowledging in Inclusive and Sustainable Education.” In *Language and the Sustainable Development Goals: Selected Proceedings of the 12th Language and Development Conference, Dakar, Senegal, 2017*, edited by Philip Harding-Esch and Hywel Coleman, 37–47. London: British Council.

Kamwangamalu, Nkonko M., Richard B. Baldauf Jr., and Robert B. Kaplan. 2016. “Language Policy and Planning in Africa: Cameroon, Sudan and Zimbabwe.” In *Language Planning in Africa: The Cameroon, Sudan and Zimbabwe*, edited by Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu, Richard B. Baldauf Jr., and Robert B. Kaplan, 1–19. London: Routledge.

Kaschula, Russell H., and Pamela Maseko. 2014. “The Intellectualisation of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education: A Research-Based Approach.” *Alternation* special edition 13 (13): 8–35.

Khumalo, Langa. 2017. “Intellectualization through Terminology Development.” *Lexikos* 27 (1): 252–64. https://doi.org/10.5788/27-1-1402.

Khumalo, Langa, and Dion Nkomo. 2022. “The Intellectualization of African Languages through Terminology and Lexicography: Methodological Reflections with Special Reference to Lexicographic Products of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.” *Lexikos* 32 (2): 133–57. https://doi.org/10.5788/32-2-1700.

Khumalo, Langa, Tobie van Dyk, and Friedel Wolff. 2023. *Insights from the National Language Resources Audit*. Presentation and Audit Report. Potchefstroom: South African Centre for Digital Language Resources. https://repo.sadilar.org/handle/20.500.12185/667.

Koai, Mojalefa, and Brenton Grant Fredericks. 2019. “Sesotho Is Still a Marginalised Language.” *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 37 (4): 303–14. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2019.1692677.

Kolobe, Maboleba Agnes, and Lifelile Matsoso. 2020. “Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages’ Backgrounds.” *International Journal of Language Education* 4 (3): 378–88. https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v4i3.14046.

Lekhetho, Mapheleba. 2013. “Lesotho: Organization, Structures and Challenges.” In *Education in Southern Africa*, edited by Clive Harber, 55–81. London: Bloomsbury.

Letsoalo, Alydia Modjadji. 2021. “The Intellectualisation of African Languages: The Case of the University of Limpopo.” PhD thesis, University of Limpopo, South Africa. http://ulspace.ul.ac.za/handle/10386/3709.

Mahlakoana, Theto. 2017. “PhD Written in isiXhosa Hailed as Milestone.” *Rhodes University Latest News* (blog), April 23, 2017. https://www.ru.ac.za/latestnews/archives/2017/phdwritteninisixhosahailedasmilestone.html.

Mahloane, Malefu Justina, and Stefan Trausan-Matu. 2015. “Metaphor Annotation in Sesotho Text Corpus: Towards the Representation of Resource-Scarce Languages in NLP.” In *2015 20th International Conference on Control Systems and Computer Science*, 405–10. IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/CSCS.2015.90.

Maodi, Mmamotidi Catherine. 2018. “Teachers’ Management of Language Transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4.” Master’s thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa. https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/69904.

Marjie, Sarah. 2021. “Evaluating the Concept and Value of Language Policies in Some African Countries.” *Journal of the Institute of Kiswahili Studies* 84 (1): 20–38.

Marupi, Omphile, and Erasmos Charamba. 2022. "Revisiting the Effects of –isms in the Promotion, Development, and Revitalisation of Indigenous Languages in Zimbabwe: The Position of Sesotho in Gwanda South, Zimbabwe." In *Handbook of Research on Teaching in Multicultural and Multilingual Contexts*, edited by Erasmos Charamba, 32–46. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Maseko, Pamela. 2011. "Intellectualisation of African Languages with Particular Reference to isiXhosa." PhD thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. http://hdl.handle.net/10962/58035.

Mbamalu, Socrates. 2018. "Nompumelelo Kapa, First Academic to Write a Thesis in isiXhosa in 102 Years at Fort Hare." *This Is Africa*, October 23, 2018. https://thisisafrica.me/african-identities/nompumelelo-kapa-isixhosa-phd-thesis-fort-hare/.

Mda, Thobeka Vuyelwa. 2010. "Politics of Dominance: The Suppression and Rejection of African Languages in South Africa." Report, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa. https://repository.hsrc.ac.za/bitstream/handle/20.500.11910/3886/6732.pdf?sequence=1.

Moeketsi, Victor Solomon Monare. 2014. "The Demise of Sesotho Language in the Democratic South Africa and Its Impact on the Socio-cultural Development of the Speakers." *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology* 5 (2): 217–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/09766634.2014.11885626.

Mojela, V. 2016. "Etymology & Figurative: The Role of Etymology in the Lemmatization of Sotho Terminology." In *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference of the Asian Association for Lexicography (AsiaLex2016)*, 93–100. IEEE.

Moleleki, M. A. 2012. "The State of Lexicography in Sesotho." In "Lexicography in a Multilingual South Africa." *Lexikos* 9 (1): 241–47. https://doi.org/10.5788/9-1-924.

Möller, Jana. 2013. "The State of Multilingual Publishing in South Africa." *E-Rea. Revue Électronique d'études Sur Le Monde Anglophone* 11 (1). https://doi.org/10.4000/erea.3507.

Moors, Carmen, Ilana Wilken, Karen Calteaux, and Tebogo Gumede. 2018. "Human Language Technology Audit 2018: Analysing the Development Trends in Resource Availability in All South African Languages." In *SAICSIT '18: Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists*, 296–304. https://doi.org/10.1145/3278681.3278716.

Morgan, Naòmi. 2006. "Revisiting the South African Book Market: Towards a Change of Tongue?" *Acta Academica Supplementum* 2 (2006): 179–96. https://doi.org/10.38140/aa.v0i2.1126.

National Language Services. 2021. *National Language Services: Executive Summary*. Pretoria: Government Technical Advisory Centre. https://www.gtac.gov.za/pepa/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Language-Services-Summary.pdf.

Ndlovu, Eventhough. 2011. "Mother Tongue Education in the Official Minority Languages in Zimbabwe." *South African Journal of African Languages* 31 (2): 229–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2011.10587367.

Nhlapo, Moselane Andrew. 2021. "Historical Perspectives on the Development of Sesotho Linguistics with Reference to Syntactic Categories." Doctoral thesis, University of the Free State, South Africa. http://hdl.handle.net/11660/11721.

Odeh, Dean. 2016. "English as a Linguicide: Language Endangerment and Conservation in Nigeria." *Journal of Linguistics, Language and Culture* 3 (1): 58–72.

Plüddemann, Peter. 2017. "Unlocking the Grid: Language-in-Education Policy Realisation in Post-Apartheid South Africa." In *Language in Epistemic Access: Mobilising Multilingualism and Literacy Development*, edited by Caroline Kerfoot and Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenbergen. London: Routledge.

Prah, Kwesi Kwaa. 2007. *Nithini Ngolwimi Iwethu? Challenges to the Promotion of Indigenous Languages in South Africa*. Cape Town: Center for Advanced Studies of African Society.

Prinsloo, Danie J. 2001. "The Compilation of Electronic Dictionaries for the African Languages." *Lexikos* 11:139–59. https://doi.org/10.5788/11-0-845.

Rehg, Kenneth L. 2018. “Compiling Dictionaries of Endangered Languages.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Endangered Languages*, edited by Kenneth L. Rehg and Lyle Campbell, 305–26. New York: Oxford University Press.

Republic of South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Department of Justice.

Sebotsa, Mosisili, and Malefane Victor Koele. 2020. “Exploring New Scientific Methods in the Teaching and Learning of Sesotho.” *Journal of Law and Social Sciences* 3 (1): 115–27. https://doi.org/10.53974/unza.jlss.3.1.452.

Setaka, Mmasibidi, and Danie J. Prinsloo. 2020. “A Critical Evaluation of Three Sesotho Dictionaries.” *Lexikos* 30:445–65. https://doi.org/10.5788/30-1-1592.

Shah, Sheena, Letzadzo Kometsi, and Matthias Brenzinger. 2022. “Language Activists and Linguists in Pursuit of the siPhuthi Cause.” *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 42 (March): 93–101. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190522000058.

Sibeko, Johannes. 2023a. “The Challenges of Translating English Linguistics Terminology to Sesotho.” Long Paper presented at the South African Translator’s Institute, Stellenbosch, South Africa, September 25, 2023.

———. 2023b. “Developing Resources for Measuring Text Readability in Sesotho.” In *Selected Papers from the CLARIN Annual Conference 2022*, edited by Tomaž Erjavec and Maria Eskevich, 120–32. Prague: CLARIN. https://doi.org/10.3384/ecp198012.

Sibeko, Johannes, and Mmasibidi Setaka. 2022. “An Overview of Sesotho BLARK Content.” *Journal of the Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (DHASA)* 4 (1). https://doi.org/10.55492/dhasa.v4i01.4440.

———. 2023. “Evaluating the Sesotho Rule-Based Syllabification System on Sepedi and Setswana Words.” In *Proceedings of the Fourth Workshop on Resources for African Indigenous Languages (RAIL 2023)*, 76–85. Dubrovnik, Croatia: Association for Computational Linguistics. https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2023.rail-1.9.

Sibeko, Johannes, and Menno van Zaanen. 2021. “An Analysis of Readability Metrics on English Exam Texts.” *Journal of the Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (DHASA)* 3 (1): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.55492/dhasa.v3i01.3864.

Turner, Irina. 2023. “Decolonisation through Digitalisation? African Languages at South African Universities.” *Curriculum Perspectives* 43 (1): 73–82. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-023-00196-w.

Van Heerden, Charl Johannes, Neil Kleynhans, Etienne Barnard, and Marelie H. Davel. 2010. “Pooling ASR Data for Closely Related Languages.” In *Proceedings of the Workshop on Spoken Languages Technologies for Under-Resourced Languages (SLTU 2010)*, edited by Laurent Besacier and Eric Castelli, 17–23. School of Computer Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Vuzo, Mwajuma. 2018. “Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: Revisiting Language of Instruction in Tanzanian Secondary Schools.” *International Review of Education* 64 (6): 803–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-018-9740-z.

Wagner, Valencia K., Thabo Ditsele, and Mary M. Makgato. 2020. “Influence of Sepitori on Standard Setswana of Its Home Language Learners at Three Tshwane Townships.” *Literator* 41 (1). https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v41i1.1653.

Webb, Vic, and Mariana Kriel. 2000. “Afrikaans and Afrikaner Nationalism.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2000 (144): 19–50. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2000.144.19.

Wilken, Ilana, Tebogo Gumede, Carmen Moors, and Karen Calteaux. 2018. “Human Language Technology Audit 2018: Design Considerations and Methodology.” In *2018 International Conference on Intelligent and Innovative Computing Applications (ICONIC)*, 1–7. IEEE.

Appendix

Sesotho print dictionaries

Title	Publication year	Author/editor	Type and size
English–Sesotho Official Foundation Phase CAPS Picture Dictionary	2017	Sesotho National Lexicography unit	Bilingual dictionary, 148 pages
English–Southern Sesotho dictionary	2015	J. Motsapi	Monodirectional bilingual, 408 pages
Patlamantsoe ya Sesotho ya Machaba	2010	M. Chitjha	Monolingual with English equivalents, 842 pages
Oxford First Bilingual Dictionary	2007	D. Paizee	Bilingual, 64 pages
Sethantšo sa Sesotho	2005	B. Hlalele	Monolingual, 325 pages
Khetsi ea Sesotho	1997	T. T. E. Pitso	Monolingual, 323 pages
New South Sotho dictionary	1997	S. R. Chaphole	Bilingual, 103 pages
Sehlalosi: Sesotho cultural dictionary	1994	F. Z. A. Matšela	74 pages
Southern Sotho–English dictionary	1988	R. A. Paroz	598 pages
Bukantswe ya maleme-pedi, Sesotho–Seafrikanse	1974	J. A. du Plessis, J. G. Gildenhuys, and J. J. Moiloa	269 pages
English–Southern Sesotho dictionary	1965	L. Hamel (OMI)	Bilingual, 6 volumes
English–Sotho, Sotho–English pocket dictionary	1960	S. Christeller	Bilingual, 144 pages
English–Sotho, Sotho–English pocket dictionary	1960	(Unknown)	Bilingual
Sesuto–English dictionary	1937	A. Mabille and H. Dieterlen	Bilingual, 445 pages
English–Sesotho vocabulary	1905	A. Casalis	English lemma list with basic Sesotho translations
English–Se-Suto vocabulary	(Unknown)	D. F. Ellenburger	(Unknown)
Se-Sotho–English vocabulary	(Unknown)	T. Verdier	(Unknown)

Online Sesotho dictionaries

Dictionary link	Type and size
Bukantswe http://bukantswe.sesotho.org	Bilingual dictionary, 10,075 entries
Sesotho dictionary–Bilingo https://www.bilingo.co.za/sesotho-dictionary-2/	(Not available at time of consultation, December 29, 2023)
Free English–Sesotho dictionary and translator-FREELANG https://www.freelang.net/dictionary/sesotho.php	9,980 words, English > Sesotho: 6,638 words
English–Southern Sotho Dictionary, Glosbe https://glosbe.com/en/st	Bilingual
Sesotho–English Dictionary—Apps on Google Play https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=alldictdict.alldict.sten&hl=en_US	Bilingual

Source: Adapted from Setaka and Prinsloo (2020).