The relation of local and foreign languages to national needs in Africa

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Abstract

This paper argues that African countries need both local and foreign languages and that the roles of these languages are complementary. Several African countries have designated African languages as national, official languages and as media of instruction, especially at primary-school level. The languages of the former coloniser have often been maintained as media of instruction in secondary and post-secondary education, as official languages, and, in several countries, as national languages as well. An African language, like any other can become official and national, and a medium of instruction; the choice is determined by political and socio-economic factors.