

IS LANGUAGE TRULY A RIGHT? Deaf and speech impaired people in South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa aims to afford every citizen a right to their language of choice and that all languages receive equal treatment and enjoy the same parity of esteem (Constitution, 1996), recognising the significance of language in social inclusion and human development. This poster explores the concept of language as a right and examines the provision and accessibility of indigenous languages for South Africans with speech impediments and hearing impairments.

OBJECTIVES

This research will be aimed at bringing about questions and insights that will spark on-going discussions and highlight existing gaps in the language right for the deaf and speech impaired South Africans, thus ensure the promotion of language rights for all members.

METHODOLOGY

The study will incorporate Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to observe the accessibility and indigenous language services [including formal education and health services] and the practicality of 'language as a right' among the deaf and speech impaired communities. In order to reach a wider population of these communities, the study will therefore use AI tools for data collection, analysis, and categorisation to bring about insights for inclusive language policy development.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The study is set to reveal the disparities in language rights for the the deaf and speech impaired in South Africa. Looking at the use of AI tools, a limited availability of language services is expected as 'African languages represent only a small fraction of available language resources', Menon *et al.*, (2018), limited Assistive technological tools and educational resources designed to cater for them. The outcome should challenge the participants in the Policy making to address the underlying issues effectively for the success of Linguistic Inclusiveness.

CONCLUSION

Although the study is yet to be conducted, the expected outcomes are positive and can contribute significantly in the impacting the society and creating an awareness as well as advocate for the rights of the marginalised communities. The study strives for social consciousness and contributes to building a society that embraces diversity and ensures that language rights are upheld. The expected outcomes have a great potential to spark meaningful discussions among the Academics, Policymakers, and advocacy groups.

REFERENCES

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