

# **Indigenous Languages Endangerment in the Universities: A Focus on the Zimbabwe Open University's (ZOU) Tutors and Students' Perceptions**

By

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## **Abstract**

*The present study is descriptive survey explored the degree of language endangerment in the universities with particular reference to tutors and students' perceptions at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). It employed a random sample of 40 tutors and 160 students. Tutors were interviewed during the examination processing period in December 2011, while data were gathered during the conduct of tutorials between October and November 2011. Data were interpreted thematically. The study found out that English language was the main cause of indigenous language endangerment in the learning institutions in the country. It also found out that lack of resources and negative tutor and student attitudes could present challenges to the implementation of indigenous languages to the teaching processes at university level. The study concluded that use of indigenous languages in the teaching of university courses is gateway to mastery learning. The study recommends the need to revisit the existing language policy with the intent to rebrand it in order to tailor it to local needs. It also recommends that the government need to train existing and new tutors in the pedagogic and andragogic principles. Studies in the same area need to be carried out at a national scale using state and private universities in order to generate comprehensive knowledge in the area.*