

Lost in Translation - Closing Africa's AI Language Gap

1- Africa is home to over a quarter of the world's languages, yet many are missing from artificial intelligence (AI) development. This is both an issue of a lack of investment and readily available data.

2- Most AI tools, such as Chat GPT, used today are trained on English as well as other European and Chinese languages. But as many African languages are mostly spoken rather than written down, there is a lack of text to train AI on to make it useful for speakers of those languages. For millions across the continent this means being left out. For many Africans, not speaking English can mean missing out on essential services like healthcare, banking or even government support.

3- Researchers who have been trying to address this issue have recently released what is thought to be the largest known dataset of African languages. "We think in our own languages, dream in them and interpret the world through them. If technology doesn't reflect that, a whole group risks being left behind," the University of Pretoria's Prof. Vukosi Marivate, who worked on the project, tells the BBC. "We're going through this AI revolution, imagining all that can be done with it."

4- The African Next Voices project brought together linguists and computer scientists to create inclusive AI-ready datasets in 18 African languages. In two years, the team recorded 9,000 hours of speech across Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, capturing everyday scenarios in farming, health and education, and reflecting how people really live and speak. The project was made possible by a \$ 2.2 million Gates Foundation grant. The data will be open access, allowing developers to build AI tools that translate, transcribe and respond in African languages.

5- There are already small examples of how indigenous languages used in AI can be used to solve real-life challenges in Africa, according to Prof Marivate. South African farmer Kelebogile Mosime uses the AI-Farmer application in Setswana to get help with crop issues. "Being able to use my language makes a huge difference," she says. "Daily, I see the benefits of doing so."

6- Language can be a huge barrier. But this is more than being about business and convenience. For Prof. Marivate there is also a danger that without African language initiatives, something else could be lost. "Language is access to imagination," he says. "It's not just words – it's history, culture, knowledge. If indigenous languages aren't included, we lose more than data; we lose ways of seeing and understanding the world."

Adapted from BBC News in Johannesburg, 4 Sep, 2025



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00	25	50	75

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Niveau : 1ère année		Durée : 2 heures
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Part I: Reading Comprehension (18pts)

A/ Tick (✓) the idea that best relates to the text. (1pt)

1. Africa is not only just closing its AI language gap but it also preserves its cultural identity.
2. Most Africans already use advanced AI tools in their native languages without any major accessibility problems.
3. Using English as the main AI language promotes digital equality and creative expression among Africans.

B/ Complete the following table about The African Next Voices Project: (3.5 pts)

Leadership	Professor Vukosi Marivate of the University of Pretoria
Purpose	
Participants	
Languages Covered	
Countries Involved	
Data Collected	
Focus Areas of Data	
Funding Source	

Nom, prénom et signature de
l'enseignant surveillant



C/ Complete the following paragraph with words or expressions from the text: (2pts)

The importance of using African AI tools in helping local people with (1) problems is visible. One of South African farmers, for instance, uses the AI-Farmer application in her (2) language to get guidance on (3) management. That significantly enhances her experience and gains her (4) benefits.

D/ Answer the following questions: (2pts)

1. Why are many African languages under-represented in AI development?

- a.
- b.

1. According to Prof. Marivate, what deeper risks do excluding native languages from AI pose?

- a.
- b.

E/ Say whether the following statements are true or false and justify with details from the text: (4.5pts)

1. Non English-speaking African communities may be prevented from accessing some vital services.

(.....).....
.....

2. Having open access to the data available on the African Next Voices Project is not useful at all for experts.

(.....).....
.....

3. For Prof. Marivate, including African languages in AI is only a matter of economic growth.

(.....).....
.....

F/ Which message does the statement "Language is access to imagination" (&6) convey about the cultural dimension of AI? Tick (✓) the correct alternative. (1pt)

- 1. AI systems should focus mainly on improving translation speed and efficiency across all languages.
- 2. Language shapes how people think, create, and see the world—so excluding certain languages from AI limits imagination and cultural diversity.
- 3. Imagination in AI depends mostly on technological innovation, not on cultural or linguistic diversity.

G/ Find in the text words having approximately the same meaning as: (2pts)

- 1. excluded (&2) =.....
- 2. deal with (&3) =.....

3. a sum of money given by a government or other organization for a particular purpose (&4)=.....
4. obstacle (&6) =.....

H/ What do the underlined words in the text refer to? (2pts)

1. this (&1) refers to
2. that (&3) refers to
3. it (&3) refers to
4. doing so (&5) refers to

PART TWO: LANGUAGE TASKS. (10pts)

TASK ONE: Circle the right alternative. (5pts)

The global smart waste management market reached over \$ 2 million in 2024. Worldwide demand (1) (of / for / about) smart waste management recorded a (2) (grown / growing / growth) of 15% in 2024. (3) (Therefore / But / Besides), the market is expected (4) (reaching / reached / to reach) more than \$ 3 million in 2025. From 2025 to 2035, the global smart waste management sales are predicted to rise (5) (increasingly / swiftly / easily) at 16% by 2035. Recent increase in solid waste generation in different parts of the world (6) (has become / becomes / had become) a burden on the global economy. The World Bank has estimated that nearly 2 billion tons of waste (7) (generate / is generated / are generated) every day , with over 33% not managed safely. This amount, (8) (which / who / whom) is estimated to increase in the forthcoming years, has pushed governments in (9) (similar / various / major) countries to invest in smart waste management. The (10) (rise / risen / rising) need for effective waste management in homes, hospitals, commercial spaces, and public places is set to drive the market.

TASK TWO: Express differently starting as given. (5pts)

1. Certain online challenges are very dangerous; you shouldn't try them even for fun.
→ *Certain online challenges are too*
2. Cyber bullying can be persistent; that's why victims feel overwhelmed every day.
→ *Cyber bullying can be so*
3. Despite the flexibility of teleworking, separating work and home life can be difficult.
→ *Although*
4. Back up your files often; otherwise, you may lose everything in a cyber-attack.
→ *Unless your files*
5. I advise you to avoid clicking unknown links not to download malware.
→ *If I were you,*

PART THREE WRITING (12pts)

Task One: There are FOUR mistakes in the paragraph below. Find and correct them. (2pts)

The Charles Nicolle hospital in Tunis marked in Tuesday, November 11, 2025 a historic milestone for Tunisian medicine by successfully carry out the first robotic surgical operation on the system digestive.

Mistake	1).....	2).....	3).....	4).....
Correction	1).....	2).....	3).....	4).....

TASK Two: Rearrange the chunks below to get a coherent paragraph. (2pts)

- a. Only China comes close to matching the US in AI development
- b. and most of the world is still trying to catch up.
- c. with companies like DeepSeek, and Moonshot releasing models that rival top US systems.
- d. It's been almost three years since the US launched the artificial intelligence boom,

1 = ...	2 = ...	3 = ...	4 = ...
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TASK three: Essay (8pts)

It is widely believed that governments should invest in space issues only after solving problems on Earth.

Develop this idea in a 15-line essay.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slightly textured appearance and some minor discoloration or faint smudges, particularly towards the bottom edge. The overall tone is light blue and white.