

Press Release

For immediate release



SOUTH AFRICAN
INSTITUTE OF
RACE RELATIONS

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

www.sairr.org.za

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Afrikaans and English no longer 'white languages'

Some 4.1 million (or 60%) of people whose home language is Afrikaans are African, coloured, or Indian. Of the 6.9 million people who speak the language at home, only 2.7 million (or 40%) are white, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Of the 4.9 million people who speak English at home, only 1.6 million (or 34%) are white. Among the remaining 3.2 million (or 66%) of people whose home language is English, Africans account for almost 1.2 million, coloured people for just under 950 000, and Indians for nearly 1.1 million.

The most commonly spoken home language in South Africa is Zulu, which has more than 11.6 million people speaking it at home. The Institute obtained the data from the 2011 census.

Thuthukani Ndebele, a researcher at the Institute, said, 'Although English is only the fourth most-spoken home language, it is the preferred language of learning in South Africa. About 64% of the 11.5 million pupils in public schools in 2010 chose to be taught in English, reflecting a global trend for the preference of the language.'

At least one in four people in the world speak English to some level of competence, Ndebele said.

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