

# Translanguaging, decoloniality and epistemic (in)justice in education

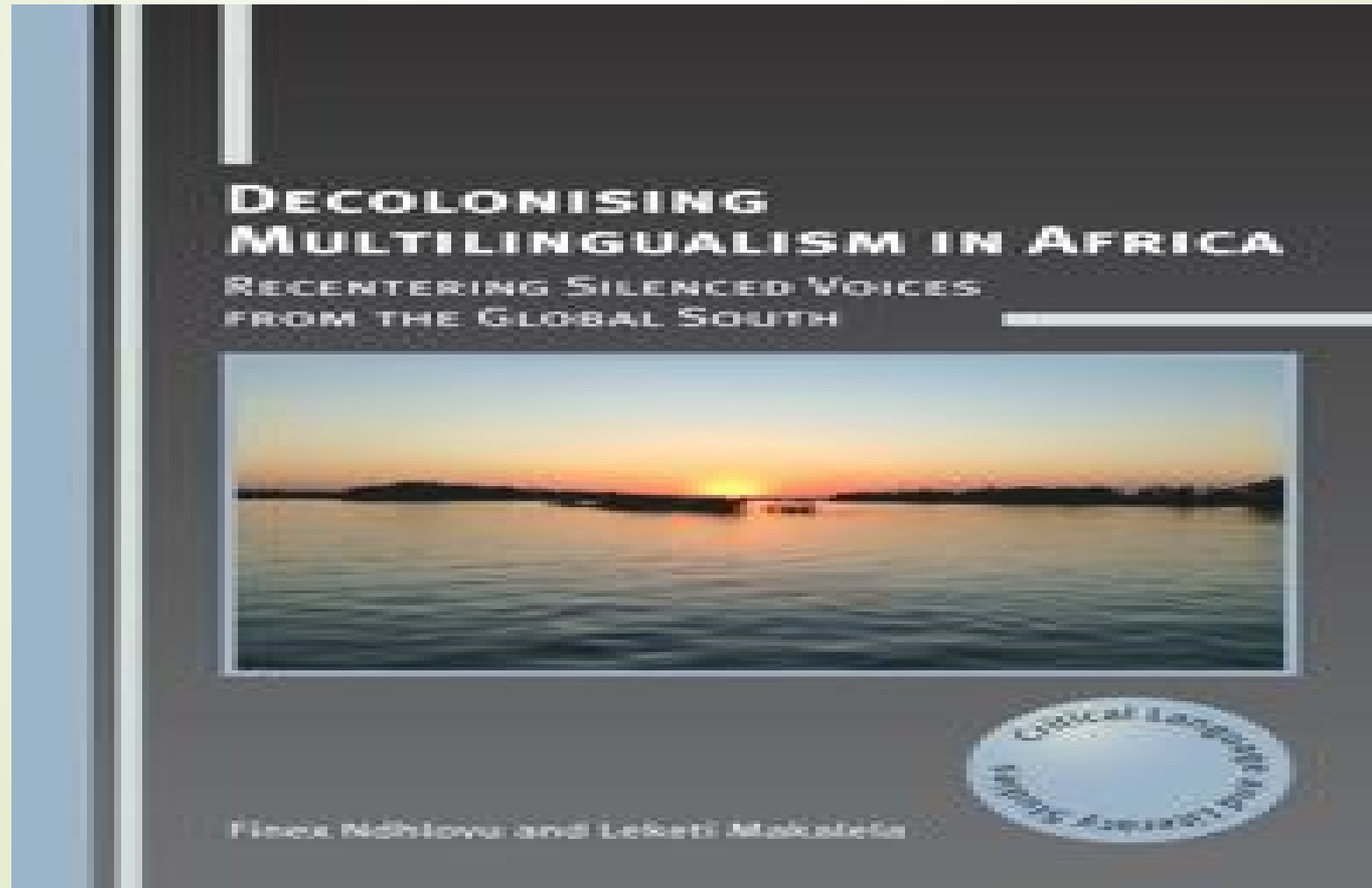
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# African multilingualism?



# Digital multilingualism African languages

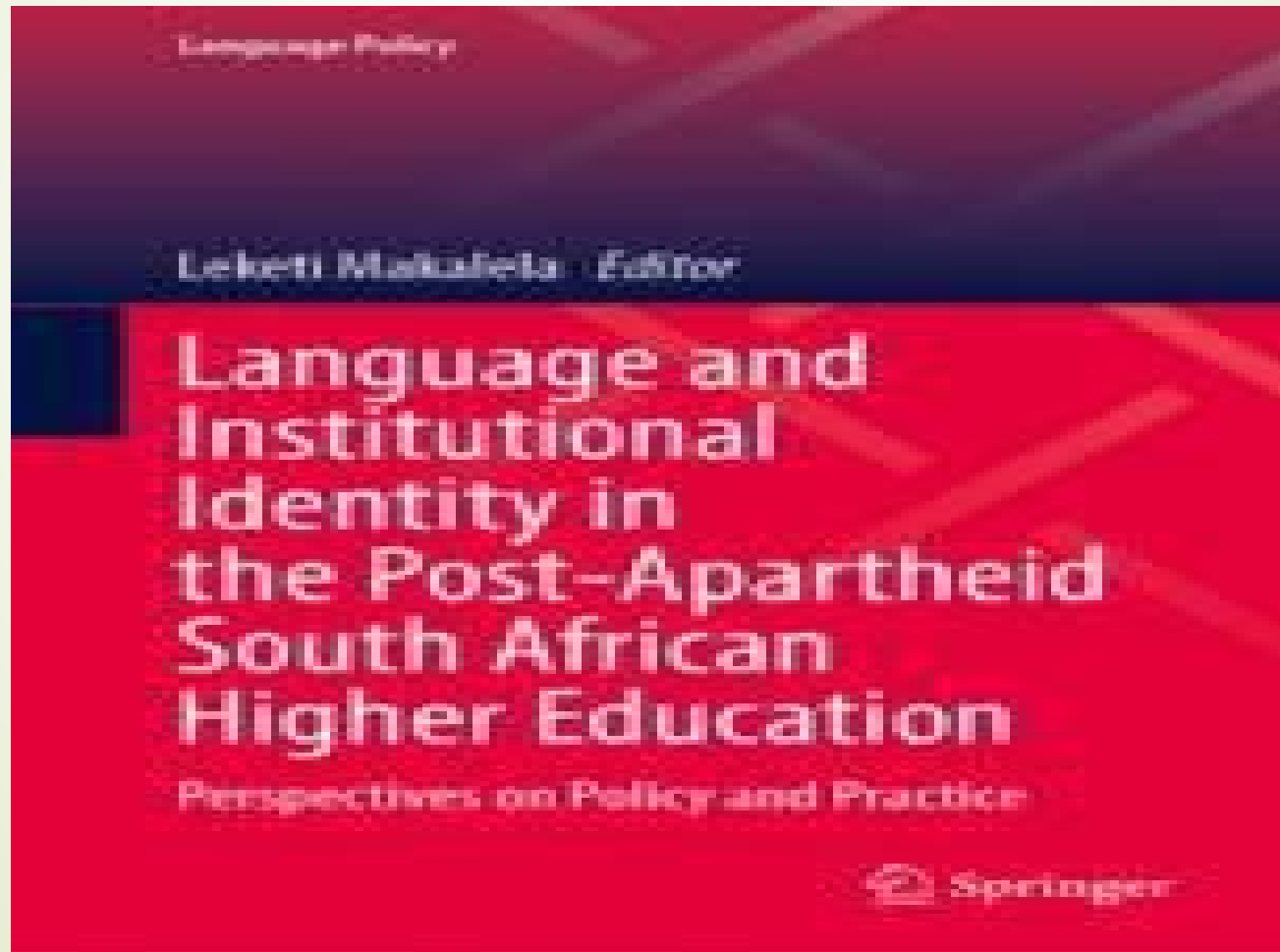
## Rethinking Language Use in Digital Africa Technology and Communication in Sub-Saharan Africa



Edited by  
Leketi Makalela and  
Goodith White

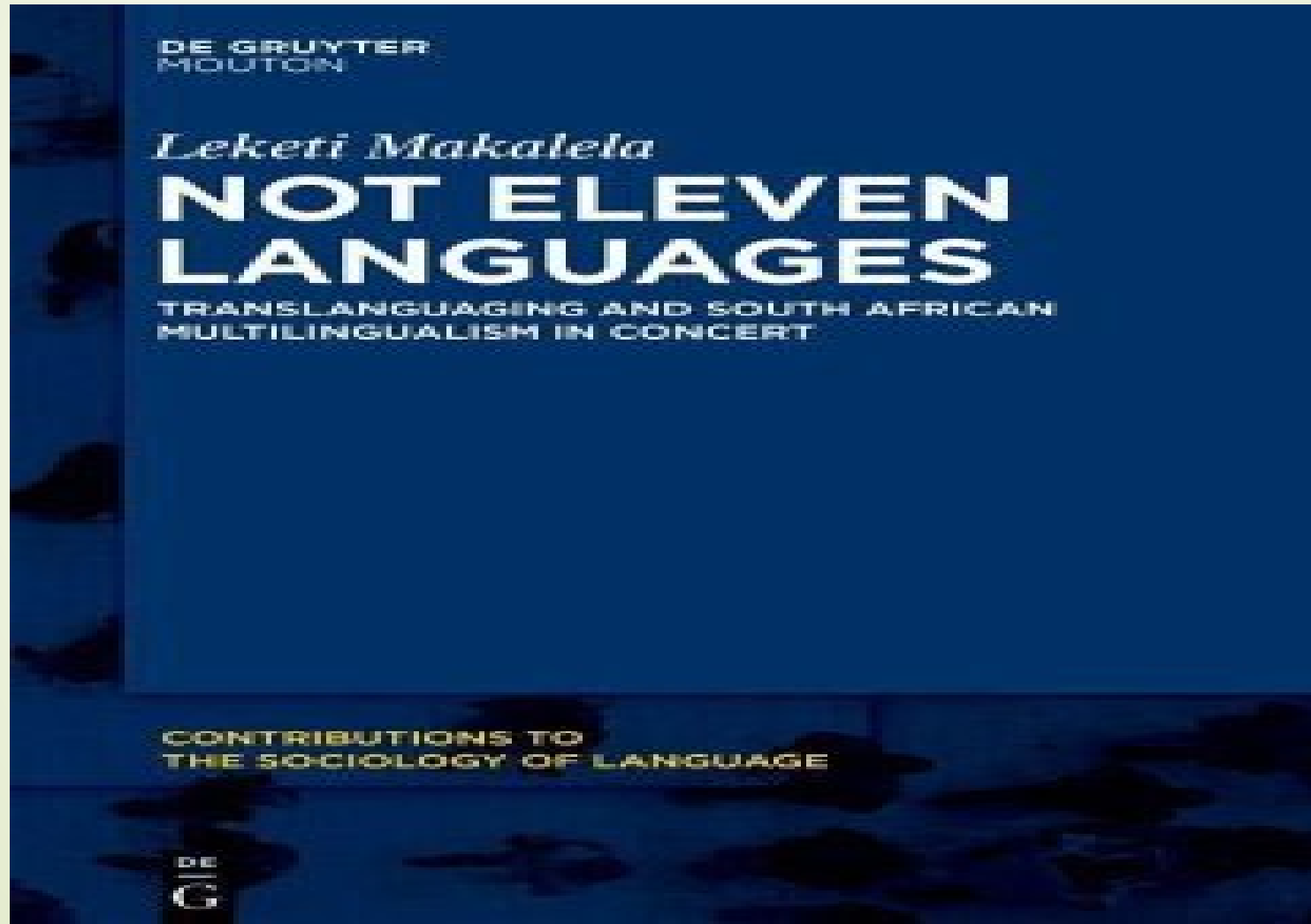
new  
perspectives  
on  
language  
and  
education

# Linguistic Apartheid in Higher Education





# Translanguaging and SA multilingualism in concert: 12 official languages?





# Let's begin: Decolonising through historical Consciousness

“Perhaps in the future there will be some African history...But at present, there is none; there is only the history of Europeans in Africa”

Trevor-Roper (1963)

“People without culture become mimics who have placed their memories in a psychic tomb” Ngugi wa Thiongo

“We have to meet prevailing global challenges from within our own *worldview* and proceed to action from our own authentic possibilities based on the **culture and competencies of Africans themselves**”. (Khoza, 2013: xi)

= southern epistemologies/theories/practices



# Johannesburg vs New York



How can we explain the difference?  
SANKOFA





Once upon a time-there was a  
multilingual city in Southern Africa



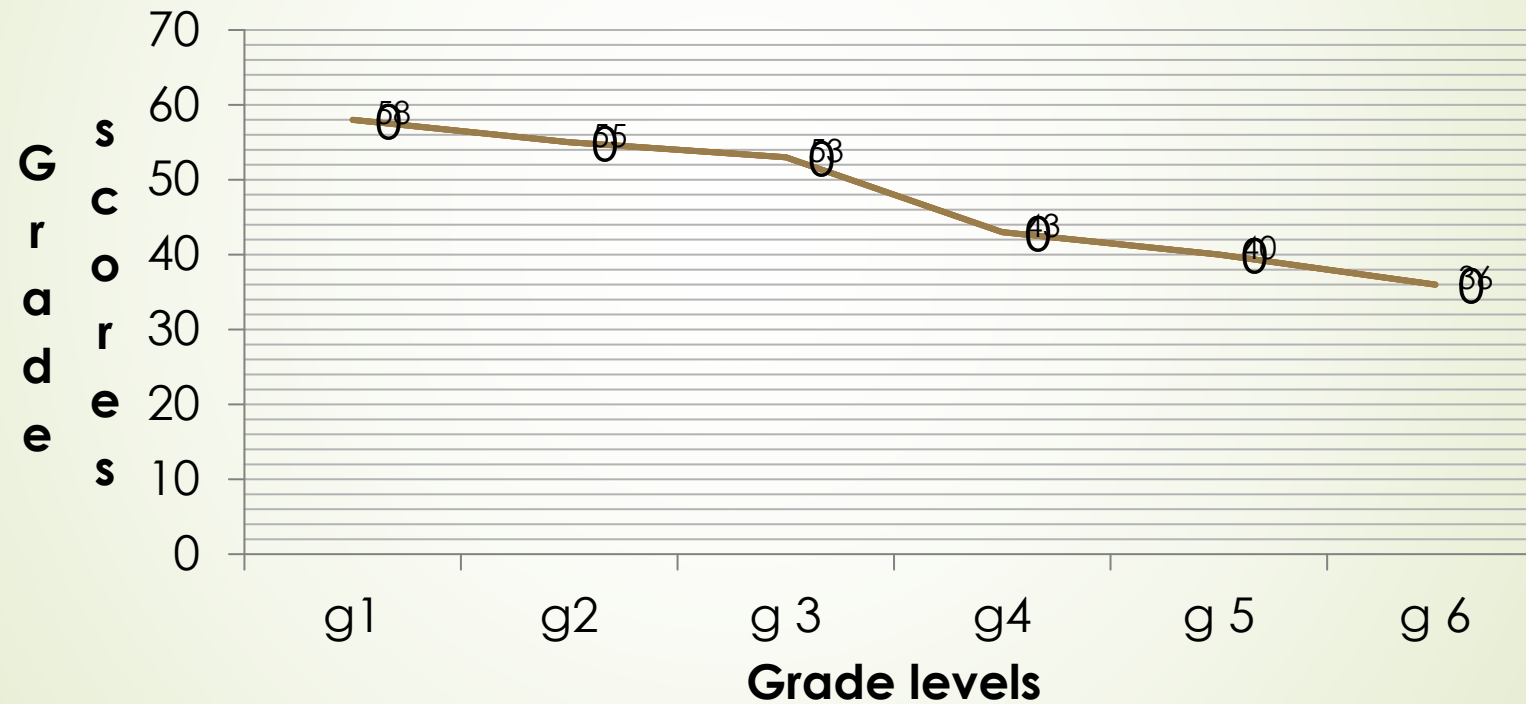


# The Issues in higher education

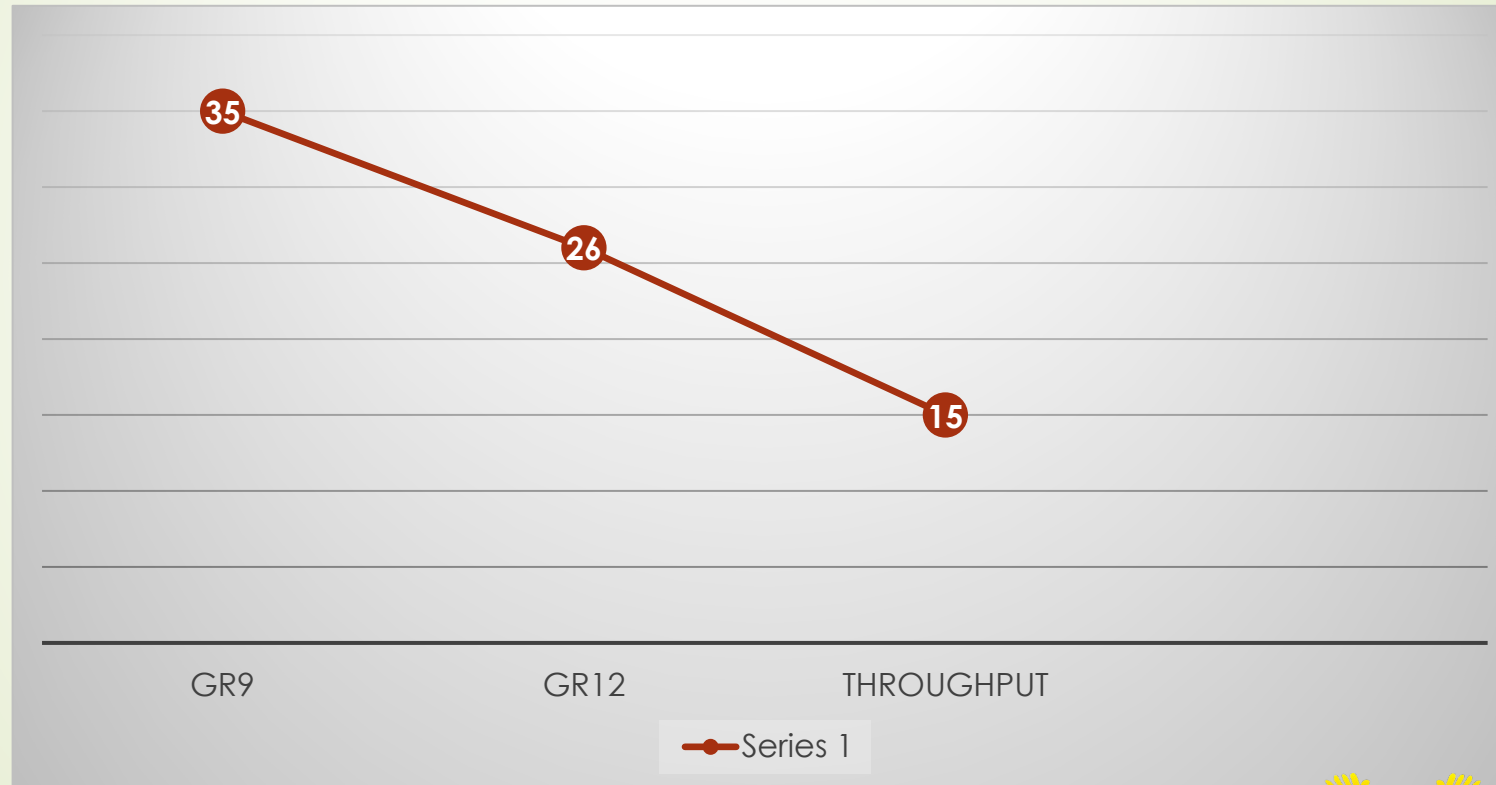
Multilingual students are disproportionately marginalized:


- Epistemic access compromised
- Identity positions questioned

# A consistent pattern of de-education



# Students vulnerable to “unauthentic forms of existence and thought”- Freire





# Adopted one-ness ideology

- Multilingualism misconceived as multiple monolingualisms
  - Mistaken/colonial beliefs about African languages
- 





# Ipseity and Enlightenment

- A world vision of territorized national languages:
- A global isomorphy of monolingualisms bounded and sealed through sovereign states
- Contrast: Pre-modern speech as a linguistic repertoire
- “I-ness” vs “otherness” (Nation-statism and ideology of one-ness)
- Colonialism as expansion of the “I-ness”- Balkanization of African countries into outposts (Berlin Convention of 1884)



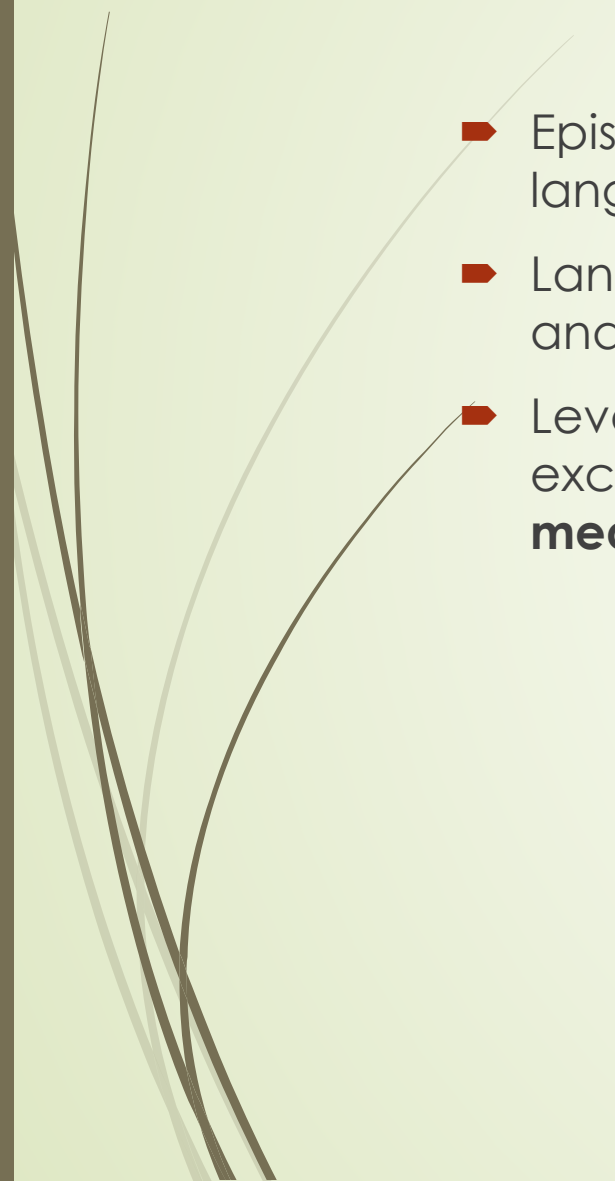


# Our Trap in two frameworks

- Cognitive efficiency mechanism
  - Two brain system
    - (i) Automaticity (autopilot) and (ii) working memory (deliberate, rational, logical)
- Environmental opportunity hypothesis
  - Experiential factors- reading volume/print exposure



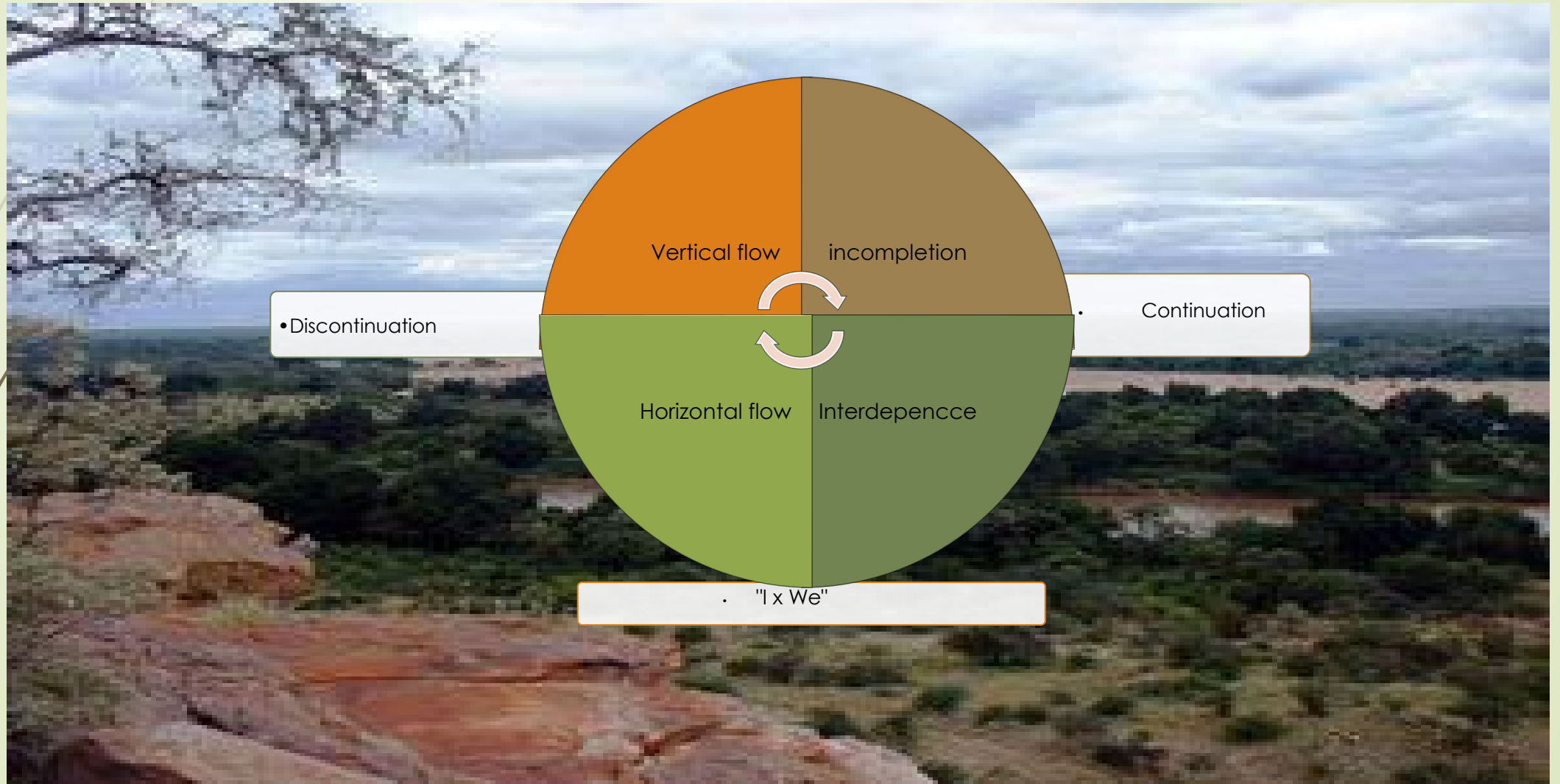
# From fixity to fluidity

- Epistemological shift: what people do with language, not what a language looks like
  - Lang/s: not as fixed systems in sealed boxes; rather: versatile, fluid and unbounded
  - Leveraging on natural multilingual situations where **input: output** are exchanged in different languages or modes in the process of **meaning making**.
- 

Ancient city of Mapungubwe: “Stranger come to our place so we are complete” : I am because we are (cf: Cogito: “I think, therefore I am)



# Ubuntu: confluence and infinite relations of dependency



# Ubuntu Translanguaging Pedagogy

- **Turning and talking/hearing from others (the collective)**
- **Group work:** Guided alternation between languages
- **Language & vocabulary:** Key vocabulary, concepts and syntax developed side by side
- **Reading/listening:** input-output exchange
- **Writing:** Multiple drafts in different languages (within and between sentences/paragraphs)
- **Mini-lessons** (expanded opportunities)



# Ubuntu translanguaging

- **I x We: I am because you are-** No one language is complete without the other.
- **Complex interdependence:** Infinite relations of dependency
- **Discontinuous continuation:** Constant disruption of orderliness and simultaneous recreation of new ones (21<sup>st</sup> Century)
- **Confluence:** Vertical and horizontal overflows (translanguaging paradox– E and I languages (**speaker vs hearer**))

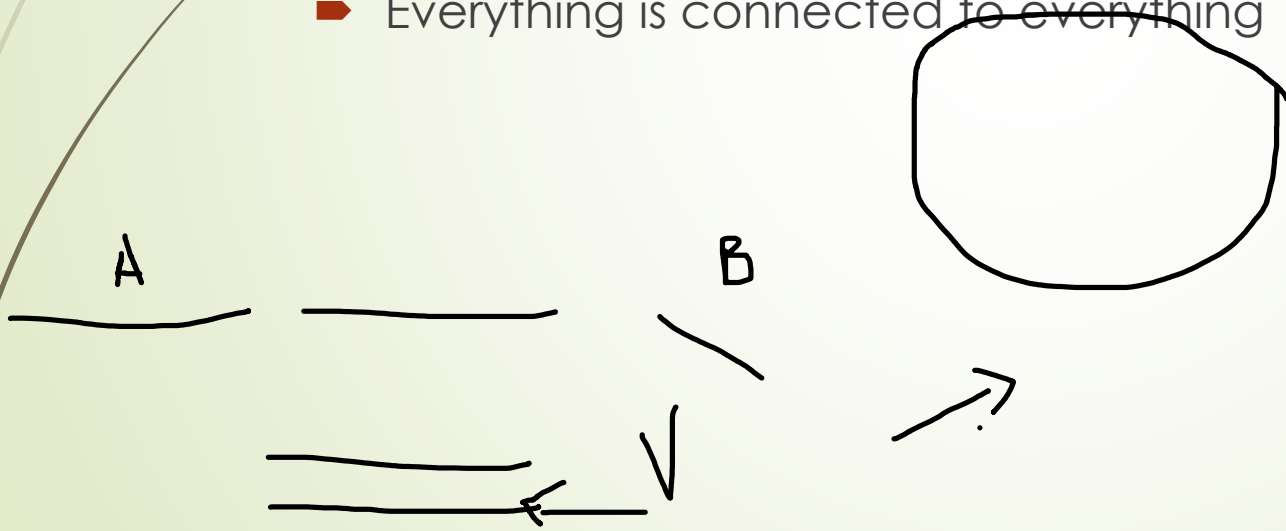


# Digital Multilingual Tutorials: 1 hr/week



# Findings from community based participatory research

- Circumlocution vs paragraph structure
- Place-based learning
- Cross-cultural border crossing
- Everything is connected to everything



# Deeper learning- Not simple copying

It is possible in a monolingual teaching situation, for students to answer questions or write an essay about a subject without fully understanding it. Processing for meaning may not have occurred. Whole sentences or paragraphs can be copied or adapted out of a textbook, from the internet or from dictation by the teacher without real understanding. It is less easy to do this with 'translanguaging'. To read and discuss a topic in one language, and then to write about it in another language, means that the subject matter has to be processed and 'digested'. (Baker, 2011, p. 289)



# More than one language

- In *ubuntu*, one rediscovers a plural vision of interdependence of the language systems and their fluid, overlapping and discursive nature to match the everyday ways of communicating where the **use of one language is incomplete without the other.**

# Multilingual Mapungubwe







# Concluding Remarks: Policy Implementation Directions:

Epistemic injustices undermine indigenous ways of knowing, being and acting

Alternative multilingual theories and methodologies based on the cultural competence of the local themselves (ontological, epistemological and methodological alignment)

Ubuntu Translanguaging as an anchor for transformation : affirmation of identity positions and plural access pathways.

Resuscitate 'multilingual souls' from educational marginalization, epistemicide and systemic cultural violence.





Inkomu, Siyabonga, Re a leboga, ....

Thank you

