

Safely Nestled in isiXhosa is a Psychology of a People

Zethu Cakata

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6977-7008>

Abstract

Being called to re-imagine education provides everyone whose ways of knowing have been invisibilised an opportunity to be deliberate in crafting an education where they are not merely performers of knowledges that were scripted in other lands. Psychology as a way of understanding human mind and behavior should mean that every society had ways of understanding and speaking about human behavior and language was central to that task. In this paper I aim to look at how the speakers of IsiXhosa language understood and conceptualized human behavior and how that could benefit the bigger task of not only learning in indigenous languages but also from them. IsiXhosa concepts of *ukuphalaza imbilini* and *ukuzityanda igila* are used to demonstrate how language transmits its own epistemology.

Keywords: Metaphoric language, Indigenous knowledges, IsiXhosa, Psychology, Ethics, Science of Human Functioning

Okufukanyelwe Ngokuphepha EsiXhoseni Yisayikholoji Yabantu

Zethu Cakata

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6977-7008>

Iqoqa

Ukubizwa ukuthi ubheke imfundo isibili, kunikeza bonke abantu abazindlela zabo zokwazi esezisatshalalisiwe ithuba lokuthi baqaphelise kahle ukuqamba imfundo, lapho bengabona nje abalingisi bolwazi oluthathwelwe kweminye imihlaba. Isayikholoji, njengendlela yokuqonda umqondo womuntu kanye nendlela yokuzophatha, kumele isho ukuthi yonke imiphakathi beyinezindlela zokuqonda nokukhuluma ngendlela yokuziphatha kwabantu futhi ulimi belungumgogodla kulowo msebenzi. Kuleli phepha, ngihlose ukubuka ukuthi abantu abakhuluma ulimi lwesiXhosa bebekuqonda futhi bebekucabanga kanjani ukuziphatha kwabantu, nokuthi lokho kungaba namthelela muni emsebenzini omkhulu wokufunda ngezilimi zendabuko kanye nokufunda kuzo. Izisho zesiXhosa ezithi *ukuphalaza imbilini* kanye nokuzityanda *igila* zisetshenziswa ukuveza ukuthi ulimi luziveza kanjani izindlela zokwazi.

Amagama asemqoka: ulimi lokungathekisa, ulwazi lwendabuko, isiXhosa, isayikholoji, inqubonhle, Isayensi Yokusebenza Komuntu

Introduction

The resurfacing demands that call on higher education to redefine its role, intentions and ethos, compel everyone involved in pedagogy in South Africa to cast a critical gaze on the knowledge they disseminate. In my endeavors to question what I have come to understand as Psychology and its application I arrived at the realisation that language is an anchor of all epistemologies. My intention with this paper is therefore to demonstrate how my home language of isiXhosa has always communicated an understanding of human behaviour. This I have done by drawing from figurative language and ordinary people's understanding of the concept of emotional wellness. Furthermore, in order for this knowledge to find accurate expression, I decided to perform an epistemic disruption, which prevented me from gazing upon African knowledge with a western lens. This follows Mignolo's (2011) expression of assuming a distance from imperial categorisation of knowledge as either superior or inferior, and the treatment of language according to such divisive categories. In this paper, I thus disrupt the western epistemic rules which dictate the structure of knowledge dissemination. This is done by not only presenting an African epistemology, but also doing so in a manner that is in line with African ways of engaging in speech (either written or spoken). This relates more to the way in which I begin (with ethics) and end (with a conversation), the discussion that relies on spiritual invocation, rather than logical flow as we know it.

This discussion regarding isiXhosa safely harbouring the psychology of a people was presented at the 24th Psychology Society of South Africa conference in September 2018¹. The conference was held at a venue named 'Emperor's Palace' in Johannesburg, South Africa, and that evoked in me the issue of ethical considerations in a society that is still reeling from colonialism. The article, therefore, first draws from isiXhosa idioms to address some ethical concerns, not just about the conference venue, but also about western education in general, and psychology in particular. Secondly, still drawing from isiXhosa idioms, it will be argued that long before colonial invasions, psychology has always been and continues to be a part of African communities. Parentheti-

¹ While initially addressed to a specific South African audience in the South African context, it is believed that this message would be relevant to any people who have experienced colonialism and threats of language erosion leading to epistemicide.

cally, due to the hegemonic domination of western education, the term representing the science of human functioning i.e., Psychology, universally refers to Euro-American psychology. The scope of this article, unfortunately, will not allow for a full discussion of the problem of the accurate nomenclature for isiXhosa human functioning. Nevertheless, what receives due consideration will demonstrate how language communicates its knowledge, and particularly how isiXhosa transmits its knowledge of human functioning.

What of the Ethics of this Land?

Addressing ethical issues before delving into discussion about the science of human function of the speakers of isiXhosa is deliberate. It responds to the question of the place of a human being in the both teaching and research. When the speakers of IsiXhosa language say *irhamncwa ligquma kowalo umngxuma* (a beast roars in its own den), they mean a person is only superior in his or her own territory. This is an ethical statement which forces me to pose two questions:

- 1) From which den is this beast called western psychology that brought us to the conference?
- 2) Why is it roaring in this territory?

Mignolo (2011) cautions us to be suspicious of knowledge that pretends to be universal, and which promises to be capable of responding to everyone's reality. It is a caution that has caused me to question the ethics of western education, a system that has dominated the African landscape for centuries. In specific regards to western psychology in Africa, Nobles (2015a) asserts that to simply bring western psychology to Africa is to be complicit in the mental brainwashing and psychic terrorism of Africa, and the adoption of the very tool and theories that have been used to demean, defame, debilitate, and damage African people. To not remember that psychology is part of an imposed education system would be a serious error. Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo (2006) lament the foundation of western education in Africa, bent as it is on epistemicide², and argue that its existence can be neither politically

² The term epistemicide refers to the phenomena where the dominant (Western) conceptions of knowing are asserted as the only source of knowledge and

nor ethically justified. Those of us who participate in this imposed education system are, therefore, complicit in the breach of the ethics of the people of the South African land. As illustrated by Wa Thiong'o (1986), through brutal measures, western education system was enforced, and insisted on 'educating' everyone, and dismissed all whose ways of knowing were not of western origin. By participating in this system, we have legitimised an injustice which began by forcing African children into a western schooling system for which they did not volunteer themselves. By taking the young from an early age and putting them through their schooling system, the coloniser knew that they would eventually produce a generation that perceives the brutality of western education as a norm. I form a part of those who were raised by that generation forced to rely on western education for its livelihood – a generation that was made to forget that our landscape provided food for thought, body, and spirit. This is a profoundly ethical issue, and as stated by Waziyatawin (2005), the United Nations Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide declared this practice genocidal where it can be found to be transferring African children from their cultures into a western culture.

What is most violent about this education system is its claim that it can impart to the indigenous people of South Africa skills that could improve their lived conditions. However, since its imposition, the indigenous people have far from benefitted from its promises. As shown by Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo (2006), the higher education institutional cultures in South Africa have not changed to respond to the socio-political demands of the land. The psychology profession, of which I am a part, has not fundamentally responded to the question of how to meet the need for healing of the land, or healing from various forms of oppression attendant to colonialism. The disconnect between the education and the society it promises to help is evident in the destitution that the majority of African people continue to experience.

In his numerous works, Ramose (2002a; 2002b) urges us to remember that a scholarship without memory will not succeed in fighting against colonialism. Paradoxically, Euro-American psychology has formidable scholarship on memory, however, remembers nothing about its own story and contributions to the dehumanisation of Africans in South Africa and elsewhere.

knowing resulting in the killing of indigenous knowing and the murder of all other culturally congruent, indigenous knowledge. For a further discussion of epistemicide, see Dei (2000).

It has theories of debriefing and reflection, but it does not reflect or debrief about being the very discipline that engineered one of the most heinous crimes against humanity in the guise of colonial-apartheid (see Rich 1990) for an account of race science and white supremacy attributable to this period). It is silent on its deliberate role to distort African knowledge in order to facilitate the dehumanisation of African people. Euro-American psychology in South Africa was instrumental in the entrenchment of colonial-apartheid policies; nevertheless, its curriculum does not explicitly reflect on that history. A science of human functioning should be seen as a healing field of study. It is imbued with the tears of the society and promises to mend the brokenness of our humanity. However, in South Africa, Euro-American psychology has disregarded the healing ethics of this land. Ethics that have always whispered: ‘*You do not heal people whose lineage you do not know!*’

This profession arrogantly insists on teaching our people; *yet*, it knows nothing about how our spirit should be handled. African cultures in South Africa discourage teaching people whose backgrounds you refuse to know and of which you are dismissive. As illustrated by Biko (2004), western education has been dismissive of African epistemologies. The schooling system has ensured that African children would have a distorted view of their knowledges and fed them a glorified version of western cultures. As Biko (2004) states, African children left school feeling ashamed of their backgrounds.

The ethics of African communities have always whispered that *ikramncwa ligquma kowalo umngxuma-*, that is, you are only superior in your own territory. Notwithstanding this wisdom, this profession has imposed the superiority of its world of origin on the African thereby, demonstrating that its supposed ethics are in point of fact void of requisite humility.

It is only ethical to remind the reader that our African ancestors died fighting against the so-called superiority of western education. For it to have legitimacy, the Europeans had to kill them and pit the survivors against one another in what they labelled *iqaba* versus *igqoboka* (the illiterate vs. the converted). As made evident in Opland, Kuse and Maseko (2015), the survivors were turned into mutual foes, dividing communities into two camps (viz. those who were for and those who were against western education). All this happened because one group was fighting for their ethical right to educate their young, because they knew that the only legitimate form of education begins with self-knowledge. Western education took from families the honour of making their children what they came to be.

As indicated in the introduction, the choice of the conference venue by the organisers was ethically troubling. Ethics certainly constitute a fundamental expectation from a discipline that claims to be concerned with people's emotions and state of mind. I believe the choice of the venue disregarded the fact that many such venues in South Africa ignite certain memories to those who continue to suffer colonial trauma. It is difficult to ignore that the conference venue is a product of colonial land grabs and was built by the bleeding hands of enslaved African forebears. It should be taken into consideration that the spirit of some of us attendees could be unsettled in such spaces, because they are built on the very site of incidence – what amaXhosa call *indawo yoxhwayelo*, a spot of pillage of the blood, sweat, tears and the flesh of our forebears. This is why some people choose to burn *impepho* (incense) when they get to such spaces to cleanse the air, to plead for calm, and acknowledge that human beings fell in order for such buildings to rise. The continued exploitation of black bodies in establishments such as Emperor's Palace (where black workers are to this day unjustly remunerated) must trouble those of us who are entrusted with the pain of this society.

An education that teaches us to live alongside appalling socio-economic conditions is void of *ubuntu* (humaneness). *Ubuntu bethu* (our humanness) speaks of *inkomo yenqoma* (an isiXhosa principle of lending a milking cow to a neighbour who cannot make ends meet so as to help to rebuild the dignity of the homestead), which provides the lesson that poverty does not live alongside opulence. The South African Psychology profession should be troubled by what it took for buildings such as Emperor's Palace to rise and what it takes to keep them standing: Our blood, Our tears, and the sweat our bodies produced from the strain of the yoke as black people!

A Psychology Nestled in isiXhosa

As shown above, the forceful introduction of western education was a brutal violation of the spirit, personhood, and the ethics of African people. It disregarded that the people of the land had an understanding of human functioning that worked hand in hand with their spirituality, their physical health, and the workings of the cosmos. If the definition of psychology is a way of understanding the human mind and behaviour, then we should agree that every society has its own psychology to help understand the mind and

behaviour of its people. We cannot accept that it is only western psychology that is capable of doing that. This finds accurate expression in Myers (1987) who argues that all people have a culture, which explains their way of life and existence in the world.

In the same manner that western psychology is embedded in the value system of its individualist culture, African psychology too has embeddedness in its own cultural value system. It is easily accessed through the languages of its people. Language serves a purpose of communicating its knowledge that means everybody who has a language knows something, i.e. come from a people with knowledges. So, if the language of our work is English, then the knowledge being communicated is, as it were, of the English world. Similarly, the demand for the full utilisation of African languages is to house and to communicate the knowledge of African people. This is something the coloniser understood too well as shown in the words of the colonising missionary J. L. Dohne in 1857:

In the study of languages in general, and of barbarian language in particular, two objects are to be aimed at — a philosophical and a practical. The philosophical object is the attainment of an insight into the character of a people, by means of an accurate acquaintance with the form into which its thoughts are moulded — and which is invariably the true expression of the national spirit. As regards savages this is in an especial degree the fact. The investigation of the language discloses the secrets of national character, otherwise impenetrable, and reveals the origin of customs long since forgotten. The spirit of the nation is exhibited to our minds in the living words which have conveyed its ideas for ages, as clearly as its physical appearance is presented to our eyes. Thus the national language is the only safe exponent of the national character. The immediate practical object, as far as barbarous tribes are concerned, is that a literature should be created for the propagation of Christian truth and the extension of civilisation.

The missionaries were very clear and methodical about their colonising mission. They studied African languages to get into the depths of African epistemologies (the national character and spirit, as they put it). This enabled them to gain an insight into the ways of African people and was

necessary for the imposition of Christianity and western cultures, dubbed self-referentially to the exclusion of all else, as ‘civilisation’. Without their epistemologies, African people ceased to exist as themselves. They were forced to manifest their world using – that is, in and through – the imposed knowledges of the coloniser.

Their understanding of what it means to be human was *intercepted* by a colonial understanding. They were left without their ways of making sense of their human behaviour. As clearly articulated by Nelvis Qekema (an elder from whom I sought advice about pursuing this project on indigenous languages and psychology in February 2018):

... in the process of doing psychology, which is different from having it. In the process of doing it, you academics, practitioners, professors, scholars, you ended up messing up. You centralised it. But we all know culture is culture, you can’t destroy it. It does not matter what you do to those human beings. For you to destroy it you have to terminate that race. But even when you do that we can trace it from their language, from their history. But even if you chase it out of urban areas it will refuse, it will retreat and find refuge in rural areas. Even if you take it out of the educated in the rural areas. It will run, it will take refuge among the illiterate in the rural areas. It will still be there.

Here, Qekema is echoing Biko’s (2004) assertion that colonialism tried to wipe the African slate clean of its knowledge, but as Qekema states they simply could not succeed. Universities introduced their own understanding of psychology because they would not respect the psychology that was already available. In spite of all that, African epistemologies presented a resistance that could not be conquered. They found refuge in the language whose meaning has been embodied in the elderly. The creativity of the elderly has ensured knowledge preservation and dissemination through metaphoric language. The importance of metaphoric language is emphasised by Maseko (2017) and Nobles (1996), who advocate for the treatment of figurative language as a crucial site of knowledge. Figurative language is among the tools for preservation and dissemination of a people’s ways of knowing. In the context of this paper, examples of metaphoric language are useful in depicting how African people conceptualise wellbeing and how they respond to factors that

threaten it. This paper uses two idioms and one proverb from isiXhosa language to demonstrate the manner in which some aspects of emotional wellness are conceptualised by the speakers of this language. The idioms are *ukuphalaza imbilini* and *ukuzityanda igila*. I wish to clarify that this paper's particular focus on the isiXhosa language is not an exclusion of but a call to other oppressed groups of people in South Africa (who are the various indigenous nations, including the San people, and those who were classified as Coloureds during the Apartheid era, who may not identify as indigenous, as well as people of Asian descent) to dig into their languages and allow us to learn what these languages communicate about their humanity.

Following Asante's (2009) counsel, which urges African scholars to center African thought in order to understand their realities as they experience them (in his theory of Afrocentricity), and Biko's (2004) concept of inward looking, I argue that *isintu* has provided us with tools for epistemic self-reliance. *Isintu* is a cultural inscription of *ubuntu*, which dictates the way in which *ubuntu* should be practiced (Dladla 2018). It is a well upon which figurative language draws, thus making figurative language a communication of *isintu*. Both Asante (2009) and Biko (2004) urge African scholars to embark on an epistemic project that demonstrate that Africans too have knowledge, which exists as a tool to manifest their realities.

The usage of metaphoric wisdom to communicate an isiXhosa disposition of human behaviour therefore follows an understanding that African knowledges have a lot to offer spaces of learning. Idioms and proverbs are some of the tools with which behaviour comes under gaze. They are derived from an ancestral template of analysing life using an understanding of nature and its creatures. Metaphoric language belongs to a community of ancestors, to the living who add on the existing know-ledge of the ancestors, and the future, who will receive knowledge and continue to embolden it to respond better to the structure of the world in which they will be living. Idioms and proverbs are a spontaneous way of meaning making. They rely on a wise, creative and abstract usage of words. It is important to always bear in mind that African ways of knowing follow their own pedagogic principles of application. It should also be said that metaphors have various uses, thus do not follow a singular template of analysis. In this paper, I use metaphors that communicate a place of emotional counsel among the isiXhosa-speaking South Africans, and how that points to an existence of techniques to deal with issues of emotional wellbeing among Africans more broadly.

Ukuphalaza imbilini and ukuzityanda igila

The figurative concept of *ukuphalaza imbilini* translates as the pouring out of one's soul. It communicates the manner in which isiXhosa speakers deal with emotional distress and well-being. *Imbilini* is derived from the word *umbilini* that refers to the internal size of an object. It is a combination of two words, *bila* (which means to boil or to bubble) and *ini*, which refers to the inside. *Ukuphalaza imbilini*, therefore, means to empty that which has occupied the inside. This means there is something weighing a person down, and it can be resolved by *ukuyiphalaza* (letting it out). The word *umbilini* is only explored in its literal form to demonstrate the literal roots of the concept of *imbilini*. This should not be confused with the concept of *umbilini* which refers to an emotional state of uneasiness that psychologists, such as Professor Nhlanhla Mkhize, discuss at length. This idiom (*ukuphalaza*) communicates the same message as its counterpart *ukuzityanda igila* that similarly encourages opening up about one's internal state of being. Literally, *ukutyanda* means to cut open (also used when referring to a surgical procedure), while *igila* is a gizzard. This, therefore, literally translates to cutting open one's gizzard. It is an act of pouring out one's inner most feelings. These idioms demonstrate that opening up about one's inner state is something encouraged in African communities.

This opening up is something that isiXhosa speakers perform within their families and communities. It is only when a matter is too complex for the grasp of the families that the knowers would be consulted. This shows that language performed a healing function. It allowed people to lay their emotional burdens bare to family/neighbours and/or communities. *Ukuphalaza imbilini* or *ukuzityanda igila* was among first things you do in the morning. Neighbours woke up to greet those around them with a sole aim of enquiring about their health. *Nivukile?* (Have you woken up?) *Niphilile?* (Are you well?) *Ninjani?* (How are you?) *Ukubuza impilo* (enquiring about a person's wellbeing) and allowing a person *ukuba aphalaze imbilini* (to open up about feelings) was given its due place in rural communities. It was also daily work. Therefore, it did not allow people to bottle up feelings over time.

The structural organisation of communities also gave people time and space to open up. Walking to the river, the fields or the forest served more than an industrious function; they also allowed people an opportunity to open up about their emotions. Such an organisation revolved around group work, where

people needed one other to complete a task. Therefore, that meant there was always someone around to provide a space for opening up. This brings back Qekema's earlier assertion that Africans have a psychology of their own. Families and communities offered space – *sokuphalaza imbilini* or *ukuzityanda igila* – where you could speak your inner self to the people whom you trust. This allows a person an opportunity to share the emotional burden for the weight to be lighter. On certain occasions, they would know before you even open up that something is not right, because your inner state (*imbilini yakho*) is never hidden from your lineage. This stands in stark contrast to Western psychology's practice of psychology which encourages an objective posture between the client and the professional. This posture requires that the professional assumes an emotional distance from the client. This shows that western and African practices of psychology are ontological distinct. The indigenous African and Western understanding of human behaviour draw upon distinctly different ways of knowing and existing in the world. The imposition of western healing in the form the current practice of psychology therefore forces African people out of their sensibilities.

The idioms discussed above are complemented by other metaphoric expressions such as *usana olungakhaliyo lufel'embelekweni*. This proverb can be loosely translated as 'a baby which does not cry dies in its blanket'. This communicates a similar message to the above idioms in that it discourages the concealing of troubling feelings. This goes some way towards showing that amaXhosa theorised at length about the importance of dealing with one's emotions and placed a lot of value on the expression of emotional discomfort. From the person's first moments of life, one is expected to cry out when something is making them feel uneasy.

'Us black people are psychologists ourselves' (Scientists of Human Functioning)

Even with colonial disruptions that aimed at erasing African ways of being, Africans still draw lessons from the old practices, where families are perceived to be sites of wellbeing. A friend of mine, Boniswa Kani³ was generous enough

³ It is with her permission that I am using her real name. I believe that assigning a pseudonym would have gone against everything I have argued for in this paper as pseudonyms invisibilises ordinary African people's contributions in

to let me use a story she narrated on her Facebook page about the manner in which her mother dealt with the news of her pregnancy. She became pregnant at an age where she was expected to pursue higher education. Upon breaking the news to her mother, she and her mother travelled to her maternal aunt's house, which was about twenty kilometres away from their home. This is where she was reprimanded, told how ill- advised she was, and was reminded about her future and made to confront her mistake. They spent the night, and the following morning travelled to her second *makazi* (maternal aunt) whose approach was softer, more nurturing, and understanding. She gave advice on how to handle certain aspects of the pregnancy. She left feeling better about herself and came to accept her mistake.

What is most intriguing about this story was the decision by Boniswa's mother to involve both her sisters. This does not only demonstrate the application of the concepts discussed above but also speaks to notions of personhood. African cultures are generally known as collective cultures, but it is the varying individual personalities that make the collective functional. The contrasting approaches of the two sisters were necessary to help both the mother and Boniswa process the news of her pregnancy. This is the role the mother's siblings play among amaXhosa. They are treated as your direct mothers, and when there is a problem, it is tackled by all your mothers collectively. *Oomakazi* (maternal aunts) communicated the ambivalent feelings the mother herself embodied. The disappointment and anger expressed by the first sister and acceptance and love communicated by the second encompass the contrasting emotions Boniswa's mother could have been going through at once. This communicates a message of *ukubambisana*, or carrying the load together. Aunts and uncles are known for their responsibilities toward their siblings and their families. At this point, it is important to caution the reader that Boniswa's story⁴ is used to demonstrate how the two idioms discussed in the previous section find application, and how family members could be useful sites of emotional health. The aim is to show how families pass

knowledge production. The act of assigning a pseudonym favours western ethos of knowledge production, where a person's real name appears only when they have contributed as authors in scholarly texts.

⁴ I chose to use a story where I was not directly involved as a researcher, with ready formulated questions. Through personal observations, I have realised that people share a lot of useful knowledge when unprompted.

counsel. It excludes other cultural aspects involved when a couple falls pregnant out of wedlock.

It is from these everyday unprompted narratives that one is able to gain an understanding of how African communities navigate issues of emotional wellbeing. Important to note is the fact that this is not a top-down approach where only adults utilise other family members as the resource to bring children into line. Parents, as well, do benefit from the counsel the family and community provide. When amaXhosa say '*inkomo ayincanci etholeni*' (a cow does not nurse from its calf), they are speaking against parasitical relations that adults would have with their children, where children cannot be expected to perform parental duties while their parents are still capable. It holds parents accountable to their duties. As Motsei (2017) states, it is very much within the ethos of African cultures to allow children to speak out against elders when necessary. This is borne out of the belief that a human being enters the world as an evolved soul, with lessons to impart. This is captured in the Setswana proverb *phala e e semang phalana lesilo* (elders should also take counsel from the young), but as Motsei (2017) explains, the young need to be guided on how to align the contrasting energies of confrontational youth and the sacred knowing of the soul. This shows that families and communities are responsible for upholding the principles of mutual wellbeing. This is well captured in the words of Mrs. Jobodwana, lecturer at the University of South Africa, who spoke at a social gathering I attended in July 2018: '*Us black people are psychologists ourselves because we know our children better*'. She was expressing disdain at what she called 'former whites only schools' obsession with referring black children to psychologists'. This speaks to what I alluded to earlier, namely that western education only validates its own practices, and often treats people as incapable of providing solutions to their problems. As shown above, a science of human functioning, so-called Psychology in African communities, is something that is commonly practiced. This charge by Mrs. Jobodwana is to a system which considers itself qualified, but is regarded as unqualified by the people it is supposedly designed to help. It is a push back that has always been there (see Nobles 2015b).

I end this discussion rather abruptly with a memory of a conversation I had with my grandmother during the first year of my university studies. The concept of abrupt endings in either written or spoken ways of communication is something not opposed by the speakers of isiXhosa, because speech is never complete (as evident in speech ending expressions such *ndisatshaya*, meaning

‘I am pausing’, and *amazwi awagqitywa* alluding to the notion of incompleteness of speech). I end with this memory because my grandmother demanded we (her and I) have the last word. The essence of this paper was to communicate the role of language in ensuring the resilience of African epistemologies and the continuous rejection of the imposed western education by many African people because of the contradictions it presents. I remember communicating my own misgivings with *umakhulu* (my grandmother) when I was a first year university student. *Uumakhulu* had asked me, ‘*ufundela ukubayintoni MamTipha*’ (what are you studying to become) and my response was ‘*andiyazi makhulu*’ (I do not know, grandmother). She thought I was being cheeky, but I believe that was my spirit communicating its truth. Today I say to her, ‘*Makhulu, I still do not know!*’ That is, I do not know why I am giving other people’s children an education which teaches them how not to be themselves.

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Zethu Cakata
Department of Psychology
University of South Africa
zethu.cakata@gmail.com
cakatz@unisa.ac.za