

OPINION

The comforting language of our mothers

COMMENT



PHUMLA KESE

IN A SOCIETY that has been ravaged by a cloud of grief and anguish in places of everyday living, there is an undeniable longing for comfort and hope.

Fostering multilingualism by creative arts can be an endeavour to meet the need for humans to rely on each other for support and solidarity. It is in times like these that the spirit of empathy and freedom to express oneself in mother language alone or along with other familiar languages can be realised in context.

It might not be new to mark the International Mother Language Day with creative activities, but this is the day for the display of pride in a multilingual landscape with mother

languages and cultural dialects.

It is an opportunity for languages deemed in the minority to enjoy being bolder, louder and more colourful.

While multilingual interventions are known for cognitive enhancement, pursuing multilingual performative and creative approaches could also be desirable for creating a friendly atmosphere on school sites.

Creative arts could be a means to rejuvenate the natural talent and individual learner's artistic or imaginative expressions in application of a communal sense of kindness that is founded on an interest in the holistic wellness of each learner and value for the human soul.

Pedagogically speaking, right from foundation phase, creative strategies in language subjects could embed literacy and soft skills.

In the case of promoting bi-literacy, the learners could, congruent with the theme of the day, get liberty to codeswitch, codemix or draw on their cultural assets or home literacy. This nature of activity might need arranging for the availability of volunteer interpreters and translators.

The teachers would then need to guide the improvisation process

towards the attainment of the aspired social repair effect.

Some similar creative arts activities could work well in other learning areas to address certain themes and concepts that learners might be grappling with.

During moments of group discussions in tutorials, students do not need to sneak in using their mother language(s) or shy away from using them on campus in the presence of those whose home languages are privileged enough to be mainstream languages of tuition.

Data that I collected just more than a decade ago as part of my PhD study, with some of the participants being private law first-year module students from backgrounds of African languages that have an official status in South Africa, indicate affordances for the use of African languages alongside English in tutorials, towards a transformative pedagogical practice.

The lack of enjoying significance in official and a number of organised group avenues is no secret, which is such a pity as mother languages have the propensity to contribute towards changing the game in challenges a society might be facing.

Adults could make conscious efforts

to use indigenous African mother languages for communicative convenience with minimal sophistication for the right audiences.

For instance, during bereavement, an isiXhosa-speaking adult may draw on the use of a cultural phrase for expressing condolences: "Akuhlanga lungehlanga!" (What has happened took place somewhere else before, and your pain is ours too).

They may also do so via social media platforms, self-made sympathy cards, and other modes of correspondence to set the example for the younger generation. This may instil a sense of worth or functional value for the language.

Nonetheless, multilingualism is alive and expanding in dimensions of practice.

Of course, promoting use of one's African vernacular does not inevitably mean a stereotypical confinement to own tongue.

The multilingual drive should not fail to acknowledge the rise of the contemporary tongues that have emerged in Africa and produced convenient and popular expression peculiar to certain groups in society.

At places of work or community

service, staff may well be working in multilingual teams even in areas dominated by a specific language, just in case there is a need for one-on-one interaction with a consultant that understands the client's most familiar language.

To promote the fusion of creative arts for integrated outcomes, the following are points to ponder about:

- ◆ Publishers, embracing multilingualism and their contribution to the de-minoritisation of language.
- ◆ Programming of computers, spelling, thesaurus or vocabulary in African languages and creative writers' interest.
- ◆ Occasional family involvement for accountable participation and support when working with children.
- ◆ The need for heightened releasing of songs and music as a perceived nutrition of the soul for so many citizens towards social repair across age groups, especially during and after the blow of the pandemic.

**Dr Kесе is a lecturer at the Department of Curriculum Studies – Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University.*



RECIPE

The perfect pot roast chicken

INGREDIENTS

For the chicken:

1 large whole chicken
30ml (1 tbs) butter
Handful rosemary, picked
Handful parsley, chopped
10ml (2 tsp) chilli flakes
10ml (2 tsp) smoked paprika
1 orange; salt and pepper, to taste
Extra virgin olive oil

For the vegetables:

4 large potatoes, washed and cubed
4 large carrots, washed and peeled
½ butternut, peeled and cubed
5 garlic cloves, peeled
Rosemary, chopped, to taste
Salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Mix together the butter, rosemary, parsley, chilli flakes and smoked paprika. Season the flavoured butter to taste and add the zest of the orange.

Rub this mixture underneath the skin of the chicken and also some on top of the skin.

Cut the orange in half, or into slices, and place them into the cavity of the chicken.

Place the chicken into an oven-proof dish.

For the vegetables, arrange the potato cubes, whole carrots, butternut cubes and whole garlic cloves around the chicken. Season to taste, sprinkle with rosemary and drizzle with a dash of oil.

Roast chicken and vegetables for 1 hour or until golden brown. | FOOD LOVER'S MARKET



MBULELI Mnzini, who lives with his nine-year-old son in a shack in Klipheuwel, has been assisted by a kind donor. | PHANDO JIKELO African News Agency b(ANA)

HOUSING

Good Samaritan helps single father

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AFTER reading a Cape Times story on the plight of Klipheuwel single father Mbuleli Mnzini, who has been living in a wood shack for more than 12 years, a good Samaritan has donated R15 000 towards a new home, clothes and food for Mnzini.

Mnzini spoke last month, about his unbearable living conditions in Klipheuwel, a village of about 2 300 people, 15km north of Durbanville, and how his nine-year-old son attended school thanks to the kindness of neighbours.

The 42-year-old is a shoemaker, but said he has been unable to find steady employment for the past nine years.

An anonymous donor initially donated R10 000 toward Mnzini's home, and a further R5 000 for a bed, school uniform for his son and any other needs.

"When I saw the photo of Mnzini in the Cape Times ...

"I couldn't bear to think of his circumstances. I have been blessed with so much and he had so little. So I just wanted to help get him a proper shack. I couldn't bear to think of him in the winter with the cold and rain, and living as he did.

"Olwethu, his neighbour, has been wonderful. She's arranged for his house to be put up, the cement floor done, and bought him items of clothing and groceries," the donor said.

"I've not donated goods, but a further R5 000 with which Olwethu will buy him beds, a uniform for his son and anything he desperately needs.

"I felt so grateful that she is so kind and caring, and that it was not me but the Lord who is taking care of Mnzini through me. He is fortunate to have such kind neighbours."

Mnzini said his life has been changed by the kind act of a stranger. "I am very happy, this has brought

joy to my life.

"I feel like a true human being now. It is rare for people to do such kind (things) and this was not what I expected.

"I used to work at a nearby farm for years, but they did not pay me for three months and I decided to quit the job.

"I have been looking for a job all these years but unfortunately (had no success), so that is why I focus on shoemaking, because it's what I have been doing for a long time," he said.

Mnzini also thanked his neighbours for their continued support.

"I can see my future and my way forward now is to focus on my business while hunting for jobs. The people in the community are happy about my new house and that made me feel appreciated.

"From the bottom of my heart, I really appreciate what the donor has done. I feel more comfortable and safe now," said Mnzini.

ARTS

African languages to be celebrated

STAFF WRITER

THE Centre for Creative Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) has partnered with the Amazwi South African Museum of Literature to create a platform to showcase and profile poets who work in isiXhosa.

As the world on Sunday marked International Mother Language Day, UKZN highlighted that languages and multilingualism can advance inclusion and sustainable development goals, focus on leaving no one behind.

This year's observance for International Mother Language is a call on policymakers, educators and teachers, parents and families to scale up their commitment to multilingual education and inclusion in education to advance education recovery in the context of Covid-19.

The Time of the Writer festival presented by the Centre for Creative Arts is a forerunner in presenting programmes in mother languages.

The 24th edition of the festival will be presented virtually from March 15-21.

Author, creative and social media enthusiast Melusi Tshabalala, who has been using his Facebook account to teach isiZulu and is now offering a free 10-week course to learn the fundamentals of the language, will be featured in a special one-hour programme at the festival.

Tshabalala's method of teaching isiZulu to South Africans has been acclaimed as fun and innovative with an emphasis on one isiZulu word at a time. Tshabalala will be in dialogue with creative and academic Phindile Dlamini, who will co-curate the festival's African languages component.



CENTRE for Creative Arts director Ismail Mahomed. | THOBILE MATHONSI

"As we plan for the 25th edition of the Time of the Writer festival next year, we want to be a forerunner as being South Africa's most relevant festival that creates a place on the programme for all South Africa's official languages.

"We will work with a team of young, innovative and exciting co-curators who recognise and value the mother languages that they have inherited from their forebearers", said Siphindile Hlongwa, a co-curator of the festival.

Centre for Creative Arts director Ismail Mahomed said growing opportunities for curators in all South African languages is central to the strategic vision of the Centre for Creative Arts. "Hence, our partnership with Amazwi South African Museum of Literature is a perfect fit," Mahomed said.

In the Translation Dialogues, Phindile Dlamini will moderate a

dialogue with two translators – Nkosinathi Sithole and Nakanjani Sibiba – who translated a series of literary works from isiZulu into English. They will share their journey.

Unisa academic Zodwa Motsa will discuss the book *Avoiding Potholes in Translation* with Dr Sylvia Zulu, Sebolelelo Mokapelo and the author Phindile Dlamini. The festival will also launch a book edited by Mandla Maphumulo on isiZulu orthography.

Time of the Writer has also been made possible through partnerships with the French Institute of South Africa, Imbiza Journal of African Writing, the STAND Foundation, the National Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, and the Foundation for Human Rights.

For more information, follow @Timeofthewriter on Twitter and Instagram or like the Festival on Facebook at www.facebook.com/timeofthewriter.

TUESDAY | FEB 23

05:00 Zen Dude Fitness 05:30 Path to Wellness 06:00 The Faith Show 07:00 Our City News (R) 07:30 Street Food: Zanzibar – Spices, Slaves and the Spirit of Independence 08:00 Ek Se (R) 09:00 Scrutinized 09:30 Open Studio (R) 10:00 The Effects Of The Internet 11:00 Democracy Now (R) 12:00 Al Jazeera International News 13:00 Seeking Immortality 13:30 TED 14:00 BBC: The Breakdown 14:30 Rise (R) 15:00 Raggs 15:30 The Housing Assembly – Decent Housing for All 16:00 Ek Se 16:30 Ek Se 17:00 Open Studio 17:30 The Faith Show 18:00 Man to Man 18:30 Our City News (Live) 19:00 The Womxn's Show – Season 3 (R) 20:00 Al Jazeera International News 21:00 Timeout with GC 22:00 Behind the Secret 22:30 Afro Bus (R) 23:00 Democracy Now

ENTERTAINMENT 24/7
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