

# Naledi Maponopono

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## **Objective**

Senior Academic Developer specialising in Language and Academic Literacies, with a completed PhD and extensive experience in advancing transformative teaching and learning in higher education. I am committed to developing and implementing innovative, research-informed strategies that enhance language, literacies and multilingualism integration in curricula. With a strong track record in academic staff development, SoTL research, and policy-aligned practice, I strive to support institutional goals for student success, inclusivity, and multilingual competency. I bring expertise in designing professional learning initiatives, leading collaborative projects, and advancing evidence-based approaches that strengthen teaching, learning, and assessment across diverse academic contexts.

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## **Educational Background**

2021-2025      Doctor of Philosophy specialising in African Languages      University of Cape Town

### **ABSTRACT:**

African languages in South Africa still compete for their status in the society at large, but particularly in institutions of higher learning (Nomlomo, 2019). Since the inception of democracy in South Africa, there were many political changes in favour of the black majority who were previously disadvantaged by racist apartheid laws which affected every aspect of their lives (Zikode, 2017). These political changes encompassed the recognition of eleven official languages in South Africa as equal under the law, contrary to the apartheid era which only recognised English and Afrikaans as official languages (Zikode, 2017). This official status meant that English and Afrikaans were used in classrooms as a medium of instruction as well as in official government communication (Maponopono, 2020). Given this lived reality, the unequal status of English and Afrikaans as measured against African languages and their status in South African society, has a historical context underpinned by inequality. Measures to alleviate this inequality among English and Afrikaans and indigenous African languages in democratic South Africa saw indigenous South African languages being enshrined in the South African Constitution with explicit provisions stating that African languages ought to be prioritised as a result of their “previously diminished” status (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The aim of this study is to focus on language policy implementation within institutions of higher learning with particular reference to the University of Cape Town as a case study. It observes the language practices within the university to assess the various patterns of implementation. The study will analyse the language policy planning in South Africa at large using Ruiz’s (1984) three orientations to language planning: language as a problem, language as a resource and language as a right. The findings of this study aim to assist language planners in the development of a language policy framework in higher education which includes strong monitoring and evaluation systems to alleviate problems at the implementation stage of language policies. The study uses qualitative means to observe the patterns of language policy implementation at the University of Cape Town. It highlights the challenges inherent at the implementation stage and provides ways in which these can be alleviated. The study aims to contribute to scholarly debate pertaining to the language policy implementation across discipline.

2018-2020      Masters specialising in African Languages      University of Cape Town

### **ABSTRACT:**

The South African society is plagued with a complex and fascinating landscape of multilingualism that comprises of eleven official languages post the apartheid era. The apartheid era saw only English, and Afrikaans

recognised as languages of official status across the nation even though indigenous languages existed in the country. The post-apartheid era which commenced in 1994 have been years in which extensive political negotiation and transition have been occurring which have encompassed establishing constitutional rights for indigenous languages in the South African dispensation. This included the choice for indigenous languages to be used as languages of learning and teaching (LoLT) and being offered as subjects at schools (Pluddeman et al, 2004: 13, 14). The aim of this study is to focus on language policy implementation practices in basic education with particular reference to a primary school in Western Cape, City of Cape Town as a case study. It seeks to observe the language practices within the school in order to assess the various patterns of implementation and contribute to scholarly debate pertaining to policy implementation across disciplines. The study will analyse the language policy planning in South Africa at large using Ruiz's (1984) three orientations to language planning: language as a problem, language as a resource and language as a right.

2017-2017	Honours in African Languages and Literature Studies	University of Cape Town
2011-2014	Bachelor of Social Science (Sociology, Public Policy and Administration, IsiXhosa Language and Literature Studies)	University of Cape Town
2010	Matric Certificate	Westerford High School

### **Work Experience**

Jan 2026- Present	Nelson Mandela University	Senior Academic Developer: Language and Academic Literacies
July 2025-Present	Apex Education <i>(independent contractor)</i>	Curriculum Developer (IsiXhosa)
Feb 2019-Present	South African College of Applied Psychology	Lecturer
June 2024- Dec 2024	University of Western Cape Town	Lecturer: (Academic Literacy)
Nov 2021-May 2024	Curro Holdings	Curriculum Specialist (IsiXhosa)
March 2021 – May 2022	University of Cape Town	Lecturer
Jan 2019-Jan 2021	Reddam House Atlantic Seaboard	Teacher (Grade 4-12)
Jan 2019-September 2020 Basic	DHET	Lecturer (L4; Adult Education and Training)
May 2018-July 2018	History Department (UCT)	Translator
Jan 2018-Dec 2018 (Grade R-7)	Groote Schuur Primary School <i>(2 days a week)</i>	IsiXhosa Teacher
Jan 2018-Dec 2018 (Grade 4-7)	Pinelands North Primary School <i>(2 days a week)</i>	IsiXhosa Teacher
Sept 2017-Nov 2017 (IsiXhosa)	Centre for Higher Education Development (UCT)	Teaching Assistant
June 2016- May 2017 Liaison	National Department of Public Works	Administrative
Feb 2012- Nov 2017	University of Cape Town	Teaching Assistant

## **Publications**

**Chapter Title:** Maqonopono, N., Deyi, S., & Possa, R. (2024). *Too little time? Reflecting on the time afforded in teaching and learning of IsiXhosa at a particular school in the Western Cape*. In H. E. Wolff & J. C. Roux (Eds.), *Contextualising African language dynamics of change* (pp. 49–68). Sun Press Media.

**Chapter Title:** Maqonopono, N. (2020). My body as a site of violence. In J. Thorpe (Ed.), *Living while feminist: Our bodies, our truths* (p. 70). Kwela Books.

## **Conferences**

2022 ALASA Biennial International Conference (21-24 September)

Paper: Too little time? Reflecting on the time afforded in teaching and learning of IsiXhosa at a particular school in the Western Cape.

## **Awards and Achievements**

2010	IsiXhosa First Additional Language	3 <sup>rd</sup> (in the Province in NSC Results)
2012	Class Medal	IsiXhosa Language and Literature Studies IA
2013	Academic Achievement	Tugwell Hall
	Wellness Award	Tugwell Hall
	Class Medal	Research Areas in African Languages
	Class Medal	IsiXhosa Language and Literature Studies IIB
	Deans Merit List	UCT Humanities Faculty
2014	Member	Golden Key International Honour Society
2018	Honours Degree	Awarded First Class; Second

## **Leadership and Advisory Roles**

May 2026 – Present      Member | Institute of Directors South Africa

Feb 2020 – Present      Founder & Director | Inkwenkwezi Language Services

- Leads education and policy consulting projects focused on African language revitalisation, and multilingualism.

Feb 2025 –                      Present Board Member | Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB)

- Appointed as a board member of PanSALB to provide strategic guidance on language rights and multilingualism in South Africa.
- Contribute to policy oversight and development aligned with the Constitution. Participate in language advocacy, awareness campaigns, and inter-governmental collaborations to advance the status of African languages nationally.

Mar 2022 – 2025              Advisory Board Member | Kay Mason Foundation Alumni Network

- Serve as an advisor to support alumni and student development programmes for historically disadvantaged youth.
- Provide strategic input into mentorship, education pathways, and social justice-based youth programming.
- Actively support fundraising, events, and outreach.

## **Skills Profile**

### **Teaching and Facilitation**

- Extensive experience teaching IsiXhosa language acquisition, sociolinguistics, academic literacies, multilingual communication and diversity studies across higher education, adult education and basic education.
- Skilled in supporting academic staff through professional learning on language and curriculum integration, assessment literacy and multilingual pedagogies.
- Experienced in task based and sociocultural language teaching approaches and in developing and facilitating courses across undergraduate and postgraduate levels in a range of disciplines.
- Teaching experience includes IsiXhosa communication courses, sociolinguistics, academic literacy, language and communication skills, and IsiXhosa for clinical, education and health sciences contexts.

### **Curriculum and Content Development**

- Specialist expertise in multilingual and literacies focused curriculum design across school, higher education and digital environments.
- Developed IsiXhosa First Additional Language curricula and materials for Grades four to twelve for both national and independent school curricula.
- Lead developer of digital and interactive IsiXhosa learning content for Curro DigiEd Schools and Curro Online.
- Designed higher education modules in communication, conversational competence and African language and literature, with experience in curriculum mapping, quality assurance and the creation of assessments, rubrics and learning support resources.

### **Communication and Multilingual Competence**

- Fluent in IsiXhosa and English with working competence in SeSotho and IsiZulu and conversational Afrikaans. Strong written and oral communication skills with demonstrated experience in academic writing, facilitation and public engagement.

### **Translation and Interpreting**

- Competent translator between English and isiXhosa for academic, educational and public communication contexts. Experienced in interpreting within academic, clinical and community settings.

### **Research Expertise**

- Well-grounded in qualitative research methodologies including ethnography, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, multilingualism studies and practitioner research.
- Experienced in conducting and supervising research in academic literacies, African language education and the scholarship of teaching and learning, with a strong focus on analysing language practices and multilingual pedagogies in higher education.

### **Leadership and Management**

- Senior Academic Developer with experience supporting academics in language and literacies integration and curriculum enhancement.
- Former head of an IsiXhosa department managing teachers across multiple campuses.
- Experienced in project leadership, assessment planning, stakeholder engagement, staff development and establishing professional communities of practice.

### **Digital and Technological Skills**

- Proficient in Microsoft Office and experienced with learning management systems including Moodle.
- Skilled in developing digital learning content, interactive resources and online assessments, and in using artificial intelligence tools to support curriculum innovation and teaching.

### **Referees**

Available on request.

