

Tribute to Dr Gugulethu Siziba

It is with great sadness that I learned of Dr Siziba's passing. Not only is Gugu's passing a great personal loss to all who knew him, but his untimely death is also a huge loss for all his professional colleagues who knew and admired his growing intellectual contribution to the field of language and the politics of identity. As one of his PhD examiners, I had both the joy and privilege of reading his work and engaging in discussions with him. His PhD sensitively documented the migrant experience of Zimbabweans in urban South Africa from a unique perspective, that is, the economy of language practices and languages in negotiating identity and survival. While empathically highlighting the challenges Zimbabwean migrants face in South Africa, he provided a nuanced analysis of the interaction of class, forms of cultural capital, power, language, habitus, history, place and economies of social practice within a transnational/migrant framework demonstrating the impact of situatedness on the shifting values and status of different linguistic practices and languages. The concept of cross-identification that he developed in his thesis gave the field a new way of explaining certain kinds of language choices. Cross-identification (when a person seen to be part of a particular identity tries to pass as a different identity) explains how linguistic distance and the non-use of language (silences and omissions) also play a role in the creation of linguistic identities. Previous work focused on the *presence* of symbolic resources to appropriate identities. His work, however, demonstrated how the opposite mechanism, absences and distance, shaped by the interplay of participants' identities could have a similar function. Dr Siziba worked incredibly hard and made a valuable contribution to the academy. As we pay tribute to his work, let it be a reminder to us to recognize and value the contributions of our fellow South Africans and Africans and not let them remain invisible. I wish to express my deepest condolences to his partner, his family, friends, Dr Lloyd Hill and the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the University of Stellenbosch.

Heather Brookes
University of Cape Town