Preface

The 21st century provides unique sociolinguistic spaces that typify super-diversity, globalization and movement, and alternation of languages to reflect social changes and integration of societies where 'multiplicity' is increasingly replaced by 'complexity' (Blommaert, 2017; Pennycook, 2017). In this century, there has been increased immigration, tourism, exchange of business, educational and political goods and services that are tied to these complex mobilities. Like many multilingual countries such as Singapore, India and Nigeria, South Africa represents linguistic diversity and pluralism where linguistic overlaps, cultural cross-pollination define its post-modern era. South Africa too has seen multiple waves of translocal and transnational movements where strict separation of languages and people, even if desired, has exponentially become virtually impossible (Makalela, 2018a). Equally revealing is that the South African multilingualism had always been complex prior to colonization and the new waves of the 21st Century. As a cultural competence that interlocks the past and present, the depth of linguistic complexity and what the speakers do with it has been overlooked in research and therefore underrepresented by one-ness, linear and vertical outlook of multilingualism.

A book that questions the often taken for granted assumptions about multilingualism in the post-Apartheid South Africa is long overdue. Since the beginning of the new socio-political dispensation, the South Africa's language question has not been cogently described to explain, describe and provide a detailed dynamics of its society due to the amount of praise that characterized scholarship on multilingualism in the country. For the first part of the new constitutional proclamations, research on South African multilingualism glorified the commitment and the bravery of a single country to accord 11 languages an official status. It was a language miracle that followed a peaceful transition from the Apartheid regime and civil strife to an era of grandiose hope that affirmed all the cultural, linguistic, and social capitals of the people of South Africa. Indeed it was not an exaggeration that the people of South Africa spoke these languages in a long history that stretched over 400 years since the arrival of the Dutch colonizers, nearly 1400 years since the Nguni and Sotho groups migrated and about 120 000 years since the Khoi and the San people settled in this geographical space. In this way, South Africa becomes a uniquely rich environment to understand the intersection of various languages and the people's behavior around them. It remains fitting thus to provide a panoramic account of what the post-Mandela era has achieved in valorising linguistic diversity and how this magnifies the deeply rooted social dynamics of a new democratic country. Given that it is more than 25 years of linguistic democracy and re-socialization for national cohesiveness, it is increasingly important to ask

the question: how authentic is the language characterization in harmonizing the society where languages were used to create a social rift and to divide and rule the local communities?

This book examines the often overlooked discursive and fluid multilingual practices in post-Apartheid South Africa and highlights massive discrepancies between these practices and the official language policy proscriptions. Indeed, South Africa remains a uniquely compelling case study for language complexities that are increasingly pervasive in multilingual countries across the globe. As stated above, it enshrined one of the most liberal multilingual policies in the world by according official status to 11 languages in order to redress ethnolinguistic imbalances that were promoted by both Apartheid and colonial language ideologies since the mid 17th century. However, it is worth noting that the discursive language practices of its speakers in the new socio-linguistic dispensation have not been cogently and comprehensively described in a book length monograph. This book challenges assumptions that led to 11 official languages and focuses on mutual inter-comprehensibility of the speakers of various languages. In doing so, it brings to light transcultural dynamism, fluid linguistic boundaries, and permeable discourses across a wide array of language variants and then questions the validity of linguistic heterogeneity which was used as a measure in making provisions for one of the world's inclusive multilingual policy. Apart from stating this argument, the chapters also provide alternative multilingual policy directions for the future and recommendations for dynamic language-in-education practices for all students.

The first part of the book focuses on the sociolinguistic context of South Africa broadly and describes the history of African languages development since 1652 when the first Dutch settlers arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. In describing the history of linguistic 'inventions' (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007), the book shows how different colonization epochs ushered in different language policies, which have not always been consonant with the sociolinguistic realities of the speakers. These periods include Dutch policies from 1652, English colonization from 1875 till 1947, Afrikaans Apartheid policies from 1948 to 1994, and the 11 official language policy from 1996 to date.

The second part describes controversies and debates around the development of indigenous African languages. It comprehensively deals with issues around the costs of developing the languages, availability of resources, materials, and attitudes towards African languages in comparison to ex-colonial languages. These discussions are contextualized within the political, social, educational and economic spheres in which multilingual speakers find themselves in the post-independent South Africa. In this light, a debate on whether the present language

policy provisions create sufficient space for indigenous African languages to take up roles in prestigious position is presented.

The book then uses research findings that span over a period of 10 years to describe degrees of mutual intelligibility among selected Sotho languages (Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana) as a prototype for sister language clusters. In doing so, it provides evidence for mutual inter-comprehensibility and challenges the dominant view that South Africa has 11 official languages. The author takes a view that the current groupings naturally form mutually intelligible clusters and relates this discussion to the history of ethno-linguistic divisions from the earliest contact with the missionary linguists.

The last part of the book discusses implications of a reduced number of languages (that is, as labelled in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa) for language policy revisions, and the consequences for literacy development and readership in African languages, as well as for the teaching of African languages to speakers of other African languages. These implications are informed by observations of fluid discourse practices, which are framed within the notion of translanguaging (Garcia, 2009): a multilingualism model where speakers socially named languages receive input and give input in any language system of choice in the process of meaning making. While scholarship on translanguaging often shows a paradox of socially named languages and the individual use of languages in the process of meaning making, this book engages with both sides of the argument: language (inter-comprehensibility) and use (translanguaging).

All the parts of the book, taken together, contribute to topical sociolinguistics and language education debates, theory, and scholarship around contentious issues prevalent in multilingual countries: language boundaries, multilingual speech repertoires, cultural hybridity, multivocality, gaps between language policy and practice, and new understanding of multilingualism and bilingual speakers in the 21st century and educating multilingual children. South Africa thus provides a compelling case study to bring to light a myriad of all these current sociolinguistic concerns.