



CALL FOR PAPERS



School of Languages and Literatures Symposium

Reimagining Languages and Literatures in Times of Transformation: Possibilities and Limitations

18-19 November 2026

Centlivres Building

University of Cape Town
Upper Campus

Submissions should be sent to:

sllsymposium-groupeuct.ac.za

Organising Committee (SLL Transformation Committee)
Bibi Burger, Hleze Kunju, Gesa Singer, Mara Boccaccio
& Karel Plaiche

Reimagining Languages and Literatures in Times of Transformation: Possibilities and Limitations

The **School of Languages and Literatures (SLL)** at the University of Cape Town (UCT) invites scholars, researchers, and practitioners to participate in a symposium on the theme:

“Reimagining Languages and Literatures in Times of Transformation: Possibilities and Limitations.”

Across the globe, institutions of higher learning are grappling with transformations in knowledge production, pedagogy, institutional culture, and social engagement. In the context of Africa, these transformations are often shaped by pressing questions of **multilingualism, epistemic justice, decoloniality, social inclusion, and the reconfiguration of disciplinary boundaries.**

Guided by principles central to UCT’s vision of transformation, including **multilingualism, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility, social and epistemic justice and redress, care and humility, equity, fairness, and meaningful social engagement**, this symposium seeks to explore how scholars of language and literature respond to and enact transformation in their **research, teaching, institutional practices, and community engagement.**

Echoing and building upon the engagements during a previous SLL Symposium in November 2024*, this event aims to provide a space for critical reflection, dialogue, and knowledge exchange on the opportunities and limitations of transformation in the humanities, particularly within the fields of languages, literatures, and related interdisciplinary areas.

*This symposium follows on from an event held on Tuesday, 26 November 2024, under the theme: “Languages and Literatures in Times of Transformation: Opportunities and Challenges.” Previous attendance is not a prerequisite.



Objectives

The symposium seeks to:

- *Showcase innovative practices and scholarly interventions related to transformation within language and literary studies.*
- *Foster critical dialogue on the opportunities, tensions, and limitations of transformation in academic institutions.*
- *Encourage reflection on pedagogical, research, and institutional practices in contexts of social change.*
- *Promote collaboration and intellectual exchange among scholars working across languages, literatures, and allied disciplines.*

Key Themes

We welcome contributions that engage with transformation broadly. Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- *Transformation in Pedagogy and Didactics*
- *Research and Knowledge Production*
- *Language, Society, and Culture*
- *Institutional Culture and Transformation*
- *Community Engagement and Public Scholarship*

Format of Contributions

The symposium will include formal academic presentations, including work in progress and Creative/Multimodal Performances such as artistic presentations in the form of poetry, song, dance, or other creative expressions engaging with themes in higher education, as well as showcases of innovative projects.

Presentations (All): 20-minute presentation

Contributions may engage theoretical, empirical, pedagogical, or practice-based perspectives.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit an abstract of 200–300 words indicating:

- Title of the presentation
- Type of presentation (Academic paper, etc.)
- Author(s) and institutional affiliation

Note: In keeping with the interdisciplinary scope of the symposium, proposals from other departments or units of the Humanities Faculty, and beyond, are welcome.

Submissions should be sent to: sllsymposium-group@uct.ac.za

Important Dates

- Abstracts submission deadline: [Friday, 14 August 2026](#)
- Notification of acceptance: [Friday, 4 September 2026](#)
- Welcoming drinks, opening remarks by **Prof. Jaya Raju**, Deputy Dean for Staffing and Transformation, and the unveiling of SLL's Values Statement, as part of an initiative of the Humanities Transformation Committee: Wednesday, 18 November 2026 (14h00)
- Symposium date: Thursday, 19 November 2026

Key Questions for Reflection

While submissions are not limited to these questions, contributors may consider:

- What does transformation look like in the language and/or literature classroom?
- What might a transformed language or literature curriculum entail?
- How can the ideal of transformation shape teaching practices, teaching material and didactic approaches?
- How can the ideal of transformation shape research agendas in language and literary studies?
- In what ways can transformation inform professional practice and community engagement?
- How might transformation reshape institutional culture and academic collaboration?

These questions aim to assist presenters to identify practices, processes or actions in their own field/ sphere and reflect on them.

The symposium will be formally opened with remarks by the Dean, **Prof. Shose Kessi**.

The keynote speaker is **A/Prof. Ramona Kunene Nicolas**, Head of the School of Literature, Language and Media at Wits University.

For more information, please contact:

sllsymposium-group@uct.ac.za

Note: Presenters will have the opportunity to develop their presentations into full chapters for inclusion in a DHET-accredited publication.

We look forward to receiving your submissions.

Sincerely,

Organising Committee (SLL Transformation Committee)
Bibi Burger, Hleze Kunju, Gesa Singer, Mara Boccaccio
& Karel Plaiche