In this paper, I wish to reflect on the ways in which knowledge mobilization constitutes a terrain for discomfort, boundary-crossing and conversation (or various forms of "translation") between academics and actors whose role is to mediate knowledge to "the public". Drawing on various research projects on language and political economy where we tried to involve various public actors (from the political and economic spheres) to help mobilize knowledge in different ways outside the academic world, I shall focus on two central tensions that emerge in this process. The first is linked to translation and entextualization, and how they affect the knowledge that was initially produced. The initial results get embedded in new ideological frames and confronted with various forms of constraints (technical, legal, economic), calling into question what counts as disseminable story, what is showable and hearable, and by and for whom.

The second tension has to do with authorship and the necessary acceptance of being somehow dispossessed of the story we want to tell. The knowledge we produce is reappropriated by others, which finally entails central questions around whose stories it is, whose knowledge? I argue in this paper that instead of seeing these issues as completely incommensurable, we might consider them as interesting terrains where the limits of and the condition of possibility for the circulation of knowledge and its transformation are illuminated. Rather than romanticizing knowledge mobilization as a collective activity characterized by smooth forms of co-construction, we might consider it as a site of tension, ideologically loaded, and institutionally and politically constrained – and therefore as a space of conflicting debates where the point is not to transpose specific knowledge from one space to another, but to generate something else that necessarily and productively includes a dissonant polyphony.

Keywords: language ideologies, public discourse, knowledge mobilization.