The Languaging of Higher Education in the Global South:
De-Colonizing the Language of Scholarship and Pedagogy

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Overview of Today's Presentation

Introduction → **Exploring Decoloniality** → **Southern Perspectives** → **Solidarity**

Decolonization in Higher Education and Language → **Overview of Book Sections** → **Expanding Themes** → **Conclusion/Moving Forward**

Introduction

- By foregrounding language practices in educational settings, OUR volume offers a postcolonial critique of the languaging of higher education and considers how Southern epistemologies can be used to further the decolonization of post-secondary education in the Global South.

- This book builds upon research on critical orientations to language in higher education, drawing on:

I.   integrational linguistics

II.   indigenous and alternative knowledges

III.   decolonial pedagogies

IV. Southern Theories and epistemologies of the South

What is Decoloniality?

- This books contributes to explore the role of decoloniality in knowledge construction.

- But what is decoloniality ?

- Decoloniality means different things in different contexts.

- 'A straightforward definition of the decolonial project is impossible' (Kusic et al 2019:12).

Importance of Dialogue

- Decolonial scholarship should involve dialogue with many communities across the globe because decoloniality is a global project.

- For example, African scholars have not yet fully created a productive dialogue between scholars in Eastern Europe and African scholars.
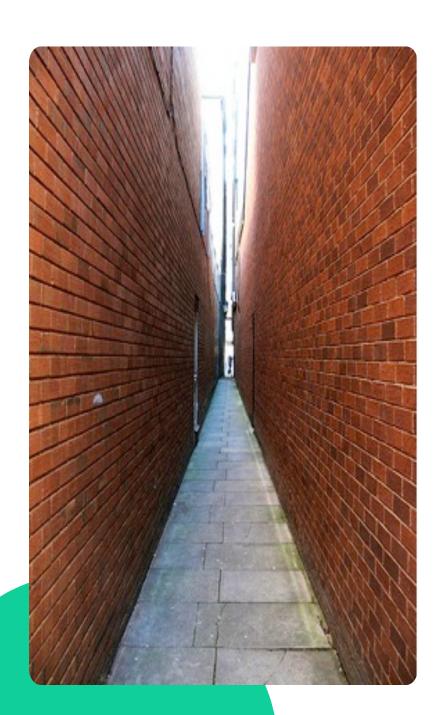
We can define **decoloniality** as an epistemic proposal whose principal objective is to recover and celebrate subdued and subordinated knowledges of the marginalized and those on the periphery.

New Language Needs

- We need new ways of analyzing language which reduce the gravitational weight of western linguistics and advocates other alternative frames of analytical frames which have not been popularized in Linguistics

- Example:
  - 'wet ontologies': 'using pipes', 'plumbing', 'rainwater' as analytical heuristics

- Stoler feels the notion of decoloniality needs to be limited in its scope.

- He thinks a narrower vision of decoloniality is more analytically feasible.

- "*Colonial invocations are covering a more capacious ground than ever before-the archive stretches across the academe, indigenous communities, activist blogs, and the mainstream press, splays high-pitched over museum curation*" (Stoler 2021:66).

Our Argument:

'Decolonial thinkers must go beyond decoloniality for the sake of decoloniality'' (Gordon 2021:16).

If decolonization is to be effective, we need to be conceptually clear as to what and who decolonization is for, stands for, and/or seeks to accomplish.

Southern Perspectives

- We construe work that draws on Southern perspectives as part of broader epistemological, ethical, and political decolonial movements (Quijano, 2005; Santos, 2014; Walsh, 2017) that challenge the Eurocentric basis and hierarchized racial categories underpinning most current institutions of higher education in both the Global South and the Global North.

- In our conception of the Global South, we refer to people whose voices are mediated or spoken for, rather than given the opportunities to speak for themselves.

- Additionally, we suggest that the term 'Global South' become pluralized as 'Global Souths' to pushback against possible suggestions of heterogeneity in these varying contexts

Integrationism and Solidarity-Based Epistemology

- Drawing from an integrated concept, we explore the roles of language in the context of higher education by bringing together the diverse experiences of scholars and students from around many regions of the Global Souths.

- We argue that <u>Southern epistemologies and decolonial linguistics are compatible with integrationist linguistics</u> (Makoni et al., 2021) because the latter is not a type of linguistics—it is a type of '**anti-linguistics**.'

- Integrational linguistics is more concerned with issues about communication than with languages. From this perspective, there are no signs which exist independently of communicational activities in the here and now.

Towards a Solidarity-Based Epistemology

- Epistemologically, we seek to develop a "**solidarity-based epistemology**" (Connell, 2018), or '**connected sociolinguistics**' as constituting the theoretical predicates for the book.

Solidarity

- Solidarity is a key concept for higher education decolonial projects engaged with the problematization of hegemony, neoliberal capitalism, patriarchalism, and racism inscribed in the modern process of knowledge production and dissemination.

- With the concept of solidarity, we consider the need for a multilingual, pluriversal, autonomous, and democratic concept of the university engaged with decolonial, anti-oppressive praxis, and critical thinking (Freire, 2000; Santos, 2011; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012).

Decolonization of Higher Education

- Decolonization of education in the Global South is necessary because universities were introduced during the colonial era.

- The main objective of the universities was to serve and promote the interests of the colonial elites.

- They were modeled after universities in the Global North.

- The universities have not radically changed even after the end of the colonial era.

Decolonization of Higher Education

- Decolonization of universities is a difficult process, but it is feasible to decolonize specific spaces as part of institutional changes.

- Spaces that can be decolonized are those Monica Heller refers to as not locked down:

  - *"the spaces of contradiction, and you put your finger on this huge contradiction for states legitimized through ideologies of democracy, which failed to deliver on the promise. So, where do these contradictions show up in people's lives?"* (Heller, 2021)

Decolonization of Higher Education

- Any project engaged with the decolonization of higher education should take seriously the ideas of critical education "as a form of networking—a 'community' of knowledge and knowledge formation" (Freire, 2000, p. 17).

- As solidarity has become a principle of 21st-century universities that are committed to education oriented by human rights, responsible rationale, and sustainable practices (Salvioli, 2009), we continue expanding on the nuances of this principle within this body of work.

- Solidarity practices require the construction of plural, dialogical, translingual, and intercultural spaces of learning, teaching, and sharing (Bakhtin, 1993; Freire, 2000; García & Leiva, 2014).

Language Policy in Higher Education

- In the face of a neoliberal tendency to "commercialization of knowledge" (Santos, 2011), we argue that the creation and development of multilingual practices in the context of institutions of knowledge production and dissemination play an important role in the problematization of the hegemony of English as an academic and economic *lingua franca*.

- According to Prah (2021), decolonization requires addressing the language question, which entails having to introduce and facilitate the use of local languages because no nation can develop based on foreign languages.

- Furthermore, decolonization involves adopting a radically different orientation towards notion of language.

Decolonizing the Notion of Language

- In this volume, we adopt a more radical approach and reject the idea of language as a fixed code even if it is framed as a core or cluster that makes meanings available for us in specific contexts.

- Instead of thinking of language as an autonomous system, we regard **language as a product of communicational activity**.

- Communication and language use in this analytical framework is a creative process.

Overview of Book Sections

1. Confronting Epistemological Language Issues
2. Language Policy in Postcolonial Academic Contexts
3. Language Pedagogy in Post-Secondary Contexts
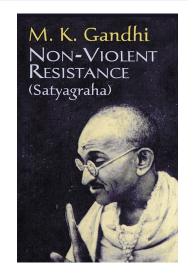4. Technology and Decolonial Practices
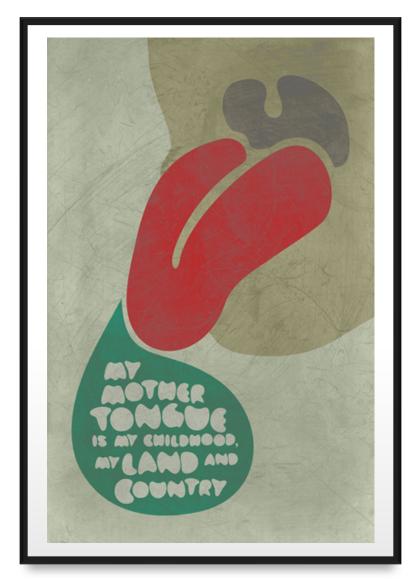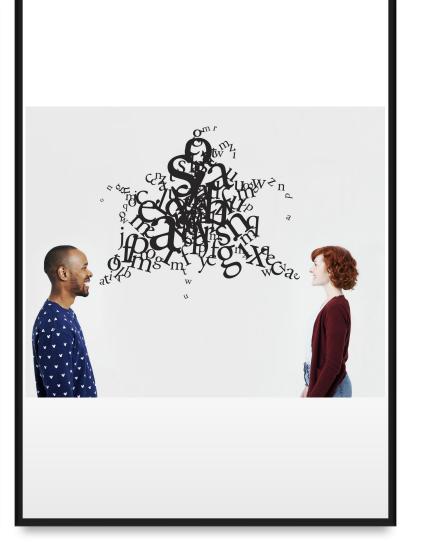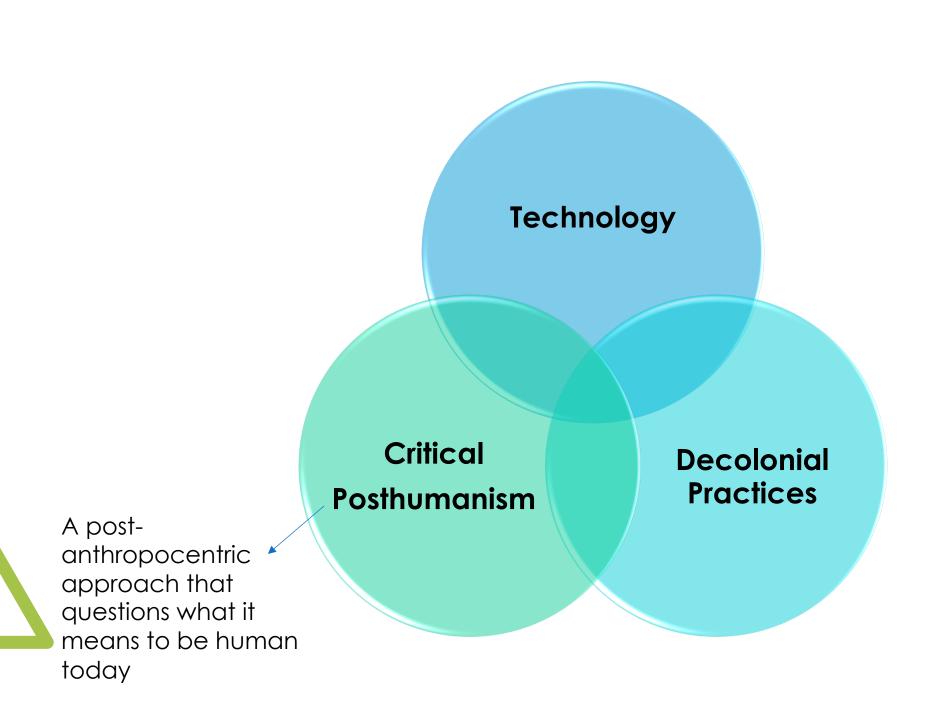
Confronting Epistemological Language Issues

AHIMSA
अहिंसा
NON-VIOLENCE;
COMPASSION
FOR ALL
LIVING THINGS

M. K. Gandhi
NON-VIOLENT
RESISTANCE
(Satyagraha)

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Language Policy in Postcolonial Academic Contexts

My mother tongue is my childhood, my land and country

Mother Tongue

isiNdebele 2.1%

siSwati 2.5%

Sesotho 7.6%

Setswana 8%

isiZulu 22.7%

isiXhosa 16%

Tshivenda 2.4%

Afrikaans 13.5%

Sepedi 9.1%

English 9.6%

Other languages 1.6%

Xitsonga 4.5%

Sign language 0.5%

(Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011)

Language Pedagogy in Post-Secondary Contexts

Turkey

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miles

CHIMAMANDA
NGOZI ADICHIE

AUTHOR OF *AMERICANAH*

PURPLE
HIBISCUS

A NOVEL

"BREATHTAKING." —*The Washington Post Book World*

Simone de Beauvoir
**Le deuxième
sexe, I**
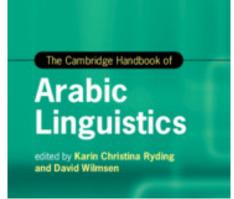
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Technology and Decolonial Practices

- Computer mediated communication leading to new forms of "multilingualism"

- Southern universities and the rise of the "cyborg"
  - Call for critical posthumanism

- The role of remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic in the de/Northernization of universities
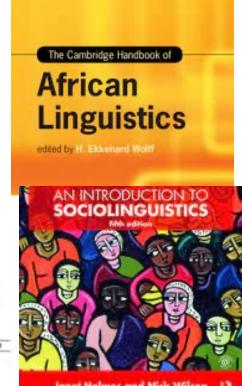
Expanding Themes

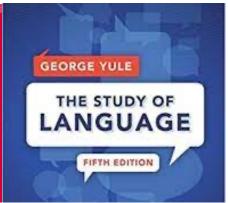# Epistemological Language Issues

- Pluralizing "segregationism"?

- Why not inflecting 'Linguistics' in the Southern curricula?
    - E.g., Linguistics vs. "Arabic tradition"
    - Linguistics vs. "African Linguistics"
    - Etc.

- Turning a decolonial critique against itself: 'mother tongue' and 'diversity' in Southern curricula.
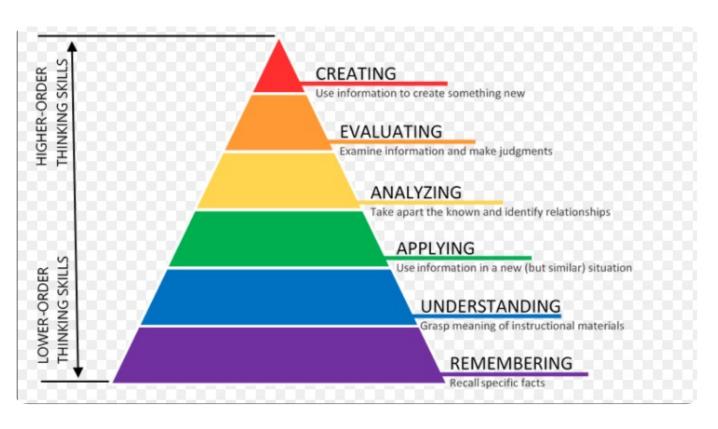
- Political revolutions in the Arab world and North Africa and the silence of 'Northern linguistics'!

- 'Accreditation' as an epistemology of governmentality: Ratifying non-western languages programs through 'English discourse'

- The Southern university and the reproduction of Northern technocratic discourse: Seeing the Southern world through Bloom's taxonomy, the 'impact factor' metric, etc.

Concluding/Moving Forward

- We 'need to shift the geography of reason' as a way forward because if we are to treat what has come from Africa and its diasporas as academic and scholarly, we need to 'shift the geography of reason' because this will create conditions which liberate us from both 'epistemic colonization' and dependency'.

- The notion of 'shifting the geography of reason' is a multilayered one with many dimensions which we enumerate below:

1. 'a shift in the geography of reason' entails a shift from a 'closed to an open relational commitment' (Lewis Gordon 2021;128)

2. 'a shift in the geography of reason' requires thinking anew and creatively (Lewis Gordon 2021:130)

3. 'shifting the geography of reason' requires understanding that power should not be reduced to a single element but should be explored in its creative potential (Lewis Gordon 2021:130)

4. 'shifting the geography of reason' requires shifting the geography of knowledge production. A shift does not mean abandonment (Lewis Gordon 2021:132)

5. shifting a geography of reason is a task which creates healthy possibilities