



Sociolinguistics Symposium 26

13 – 15 July 2026

East London, SOUTH AFRICA

Sociolinguistics Symposium 2026

Conference Book



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Message from Dr Sithembele Marawu, Chair of the Sociolinguistics Symposium 2026

From 13 -15 July 2026, the historic city of East London (kuGompo) will host delegates from across the world for an engaging exploration of contemporary sociolinguistic issues. As a city marked by both colonial history and resistance, and situated on the ancestral land of amaXhosa, kuGompo provides a fitting setting for critical discussions on language, identity, and social justice.

Under the conference theme, ***Linguistic Consonance and Dissonance in the Pluriversal World***, delegates will examine the enduring legacy of colonialism in promoting monolingualism within multilingual societies. Through their research, they will demonstrate that multilingualism, linguistic inclusivity, and language diversity are essential for fostering social cohesion, equity, and peaceful coexistence. Across much of the world, multilingualism is not an exception but a normal and enriching feature of everyday life.

The conference will also highlight the consequences of policies that have marginalised indigenous and minority languages. The imposition of colonial languages has often produced linguistic inequalities, undermined linguistic rights, reinforced power imbalances, and limited access to education and socio-economic opportunities for historically disadvantaged communities.

Inspired by the concept of a pluriversal world, participants will challenge perspectives that privilege a single way of knowing, speaking, and being. Instead, they will advocate for the decolonisation of knowledge and the recognition of linguistic diversity as a foundation for more inclusive, just, and democratic societies.

We warmly welcome all delegates and wish you a stimulating and rewarding conference. May this gathering inspire meaningful dialogue, foster lasting collaborations, and contribute to advancing sociolinguistic scholarship and multilingualism across the globe.

Dr Sithembele Marawu

Chair: Sociolinguistics Symposium 26



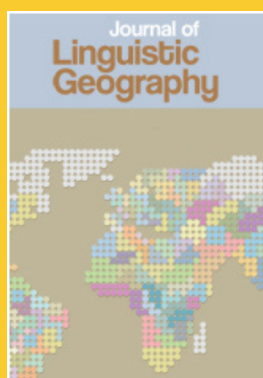
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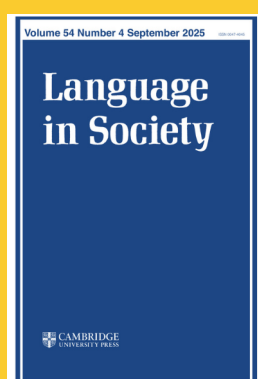
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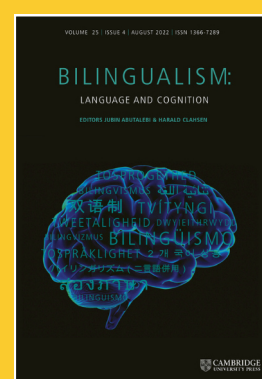
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Prof Kathleen Heugh
Adelaide University, AUSTRALIA

A sociolinguistics of Africa – southern conviviality, reciprocity, and scholarship

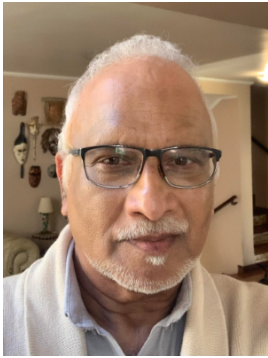
Africa, the cradle of humanity, is also the cradle of language in spoken, signed, and written forms. The most prominent field in sociolinguistics – the study of language as used in society – is multilingualism. With one third of the world's languages, Africa has long provided the poets, playwrights, and storytellers of the continent with rich multilingual resources for their craft in recording histories, and systems of belief, culture, and knowledge. They remind us of at least six historical phases of African multilingual social systems from which to recall, learn and pass on to others. So, there is little that can be taught to the citizens of Africa from the Euro-North about multilingualism/s, whether as continua of language chains or as languages of difference that our scholars, wise elders and writers do not already know.

In this paper, I offer a brief overview of African multilingualisms as pluriversal phenomena, as I've learned from archival sources, scholarly elders, colleagues and students in conversations that criss-cross Africa and the Asia Pacific for several decades. The focus is on how African knowledge of multilingualisms, as dynamic and multidimensional, has much to contribute to northern narratives of socio- and applied linguistics.

Multilingualisms are much more than language – they are about how human beings who want to get along are the *homo sapiens amans* referred to by Maturana and colleagues in Chile. They are about keeping balances in society – and how multilingual citizens take care with words in convivial conversations and reciprocal exchange. Multilingualisms are how people recognise and exercise their linguistic agency and citizenship when choosing how to communicate, depending on the purpose and with whom they converse. Human migration out of Africa was only possible when people used their multilingualisms for reciprocal exchanges and translation of knowledge, a Process of 'transknowledging'.

Northern narrators of 'multilingualism' have seldom recognised knowledge of African and southern multilingualisms, how these shift along both horizontal planes of conviviality and reciprocity, and change to vertical planes of differentiation for purposes of exclusion, entry to the formal economy and higher education, and during conflict. Africa's gift to the academy is to demonstrate that multilingualisms are multidimensional. They are intimately associated with keeping triangular relationships (ethos, logos, pathos; cosmology, epistemology, and ontology; pasts, presents, futures) in balance. These are the balances that multilingual citizens navigate while exercising their linguistic agency, citizenship and versatility every day.





Prof Lynn Mario T. Menezes de Souza
University of São Paulo, BRAZIL

Southern Sociolinguistics, Potentiated Double Consciousness and the Politics of Locus of Enunciation: Toward a Decolonial Ethics of Language

This address outlines an onto-epistemological framework for a “southern sociolinguistics” capable of confronting the structural onto-epistemological asymmetries and violence of colonial modernity. Operating against the “epistemology of the zero-point” (Castro-Gomez 2007), the modernist illusion of disembodied and transparent knowledge systems, this paper argues that all language is embodied and inherently historical and relational. By conceptually weaving together Gilroy’s (1993) contrapuntal consciousness, Jane Gordon’s (2006) “potentiated double consciousness”, and Ngũgĩ’s (1986) vitalist framework of decolonization, the address explores how the colonial matrix organizes global “audibility”. It examines how Ngũgĩ’s concept of the “cultural bomb” functions as the systemic apparatus that pathologizes local indigenous vernaculars while leaving metropolitan European languages “unmarked” (de Souza 2018, 2024, 2025) as universal standards of reason.





Dr Naledi Mbude-Mehana

Department of Basic Education, SOUTH AFRICA

Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education (MTbBE): The unfinished consonance in a Dissonant Architecture: DBE's struggle to tackle Foundational learning through MTbBE

Dr. Naledi Mbude-Mehana is a distinguished sociolinguistics and a leading voice in the field of African language education (especially bilingual Science Education), multilingualism, and language policy in South Africa. With over 26 years of academic and community-based research experience, she has dedicated her career to advancing the visibility, intellectualization, and equitable use of African languages in education, public life, and in the economy.

Currently serving as a Deputy Director General (DDG) in the Department of Basic Education (DBE); Dr. Mbude-Mehana specializes in the sociolinguistic dynamics of multilingual societies, with particular focus on the intersection of language, identity, power, and social justice in education. Her groundbreaking work explores how language ideologies shape educational outcomes, particularly for learners from historically marginalized communities. She presents extensively in local, regional and international platforms on language and education; challenging the historical marginalization of African languages pre- and post-apartheid in South Africa.

Dr. Mbude-Mehana has played a pivotal role in shaping national language policy, contributing to the Department of Basic Education's Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) strategy. She sits on the panel of advisors to the CHE Review on ITE standards related to multilingualism. Having established the Eastern Cape Department of Education's Language Unit, a first in the country (2012). She established the DBE's Language Unit, in line with UOOLA, 2012. The National Language Unit leads public education campaigns on multilingual pedagogy and MTBBE as a vehicle to widen epistemic access.

She cautions on African languages just being used as medium versus being used a meaning making systems. Her thesis is that there is a difference between the two: As a medium: the language is mostly a channel for instruction, translation, or classroom delivery. For meaning making: the language is a tool for reasoning, discussion, concept-building, and academic expression. She believes that the difference matters; as if African languages are only used as a medium, lessons can still stay teacher-centred and superficial, with little deep understanding. If African languages are used for meaning making, learners can connect new ideas to what they already know, which improves comprehension and literacy. Meaning-making use also supports intellectualization of African languages, because the language grows through use in higher-order thinking; this she says is central to the learning, teaching and assessment of mathematics and science. Part of the challenge we have with the low outcomes in the Foundation Phase; is the use of African languages just as medium. She coined the term Mother Tongue-based Reading Literacy (MTbRL, 2024) for the DBE's new Reading Literacy Strategy (2024 – 2030).

Her work has been recognized nationally and internationally, she was invited by UNESCO twice in 2025; to accompany the Minister of Basic Education to present on South Africa's MTBBE implementation on International Mother Language Day celebrations (21 February 2025); and to present her work on Leveraging AI to develop African Languages with Prof Vukosi Marivate (UP) and Prof. Langa Khumalo (SADILAR, NWU) at the Digital Learning Week (2025) at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France (September, 2025). Dr. Mbude-Mehana is committed to decolonizing education through language justice, advocating for curricula that center African knowledge systems and linguistic diversity.



**Prof Stef Slembrouck****Ghent University, BELGIUM**

The interactional activity-specific take on sociolinguistic enquiry. Situatedness and its language-policy contingencies

My keynote is rooted in an interactional perspective on sociolinguistics, foregrounding situated language use in real-time activity, noting both the complexities of in-the-moment practices and the gaps within language-specific policy debate. While asking the question what the contours might be of a context-responsive LPP framework which aligns with the lived sociolinguistic realities of today's multilingual world, we cannot avoid the interdisciplinary implications and inevitable social organizational responsibilities that come with language policy work in civil society. I will draw on various case studies from secondary and higher education in multilingual Flanders/Belgium.





Prof Marcelyn Oostendorp

Stellenbosch University, SOUTH AFRICA

Refiguring the languaging human

In this keynote I reflect on the position of the human in sociolinguistic thinking. In sociolinguistics the 'human' has mostly remained un/under-theorized. To theorize the human and language in cohort, I use the framework of linguistic citizenship specifically developing a black, feminist, decolonial perspective. Using data from a number of projects focused on the linguistic repertoires of African participants, I develop the idea of the repertoire as both inhibiting and fostering linguistic citizenship. The linguistic repertoire is thus seen both as a space of dystopia (or dehumanization) and a space of utopia, where a new humanity is possible. I argue that a linguistic citizenship approach not only provides new understandings of the entanglement of language and humanity, but also gives insight into how to 'do language otherwise'. I conclude with some proposals on how those of us in sociolinguistics who are concerned about thinking the languaging of human otherwise might work towards it.





Prof Shaila Sultana

BRAC University, BANGLADESH

Chronotopic Rapture in Pursuit of Desperate Hope for a Reimagined Nation: July 2024 Student Uprising in Bangladesh

Historically, students have acted as catalysts in challenging autocratic regimes and have inspired populations worldwide through the dissemination of nationalism and optimism. In 2024, a nationwide student-led uprising received international recognition by challenging and ultimately overthrowing an autocratic government in Bangladesh. Throughout this uprising, various media outlets served as a dynamic, contested arena in which students passionately articulated their sentiments regarding fifteen years of authoritarian rule and systematic silencing. The keynote presents data collected from both digital platforms and public spaces, including linguistic landscapes, cartoons, rap songs, memes, placards, and protest slogans, and critically reflects on how the protest movement was discursively and non-discursively constructed.

With reference to Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, the presentation shows that linguistic and semiotic resources enabled young students to reference historical, political, social, cultural, and religious ideologies and to create raptures across diverse temporal and spatial contexts. By transcending the boundaries of time and space and through their polyphonic layering of voices, they positioned themselves against the political repression and corruption, killing and persecution of journalists, opposition leaders, and activists, and violations of human rights and justice. Their affective stances—particularly anger, grief, and frustration—circulated across chronotopes, seemed to provide them with catharsis that assisted them in constructing agentive portrayals of a transformative future of hope: a reformed egalitarian nation, free from corruption, extremism, and exclusionary nationalism, linguisticism, gender discrimination, and ethnicism. Most significantly, the chronotopic rapture empowered them, as exemplified by Heller & McElhinny's (2017) metaphor of "walking backward into the future," enabling them to draw on painful pasts to imagine new possibilities. In summary, deeply embedded in memories of violence, loss, and state repression, the chronotopic rapture kindled students' hope for a more promising and equitable future—envisioning a reimagined Bangladesh in which human rights are integral to its national identity.



Multilingualisms in Education: Conversations among Southern and Northern Scholars

Participants:

- Dion Nkomo, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Ritu Jain, Nanyang Technological University, SINGAPORE
- Prof Kathleen Heugh, Adelaide University, AUSTRALIA
- Dr Joah Prada, Groningen University, NETHERLANDS

This proposed colloquium features contributors to our forthcoming edited volume, *Multilingualisms in Education: Conversations among Southern and Northern Scholars*, in press with Bloomsbury. Participants will engage in restorative conversations to explore the nature of multilingualisms in education in their unique living, pulsating pluralities of presents, pasts, and futures. Southern perspectives, considered in geopolitical terms, juxtapose the coloniality of habitus in the Global North, steeped in capitalism, universalism, and Eurocentric dominance (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). For those working at the intersection of language and education, Southern perspectives are rooted in the multilingualisms and multilinguality that have for centuries been the norm for Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australasia, foregrounding linguistic and epistemic ecologies based off people and their land, responsive to socio-political and ecological precarities and vulnerability (Heugh, 2021). A resurgence of Northern interest in multilingualisms, fashioned predominantly through a single language, English, has coincided with two decades of disruptive and divisive sociolinguistic debates, precipitated by clashing axiologies and competing strands of (neo-)colonial, post-colonial and decolonial debates. Taking up these issues, the colloquium papers offer research, practice and scholarship conducted in situated, local classroom and community contexts, drawing insights from ongoing collaborations, respectful partnerships and alliance, and action-oriented fieldwork and activism.

Multilingualism, Identity and Being Indian: Decolonial Perspectives from Singapore

Dr Ritu Jain, Nanyang Technological University, SINGAPORE

Prof Kathleen Heugh, Adelaide University, AUSTRALIA

This paper offers a decolonial perspective of contemporary multilingualism in Singapore. We offer a brief historical background to the northern influenced colonial and postcolonial language policy that has essentialised ethnolinguistic communities (Malay, Mandarin, Tamil) to suit socio-economic and educational policies optimistically designed for managing diversity. In the face of intensifying 21st century in-migration and mobility,



drawn by Singapore's prominence as the economic powerhouse of Southeast Asia, the artifice of postcolonial public language policy particularly in education, showing signs of fissure, has been adjusted. These adjustments include expanded linguistic options for students with South Asian languages. Through analysis of fresh quantitative and qualitative data, southern perspectives of multilingualisms in Singapore emerge, illustrating the linguistic agency, citizenship and resistance of minority communities from the Indian subcontinent. These are both strategic, expressed in language education choices, and integral to everyday language practices via what Jain (2023) refers to as multilingualiving.

Heritage Language Programs as Borderlands within Western Universities: Translanguaging, Transknowledging, and Transpositioning

Dr Joah Prada, Groningen University, Netherlands

Universities in the Global North remain shaped by Western epistemologies that privilege certain forms of knowledge while marginalizing others. This hierarchy, anchored in colonial legacies, continues to inform curricular design, pedagogy, and institutional norms, including in language education. Traditional language programs often reproduce these legacies by treating languages and cultures as fixed, bounded systems and elevating dominant norms as standards. In contrast, heritage language (HL) programs have emerged as critical alternatives, particularly in the United States, responding to the fluid, dynamic realities of multilingual learners. This paper positions HL programs as borderland spaces where multiple linguistic, cultural, and epistemological traditions intersect. Centering translanguaging, transknowledging, and transpositioning, it argues that HL programs foster democratic and liberatory practices that challenge colonial frameworks. Drawing on longitudinal vignettes from two U.S. university programs, the paper illustrates how HL spaces enable epistemological plurality, emergent meaning-making, and transformative possibilities for more equitable futures in education.



Linguistic Colonialism 2.0 – Machine Learning, Surveillance Technologies and Data Practices, and New Forms of Sociolinguistic Order

Participants:

- Prof Britta Schneider, Vienna University, AUSTRIA
- Dr Bettina Migge, University College Dublin, IRELAND
- Dr Helen Kelly-Holmes, University of Limerick, IRELAND
- Dr Rafael Lomeu Gomes, University of Copenhagen, DENMARK

The panel inspects the potential of digital machine learning technologies for reconfiguring future sociolinguistic economies and contributing to new colonial relationships. Older language technologies, such as writing and print, were an important element in European colonial language practices. As shown by missionary linguistics research, the transformation of spoken language into written documents – above all, the translation of the Bible – has been crucial for the transmission of the idea of languages as distinct and ethno-nationally ordered entities (Deumert & Storch 2020). National and colonial traditions, entailing the idea that language is tied to territorial and culturally homogenous communities and justifying sociolinguistic and human hierarchies, difference and exploitation, are thus entangled with technologies of writing and printing. Newer technologies based on scraping, automatically analyzing masses of language data and generating text also participate in mapping and controlling human relationships. The panel discusses the potentials they hold for new types of colonialism.

Panel contributions explore data collection practices, data curation, automated surveillance techniques, language materializations in machine learning, linguistic hegemonies in computational cultures, algorithmic management and distribution of content as aspects in new sociolinguistic economies. The panel contributes to a deeper understanding of how machine learning technologies to co-define knowledge and sociolinguistic hierarchies.

AI as an opportunity to rethink sociolinguistic theory and practice?

Dr Helen Kelly-Holmes, University of Limerick, IRELAND

While current concerns in sociolinguistics around AI reflect wider society, they also reflect the historical valorization of spoken language in ‘natural’ settings. Despite this, technology has shaped how sociolinguists study language (e.g. where and how linguists travel to record and extract which and whose ‘language’), as well as many inequalities



and hierarchies hardwired into our key concepts. The current era presents increasingly privatized spaces of human-machine interaction and language production to which sociolinguists have little access and over which they have decreasing control. Drawing on Stroud (2001), Rymes and Leone (2014), Rampton, Cooke and Holmes (2018), Rymes (2020), Bodó et al (2023) and others, as well as examples from the MultiLX study of experiences of using AI among young minority language speakers, this paper explores how ‘digital sociolinguistic citizenship’ could offer a theory and methodology for overcoming new types of hierarchies and inequalities in AI and in our research practices.

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Rampton, B., Cooke, M., & Holmes, S. (2018). Sociolinguistic citizenship. *Journal of Social Science Education*, 17(4), 68–83.

Rymes, B. (2020). *How we talk about language? Exploring citizen sociolinguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

Rymes, B., & Leone, A. (2014). Citizen sociolinguistics: A new media methodology for understanding language and social life. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 29(2), 25–43.

Stroud, C. (2001). African mother-tongue programmes and the politics of language: Linguistic citizenship versus linguistic human rights. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural development*, 22(4), 339–355.

AI in academia: Dissent and dissonance

Dr Rafael Lomeu Gomes, University of Copenhagen, DENMARK

**Janus Mortensen, Jens Christian Borup Green Jensen, and Sam Goodchild,
University of Copenhagen, DENMARK**

The availability of text-generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has had a significant impact on academic practices across the world. Some embrace GenAI; others adopt sceptical stances; but no-one is left untouched by the technology and the discourses surrounding it. Drawing on participant observation and interview data generated through linguistic ethnographic fieldwork at two Danish universities, we examine how discourses of dissent and dissonance are constructed and mobilized by university students and faculty members to counter some of the logics embedded in what has been referred to as ‘techno-futurist registers of AI’ (Del Percio 2025) and ‘digital colonialism’ (Nothias 2025). Preliminary analysis suggests that participants orient to different scales of AI reflexivity when deciding whether and how to use GenAI. The paper sheds light on the emergence of new sociolinguistic tensions in academia, brought about by the advent of AI and discursively reflected, constructed and contested in participants’ accounts and everyday practices.

Del Percio, Alfonso. 2025. Technofuturist registers for AI and the future of work. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 29(5): 319–331. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12714>.

Nothias, Toussaint. 2025. An intellectual history of digital colonialism. *Journal of Communication* 75(5): 385–397. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaf003>



Continuations from European colonialism to AI: The material making of language as practice of global domination and control

Dr Bettina Migge, University College Dublin, IRELAND

Prof Britta Schneider, University of Vienna, AUSTRIA

Although AI language technologies are typically presented as future-oriented technological innovation, machine-learning technologies are also affected by the cultural and historical contexts of their emergence. In fact, close examination of computational language culture reveals striking continuities to concepts of language and their materialization in technology settings in the history of European colonialism. Based on an in-depth analysis of how languages were materially produced in colonialism and are treated in AI technologies, we show the strong colonial continuities in language materialization processes to this day. Our investigation of the materialisation of language investigates a widely read document called “No language left behind” which discusses the processes used by big tech companies for bringing minoritized languages into the digital realm. The paper emphasizes the crucial role that language materialisations play in the construction and maintenance of power and social order in a global realm.



Mapping “Sacrifice Zones”: The Semiosis Of Coloniality In Waste Discourse

Participants:

- Prof Crispin Thurlow, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND
- Ms Charmaine Kong, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND
- Ms Laura Wohlgemuth, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND
- Mr Alessandro Pellanda, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND

This colloquium examines the “semiosis of coloniality” (Mignolo 2020) in waste discourse through four interrelated sociolinguistic/discourse-analytic case studies. In this regard, the colloquium is strongly aligned with Deumert & Makoni’s (2023) recent calls for southern theory and a decolonized sociolinguistics. In turn, decoloniality is also closely aligned with Fine & Love-Nichols’ (2021) proposal for a sociolinguistic research agenda on language and climate justice. Linked to each author’s ongoing research in the four-year Articulating Rubbish project at the University of Bern (see Thurlow, 2022), the colloquium addresses a range of different settings and discourse practices: waste governance in Switzerland; waste-related museum exhibitions; migrant waste workers in Hong Kong; and donation narratives in Swiss secondhand shops. Committed to the critical objective of decentering waste (Liboiron & Lepawsky 2022), the presenters collectively demonstrate the discursive production of “sacrifice zones” (Lerner 2012) in which material-spatial hierarchies, racialized labor, and moralized value systems are imagined in fundamentally colonial ways. This colloquium will be following up on an invited interactive workshop held at SS25 in Perth.

Framing the global south in waste exhibitions

Prof Crispin Thurlow, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND

This paper explores how waste museum exhibitions, particularly the Brussels-based Throwaway: The History of a Modern Crisis, frame the Global South in ways that obscure inequalities in global waste economies. Reading the exhibition as a spatial text (cf. Ravelli & McMurtrie, 2016), the analysis pin-points three social-semiotic tactics: relegation, obfuscation, and suppression. Relegation occurs when waste workers from migrant or marginalized communities are, for example, discursively subordinated to objects. Obfuscation is seen in the compositional equivalence constructed between Global North and Global South experiences of waste. Suppression emerges through erasure of the very labor and extractive conditions enabling Western consumption. In mediating public pedagogies about waste, these tactics effectively downplay global asymmetries and disingenuously cast the Global South as peripheral to Western waste crises.



Raciolinguistic othering in Hong Kong waste work

Ms Charmaine Kong, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND

This paper focuses on the raciolinguistic dynamics shaping migrant cleaners' labor in Hong Kong, particularly Nepalese workers supported by an NGO. Two discursive tactics are identified: linguistic disciplining and biographical erasure. Training materials instruct cleaners through targeted vocabulary lists, scripting them as "good cleaners" while reinforcing their marginality through enforced acquisition of dominant languages. This linguistic regulation functions as a form of control (Cameron, 2000) within colonial and neoliberal regimes, highlighting inequalities between those entitled to waste and those tasked with cleaning. A related NGO exhibition further extracts and aestheticizes cleaners' labor by displaying curated waste objects accompanied by decontextualized quotes. While intended to valorize cleaners' contributions, the effect is to commodify their experiences into consumable narratives of pity and ethical labor. Together, these tactics expose how waste work is racialized, gendered, and classed, rendering migrant cleaners simultaneously essential and disposable within transnational economies of waste management.

Colonial imaginaries in Swiss domestic waste discourse

Ms Laura Wohlgemuth, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND

This paper examines Swiss domestic waste practices—particularly donations to secondhand shops (Brockis)—to highlight how colonial imaginaries persist in everyday discourse. Interview data with Brocki managers show how African recipients are stereotypically cast as passive beneficiaries of Swiss clothing surplus, invoking a White savior logic (Bell, 2013) that erases African agency and reproduces racial hierarchies. Similarly, Romanian recipients are framed as "grateful" consumers of discarded items deemed unfashionable by Swiss standards, reinforcing symbolic hierarchies of taste and value. Such discourses naturalize unequal material flows, whereby Switzerland's surplus is valorized as aid while its structural waste economies remain unexamined. The act of donation, therefore, exceeds charitable intent: it is discursively and materially implicated in reproducing privilege and global inequalities. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that Swiss practices of waste disposal are sustained through moralizing narratives that reinscribe colonial power relations, situating domestic waste as a site where global hierarchies are rearticulated.

Switzerland's hygienic enclosures and waste externalities

Mr Alessandro Pellanda, University of Bern, SWITZERLAND

This paper examines how Switzerland's waste governance relies on infrastructures that sustain myths of hygiene, order, and recycling. Practices such as branded garbage bags, recycling stations, and waste-to-energy plants are conceptualized as "hygienic enclosures" that erase the presence of waste while ensuring municipal control (O'Hare, 2022). Yet, these infrastructures extend beyond national borders, creating externalities



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that shift ecological and social burdens elsewhere. Case studies from the Canton of Ticino reveal how landfills and exported waste-to-energy residues exemplify Switzerland's reliance on peripheral spaces, both domestically and abroad, to sustain its model of cleanliness. In doing so, waste's displacement maintains Swiss consumption practices while obscuring the inequalities inherent in transnational waste economies. Ultimately, the discourse of waste erasure enables an illusion of order, but this order is maintained through a contradictory transnational politics of (in)visibility (cf. Kerfoot & Hyltenstam, 2017) reinforcing global hierarchies of value and disposability.

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Cameron, Deborah. (2000). Styling the worker: Gender and the commodification of language in the globalized service economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4(3): 323–347.

Deumert, Ana and Makoni, Sinfree. (2023). *From Southern Theory to Decolonizing Sociolinguistics: Voices, Questions and Alternatives*. Channel View.

Fine, Julia C. and Love-Nichols, Jessica. (2021). Language and climate justice: A research agenda. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 25(3): 453–473.

Kerfoot, Caroline and Hyltenstam, Kenneth. (Eds.). (2017). *Entangled discourses: South-North Orders of Visibility*. Routledge.

Liboiron, Max and Lepawsky, Josh. (2022). *Discard Studies: Wasting, Systems, and Power*. MIT Press.

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O'Hare, Patrick. (2022). *Rubbish belongs to the poor: Hygienic Enclosure and the Waste Commons*. Pluto Press.

Ravelli, L. J., & McMurtrie, R. J. (2016). *Multimodality in the built environment: Spatial discourse analysis*. Routledge.

Thurlow, Crispin. (2022). Rubbish? Envisioning a sociolinguistics of waste. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 26(3): 386–403.



Translanguaging into Decolonial Futures

Participants

- Dr Nelson Flores, University of Pennsylvania, UNITED STATES
- Dr Corinne Seals, Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington, NEW ZEALAND [ONLINE]
- Dr Xolisa Guzula, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
- Prof Carolyn McKinney, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Ingrid Beiler, Oslo Metropolitan University, NORWAY

Over the past several years, translanguaging has become a central concept in sociolinguistics. Originating in Welsh bilingual classrooms (Williams, 1994) and later taken up in the United States (García, 2009), the concept has always carried decolonial possibilities through its stance that languages as bounded and numerable objects were a product of European colonialism (Makoni & Pennycook, 2005). More recently, scholars building on these conceptual insights have emphasized how colonial perceptions of language are inseparable from constructions of race, pointing to new decolonial openings (Rosa & Flores, 2017). This includes attention to colonial contexts where race has long structured inequality (García et al., 2021; Oliver & Excell, 2020) as well as to societies where race is often thought to be irrelevant (Beiler, 2020). This symposium seeks to build on these developments by bringing together scholars engaging in research in the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Nepal and Norway. Our goal is to develop decolonial perspectives on translanguaging that are deeply attuned to local histories while also attentive to how global racial hierarchies shape linguistic practices and perceptions. By creating links across contexts, the panel aims to identify both consonances and dissonances that can open possibilities for new forms of global solidarity.

Beiler, I. (2020). Marked and unmarked translanguaging in accelerated, mainstream, and sheltered English classrooms, *Multilingua*, 40, 107-138.

García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. Wiley-Blackwell.

García, O., Flores, N., Seltzer, K., Li Wei, Otheguy, R & Rosa, J. (2021). Rejecting abyssal thinking in the language and education of racialized bilinguals: A manifesto. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 10, 1-26.

Makoni, S. & Pennycook, A. (2005). Disinventing and (re)constituting languages. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 2, 137-156.

Oliver, R. & Excell, M. (2020) Identity, translanguaging, linguisticism and racism: the experience of Australian Aboriginal people living in a remote community. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 23, 819-832.

Rosa, J., & Flores, N. (2017). Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective. *Language in Society*, 46(5), 621–647.

Williams, C. (1994). *An Evaluation of Teaching and Learning Methods in the Context of Secondary Education*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Wales.



A Raciolinguistic Genealogy of Latinidad

Dr Nelson Flores, University of Pennsylvania, UNITED STATES

Translanguaging in the United States has been shaped by responses to the colonial relationship structuring U.S. Latinx life. Within this framing, Latinidad functions as a political identity mobilized to counter U.S. colonial logics in ways that obscure the settler colonialism and enslavement that created the concept of Latinidad, raising questions related to how translanguaging tied to this identity is theorized. I engage in a raciolinguistic genealogy of Latinidad to examine how conceptions of fluidity central to both Latinidad and translanguaging carry these contradictory legacies. I examine José Vasconcelos's *raza cósmica*, which resisted eugenics while also reinscribing anti-Black and settler colonial logic, and Gloria Anzaldúa's theorization of border-crossing, which, building on Vasconcelos, reframed fluidity as resistance while carrying forward these erasures. I then examine how Anzaldúa's work has been taken up in translanguaging research on U.S. Latinx communities, arguing for approaches that move beyond celebratory invocations of fluidity.

***Te keteparaha* to dismantle the oppressor's house: Adding translanguaging to practices of linguistic resistance**

Dr Corinne Seals, Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington, NEW ZEALAND

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

Within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, language carries deep emotional ties stemming from colonial-inflicted language trauma. This legacy has impacted Māori as *tangata whenua* (people of the land), as well as speakers of more than 160 minority languages who have arrived since, including Ukrainians (who are the focus of this talk). In recent history, there has been major momentum in the language reclamation space with *tangata whenua* leading the way and speakers of minority languages learning from this progress. Drawing on longitudinal ethnographic and interview data with both displaced Ukrainians and with Māori, this talk looks at how translanguaging is gaining traction in Aotearoa as part of *te keteparaha* (the toolkit) to battle the settler-colonizer's ideology of "pure language" separation. In particular, this talk looks at the complex, interwoven discourses that displaced Ukrainians draw on when pointing to Māori translingual practices as inspiration for their own translanguaging - both as a way to disrupt damaging Soviet colonial histories and as a means to negotiate how to belong in Aotearoa.



Constructing and disrupting the coloniality of language: radical translanguaging as decolonial pedagogy

Dr Xolisa Guzula, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Prof Carolyn McKinney, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Pinky Makoe, University of Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA

Despite South Africa's notorious history of the use of language to construct ethnolinguistic divisions and white supremacy, the powerful role of race is largely absent in research on language in education policy and implementation. Our collective research aims to make visible racializing ideologies of language and their construction of the normal child as a (white) monolingual English speaker, as well as to show how these can be subverted. Inspired and informed by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's call for decolonising the mind, Anzaldúa's borderlands and the coloniality of language (Veronelli, 2015), we provide an historical overview of colonial language ideologies in post-apartheid language policy and practice contrasting these with more recent interventions designed to disrupt the coloniality of language in learning spaces/materials through translanguaging. We will argue that translanguaging can both reinforce and subvert colonial ideologies of language, and offer a Southern perspective on the conditions for radical translanguaging.

Veronelli, G. (2015). The coloniality of language: Race, expressivity, power, and the darker side of modernity. *agadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's & Gender Studies*, 1, 108-134.

Translanguaging in a Context of Racial and Colonial Innocence

Dr Ingrid M. Rodrick Beiler, Oslo Metropolitan University, NORWAY

This paper considers translanguaging in a racialized educational setting within a society characterized by racial and colonial innocence (Loftsdóttir, 2024), namely adult basic education (ABE) in Norway. Intervening into European discussions of linguistic integration of adults, García (2017) posits that translanguaging may disrupt the coloniality of power and knowledge. However, such decolonial imperatives are easily rendered irrelevant through Nordic exceptionalism. Focusing on discursive absences in two year-long linguistic ethnographies, I therefore investigate shifts in power along racial and linguistic lines in ABE classrooms committed to multilingual or translanguaging pedagogies. Given taboos surrounding race, the analysis traces racializing discourses centered around cultural compatibility, vocational overdetermination, sociability, and historicity. Although all teachers in the study expanded translanguaging space in some ways, expansion of power along linguistic and racial lines seldom co-occurred. Thus, I argue that recontextualization of translanguaging to color-evasive societies must engage more substantially with covert ways of talking about race.



COLLOQUIUMS

García, O. (2017). Problematizing linguistic integration of migrants: The role of translanguaging and language teachers. In J. Beacco, H. Krumm, D. Little & P. Thalgot (eds.), *The linguistic integration of adult migrants: Some lessons from research / L'intégration linguistique des migrants adultes/Les enseignements de la recherche*, (pp. 11-26). DeGruyer Brill.

Loftsdóttir, K. (2024). Coloniality and Europe at the margins. In R. Andreassen, C. Lundström, S. Keskinen, & S. A. Tate, *The Routledge international handbook of new critical race and whiteness studies* (pp. 395-405). Routledge.



What does Marxism have to do with sociolinguistics?

Participants:

- Dr Christian W. Chun, University of Massachusetts Boston, UNITED STATES
- Prof Ana Deumert, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
- Mr Nkululeko Mabandla, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Alex Luke, University of Sydney, AUSTRALIA
- Dr Alberto Bruzos, Princeton University, UNITED STATES

In order to understand the social contexts of language practices, critical researchers in sociolinguistics have drawn upon a wide range of social theories in recent years, such as poststructuralism, posthumanism, and new materialism. However, one critical tradition that has received scant attention in sociolinguistics is Marxism in all its forms and variations. Even some critical scholars have dismissed Marxism as modernist, patronising and irrelevant to the global south and former colonial contexts.

This lack of theoretical interest in Marxism stands in contrast to the broader Marxist revival in the social sciences since the beginning of the century, as well as contemporary social and class struggles that are continuing throughout the world. Indeed, at this point in time, capitalism has unleashed its violent monstrosity yet again, destroying the lives of many people and the planet. Thus, we ask at this particular juncture: What can the Marxist traditions offer sociolinguistics in a pluriversal world? What forms of consonance and dissonance emerge from using Marxism to understand the social context of language use? In this colloquium, an international group of sociolinguists will reflect on their routes into Marxism and explore how Marxist theories can inform future work in sociolinguistics.

Going against your classed interests in a capitalist society?

Dr Christian W. Chun, University of Massachusetts Boston, UNITED STATES

Psychological wages (Du Bois, 1935) of whiteness have been cementing loyalties of white working-class people (not all) to the 1%, elevating them above their classed positionalities. Many Marxist academics have focused only on class, ignoring what Marx himself argued, "labor cannot emancipate itself in a white skin where in a black skin it is branded". But it is not only white people but also people of 'color' who chase whiteness; some Korean immigrants back in the 1990s who were racist against the Black communities in Los Angeles, and the Asian Americans who support Trump even though he precipitated the rise of anti-Asian hate crimes during the pandemic by calling it "the Chinese virus ". So how can Marxists



engage in actual praxis through social and discourse deixis to permanently dismantle whiteness in co-constructing racial and gender unity among the 99% so we can finally abolish capitalism for a real democracy?

Towards a sociolinguistics of dispossession

Prof Ana Deumert and Mr Nkululeko Mabandla, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Dispossession and primitive accumulation are core concepts in Marxist thought and are integral to Karl Marx's argument in *Das Kapital/Capital*. In this paper we will explore these two concepts from a sociolinguistic perspective, drawing on the complex dynamics of settler-colonialism in South Africa as a case study. Focusing on the intersection of land and language, we will show that even though these two concepts were introduced to explain the economic changes that are associated with capitalism, they also allow us to understand and theorize sociolinguistic histories in a settler-colony that was built on racial slavery and various forms of forced labour (see also Davis and Smalls 2021). Our argument is based on an understanding of dispossession as linked to various forms of epistemic violence; forms of violence that seek to destroy the inherent pluriversality of the world and re-create new forms of dispossession in the very practice of research.

The subsumption of language and semiosis

Dr Alex Luke, University of Sydney, AUSTRALIA

While there have been persistent calls and attempts to bring the sociolinguistics and political economy together, many of these can still treat language use as to some extent epiphenomenal to economic activity. However, Marxist political economy provides a number of abstract categories that can better specify the important role of language and semiosis in value formation and circulation. One such idea is that of the formal and real subsumption of labour, which illustrate how labour is incorporated into and changed by the capitalist valorisation process. This presentation will examine the formal and real subsumption of language and semiosis, and use examples from the use of language by LLMs, and the technologisation of discourse in organisations, to explore how the subsumption of language operates in different conditions and contexts to secure surplus value.

Liberty against the linguistic law

Dr Alberto Bruzos, Princeton University, UNITED STATES

Caló is a hybrid language variety associated with Pachucos, a subculture that emerged in the 1930s among young Mexicans in the southwestern United States. It has been proposed that Pachuco Caló is genetically related to caló gitano, the language of Iberian Gypsies (Barker 1969; García 2009). One of the aims of this presentation is to challenge that theory. Drawing on a Marxist perspective that views language as a historically



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situated social practice shaped by ideological interests, I argue that the connection between the two is better explained by the shared social position of their speakers. Through examples from works published in the early 20th century that examine caló and, more broadly, the language of “criminals” and “vagrants,” I will show how the more flexible and free linguistic practices of those deemed economically unproductive were stigmatized and devalued in contrast to the abstract, standardized language required by capitalism and liberal democracy.



Dialogues and collaborations between sociolinguists and activists: Politics and epistemes of purposeful research

Participants:

- Dr Daniel N. Silva, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, BRAZIL
- Dr Joana Plaza Pinto, Universidade Federal de Goiás, BRAZIL

This colloquium gathers sociolinguists engaged in collaborative and activist research to reflect on the politics of purposeful inquiry. Following Lassiter's (2005) call for explicit collaboration throughout the ethnographic process—from project design to writing—the panel reflects on both the potential and pitfalls of such work, including asymmetries of power, authorship, and recognition. Gandulfo and Unamuno (2020) propose a model of sociolinguistic collaboration grounded in shared decision-making and coauthorship, where writing itself becomes a site of epistemic negotiation and reflexivity. Briones (2020) expands this discussion by defining collaboration as *horizontalidad*—a horizon to be constantly pursued rather than a state achieved—drawing on Mapuche conceptions of *pu xawvn* (“letting the word walk”) to imagine ethnography as co-theorization within accountable relations. Similarly, Borba's (2022) “allied linguistics” calls for researchers to align with communities already engaged in struggles for justice, amplifying grassroots epistemologies without eclipsing the voice and authorship of field collaborators. Bringing these perspectives into dialogue, the colloquium assembles empirical studies on transnational migration, financial crises, collective mourning, and community activism in peripheries. Together, these works explore how collaborative sociolinguistic inquiry can advance semiotic justice—the right to produce, circulate, and be recognized in public discourse—while reimagining the ethical and political purposes of research itself.

Biographical Workshops in Feminist Research Methodology

Dr Joana Plaza Pinto, Universidade Federal de Goiás, CNPq, BRAZIL

In this paper, I aim to offer a situated perspective on the methodological discussions built during my last decade of ethnographic research on national and transnational university migration to Brazil. My co-researchers and I have developed feminist linguistic research practices alongside well-known ethnographic practices. I discuss these practices in four sections: first, I outline contradictory aspects of feminist action and research in colonial territories. Next, I present why and how we conducted feminist biographical workshops in our ethnographic research and thereby I discuss the principles that sustain them: horizontality, reflexivity, affectivity, singularity, and political historicity of experience. I then summarize



participants' assessments and engagement as evidence of the impact of workshops on affective conditions of linguistic hospitality, contestation of colonial, racist, and sexist metadiscourses, and political connections among students. I conclude with some horizons and perspectives for our research amidst the struggle for language as part of anticolonial feminism's critical history.

Mediating Allyship: Reverse Ethnography and the Politics of Interpreting the Periphery

Daniel N. Silva, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, CNPq, BRAZIL

This paper examines the mediation of sociolinguistic knowledge about peripheries, drawing on long-term collaborative work with favela activists in Brazil. Building on Peircean semiotics, I explore how ideologies mediate our access to social reality. Through the notion of reverse ethnography (Silva 2025), I discuss how activists critique extractivist research models and how such critiques lead us to reposition the researcher as an allied linguist (Borba 2022) working within locally grounded epistemologies. As a scholar situated in the periphery of global academia, I reflect on disputes over the legitimacy of the communicative practices I describe—sometimes dismissed in central academic circles as “indeterminate” or “nonexistent”—and, more problematically, on claims that my interlocutors are “not the real poor,” but rather actors who have gained visibility and influence. Further, critiques of my alignment with grassroots activist ideologies—rather than with the legitimized knowledge of the “center”—reveal how epistemic authority remains unevenly distributed.



Southern perspectives and experiences of multilingual education: ideologies, policies and innovating with teachers

Participants:

- Prof Carolyn McKinney, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Xolisa Guzula & Dr Soraya Abdulatief, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA & Dr Simthembile Xeketwana, Stellenbosch University, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Monica Hendricks, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA & Dr Soraya Abdulatief, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA & Dr Simthembile Xeketwana, Stellenbosch University, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Robyn Tyler, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Brian Ramadiro, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA

Multilingualism in education and linguistically shaped inequalities are consonant areas of interest to sociolinguists in both the Global South and the Global North but these constitute very different contexts. Multilingualism in the Global South is indigenous and centuries-old. Furthermore, the Southern experience of colonialism and ongoing coloniality have shaped language ideologies which continue to value colonial languages as means to social and economic advancement and fuel resistance to the use of African languages in education. Countering this is a history of research and advocacy for the use of African languages in education, which has leveraged the cracks in the edifice of coloniality. In 2025, in a major policy shift, the National Department of Education introduced bilingual education in primary schools. It is this changing Southern landscape that frames the papers presented in this colloquium.

The five papers present findings from three bilingual intervention projects: a pre-service teacher education programme, an in-service teacher education project, and a primary science project. These provide examples of leveraging the ‘cracks’ and through research evidence, advancing theory and practice.

These papers and others from the Global South can reach points of both consonance and contrast with Northern experiences and the theorising of multilingualism in education.



Bilingual Pedagogies in Initial Teacher Education

Dr Brian Ramadiro, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA

This paper examines the University of Fort Hare’s bilingual Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programme, focusing on the isiXhosa–English stream as a case of bilingual teacher education in a Southern African context. It addresses the global lack of research and practical guidance on preparing teachers for bi- and multilingual classrooms, particularly where a dominant language such as English is paired with a marginalised African language. Drawing on teaching experience between 2018 and 2024, the chapter analyses how lectures, course materials, assessments, and school-based teaching activities accommodated and valorised linguistic diversity among student teachers — most of whom were isiXhosa–English bilinguals, alongside smaller groups of Sesotho-, isiZulu-, and siSwati-English speakers. Using data from learning guides, observations, and assessments, the analysis engages both unitary and multilingual perspectives on bilingualism to interrogate the language ideologies underpinning pedagogical practices and explores how bilingual educators are prepared to use their languages as media of learning and teaching.

Crossing the frontier from oral to written translanguaging for epistemic access in a Natural Science classroom

Dr Xolisa Guzula, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Soraya Abdulatief, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Language ideologies in South Africa originating in the colonial and apartheid eras resulted in language in education policies that normalised English as the language of education. While many teachers have subverted these policies by engaging with learners bilingually in oral interactions, writing and materials have remained in English.

This paper demonstrates how the anglonormativity (McKinney 2017) of science teaching materials, and oral and written languaging practices was disrupted by a Sesotho dominant multilingual science teacher in an isiXhosa dominant classroom; and how with mentoring support, and the provision of multilingual dictionary resources, this teacher’s bi-multilingual languaging skills were legitimized and mobilised systematically and purposefully to develop learners’ understanding and active engagement in knowledge construction. The teacher’s and learners’ oral translanguaging were extended to written form. As a result, classroom interaction shifted from being teacher-led to being more learner-centred and bilingual, providing greater opportunities for epistemic access and identity affirmation.



Balancing Act: Examining Translanguaging and bi/multilingual practices in the English First Additional (EFAL) classroom

Dr Monica Hendricks, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Soraya Abdulatief, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Simthembile Xeketwana, Stellenbosch University, SOUTH AFRICA

Research (Hendricks and Xeketwana, 2024) highlights how teachers' pedagogical strategies that engage learners' bi/multilingual repertoires emphasize the role of translanguaging and biliteracy in learning. While translanguaging is acknowledged as a productive pedagogic strategy, Probyn (2015) notes that "there is little training that guides teachers towards a coherent systematic approach to using both languages in the classroom" (220). Drawing on data from the L4L project, we build on previous work to explore ways of extending translanguaging and bi/multilingual practices in English First Additional Language (EFAL) classrooms. We consider parameters for creating bilingual and multilingual pedagogies that reflect South Africa's diverse linguistic landscapes. We argue for working within the EFAL curriculum while promoting translanguaging and bi/multilingual practices. Following Tejeda, Espinoza, and Gutierrez (2003), we maintain that decolonising pedagogies must also prepare students for academic success. We focus on bilingualism and writing (codemeshing) and bilingual writers' problem-solving strategies.

Reimagining school language policy through a bilingual science intervention

Dr Robyn Tyler - University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

Gilbert Dolo - University of Cape Town, Mxolisi Mbobo - Intshayelelo Primary School, Nosimo Ndzotyana - Intshayelelo Primary School, Suanne Rampou - Western Cape Education Department

This paper reports on a longitudinal bilingual science intervention project at Intshayelelo Primary School in Cape Town from 2022 to 2025. The intervention involved the use of a bilingual isiXhosa/English science textbook called 'iSayensi Yethu' in Grade 4 with 176 participating children and three science teachers. The five practitioners forming the project implementation team reflect on the bilingual materials, bilingual pedagogy and bilingual assessment which constituted the core of the project, as well as our roles in the surrounding stakeholder engagements. Our aim is to show in detail the mechanisms and levers of language policy shift towards non-dominant languages from the 'side' and 'below' (Kosonen & Benson, 2021). We share clear evidence of the benefits of a bilingual approach to learning at the school. Furthermore, we emphasise that a crucial aspect of policy change is engaging parents, learners, staff members and departmental officials in the change process.



‘Free to learn:’ Learners’ voices in the struggle for linguistic social justice in South African classrooms

Margie Probyn, University of the Western Cape

The introduction of bilingual education for primary learners from 2025 has marked a dramatic shift both linguistically and politically. Previously language policies rooted in coloniality required learners to switch from learning through their home language to learning through English in Grade 4. This paper documents the opinions and experiences of learners over three decades, on the challenges of learning through an unfamiliar colonial language, challenges that became normalized along with limited expectations of academic success. This is contrasted with learners’ responses to the introduction of translanguaging pedagogies in a recent exploratory intervention that sought to engage with learners’ home languages as valued resources for learning while also providing access to English. The data presented is based on questionnaires, focus group discussions and classroom observations. It reveals learners as thoughtful and perceptive commentators and agents of change. It also reveals the injustice of decades of lost opportunities to learn.



Counterspaces in Pluriversal Contexts: Language, Power, and Social Negotiation Large Colloquium

Participants:

- Dr Jackie Jia Lou, University of London, UNITED KINGDOM
- Dr Dariush Izadi, Western Sydney University, AUSTRALIA
- Dr Anne Ambler Schluter, Sopuruchi Christian Aboh, and John Ganaah, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, HONG KONG
- Dr Daniel N. Silva, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, BRAZIL
- Prof Ana Deumert, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Foregrounding the clandestine, contested, and generative dimensions of social life, this colloquium proposes counterspace as a critical lens for examining dissonance through marginalised individuals' navigation of and resistance to social hierarchies within public and semi-public spaces. Its roots lie in Foucault's (1978) notion of counter-conduct, which highlights actors' subtle or overt practices resisting and reconfiguring normative regimes. It also draws on Lefebvre's (1991) concept of spaces of representation, which eschews visions of space as static or neutral and underlines, instead, actors' potential to transform it creatively. Subsequent work emphasizes the relational and social dimensions (Cf. Massey, 1994; Keating, 2015), which contribute to an understanding of these transformative practices as forms of spatial agency (Kwok, 2024). Accordingly, space-making activities potentially reposition individuals within existing power structures.

Scollon's (2001) site of engagement brings together dynamic, multimodal interactions among actors, discourses, and material contexts, demonstrating how meanings, norms, and social positions are co-constructed. Complementing this perspective, a sociolinguistics of the spectre (Deumert, 2022) attends to semi-public arenas haunted by suppressed or marginalised voices, revealing temporal and relational layers of social life. This colloquium adopts this framing to envision a niche ethnic market, migrant football match, independent café, documentary film workshop, and diaspora Facebook page as sites where everyday language practices, narratives of origin, and shared cultural repertoires are recontextualised to produce moments of symbolic dissonance with dominant discourses.



The spatial re-enregisterment of an urban dialect in Shanghai

Dr Jackie Jia Lou, University of London, UNITED KINGDOM

This paper examines the resurgence of Shanghainese, an endangered variety of the Chinese Wu language family, in the urban linguistic landscape of Shanghai. Shanghainese rose to prominence in the mid-nineteenth century when the city became a Treaty Port after the Opium War and has since become a symbol of Shanghainese identity and culture. However, this prominent dialect has been in sharp decline since the mid-1990s, leading many to speculate its imminent demise. While Shanghainese is only written in literary contexts, its presence has become more visible in the linguistic landscape of the city in recent years, especially in spaces of consumption. Drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews in an independent café, this paper analyses the resemiotisation of this urban vernacular in the designs of shop signs and interior spaces and discusses how such recontextualisation serves as a kind of spatial re-enregisterment, infusing the dialect with new cosmopolitan affect.

Material acts of belonging: Language, agency, and everyday counterspaces

Dr Dariush Izadi, Western Sydney University

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

This paper examines how everyday commercial sites such as migrant corner shops and local markets function as counterspaces where linguistic and material practices intersect to negotiate belonging and resistance. Drawing on linguistic ethnography in Sydney, it explores how multilingual signage, embodied routines, and object-mediated exchanges reconfigure social hierarchies and produce moments of symbolic dissonance with dominant discourses. These spaces, while seemingly mundane, become arenas where marginalised actors transform the conditions of visibility and participation through creative semiotic and material practices. By engaging with Foucault's notion of counter-conduct and Scollon's site of engagement, the study traces how spatial and discursive practices collaboratively generate micro-level acts of agency and innovation. The analysis contributes to theorising counterspace in sociolinguistics, demonstrating how material artefacts, linguistic repertoires, and embodied actions co-produce sites of negotiation that reveal the relational and generative dimensions of power in everyday life.



“We go give una wotowoto [merciless thrashing]”: Trash talk and multimodal stance-taking in the counterspace of a Hong Kong-based diaspora football rivalry

Dr Anne Ambler Schluter, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, HONG KONG

Sopuruchi Christian Aboh, and John Ganaah, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Informal, migrant-led sports competitions serve as counterspaces where participants build social networks and resilience in the face of structural exclusion (Aquino et al., forthcoming). Through collective navigation of barriers and intercultural interactions, teammates develop “belonging-in-interaction” (Simpson & Bradley, 2024). Combining frameworks of social resilience (Hall & Lamont, 2013), social anchoring (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2017), and place-based social capital (Blokland, 2017), this paper examines observation and interview data from football matches between Hong Kong’s Nigerian and Ghanaian diaspora football teams. Here, bodies and emotions come together with national symbols, drums, cheers, and trash talk to create a space in which dominant Hong Kong-centric structures dictate little influence over site-specific semiotics. Multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & Bezemer, 2023) of the integrated communicative functions of bodies, language, and materiality yields findings that draw a sharp contrast between participants’ agentive, defiant on-field stances vs. their docile, off-field everyday conduct as migrants who possess little power.

From deixis to counterspace: Reimagining place and security in a Rio de Janeiro favela

Dr Daniel N. Silva, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, BRAZIL

Sociolinguistic research on deixis has shown how the here-and-now of enunciation can project beyond its immediate context, anchoring broader embodied, political, and affective formations. This paper extends the notion of the deictic field (Hanks 2005) to explore counterspace—a concept this symposium adopts to examine how marginalized actors reconfigure the coordinates of belonging and insurgence. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Faveladoc, a grassroots filmmaking workshop in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, I analyze how participants collectively responded to a nearby shootout during class. Through listening practices, distributed embodiment, and humorous metapragmatics, they re-scaled the deictic field of insecurity into one of mutual care. What emerged was what one participant called a pedagogy of chaos: a counterspace where the experience of violence became a ground for creativity and resilience. The analysis situates this deictic remapping within wider struggles against (in)securitization and racialized spatial governance in the Global South.



Ontologies of language

Participants

- Mr Justin Brown, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
- Mrs Tlalane Lekhanya-Tshikare, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
- Mx Pule kaJanolintji, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

This panel looks at the notion of language ontologies with regard to some sociolinguistic research currently being undertaken in South Africa. Ontology is the study of what exists and is part of metaphysics – the branch of philosophy that examines reality. The concept of ontology has been brought to bear on language in recent years (Hauck 2023, Demuro & Gurney 2021 & 2025). An important aspect of this work has been the insistence that ontology of language is not just another approach to thinking about language. Speaking about language ontologies, Demuro and Gurney (2012: 2) say the following,

[We] move away from labelling these as ‘perspectives’ on Language, which would assume, from the onset, that there is an independent, extant, and definable entity called Language about which competing perspectives have been mobilised.

In this panel we explore some of the implications of language ontologies using data from our ongoing research. We explore how ontologies can be grasped in terms of language itself – its existence and materiality – as well as in terms of the various realities that semiotic systems can reveal.

If languages do not exist, why do we feel so strongly about them?

Mr Justin Brown, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Scholars such as Pennycook and Makoni (2007) have argued that languages have no independent ontological existence. To argue that languages have no ontological existence also does not preclude the possibility that a named language can be deeply connected to identity. How can something that doesn't exist make us feel such strong emotions? Languages, like all systems of meaning-making are always material and embodied, and one way of grappling with the ontological status of languages is to examine aspects of the materiality of language, such as sounds and the effects of these on speakers. In this paper, I focus on the significance language activists working with Khoekhoegowab attach to certain sounds in Khoekhoegowab. I argue that the emphasis on the experience of sounds is evidence of a heightened awareness of language materiality and that this in turn can help shed new light on the notion of language ontologies. Shankar and Cavanaugh (2017: 3) argue that “language materiality offers a different ontology”, one which can place notions such as affect, sound and sentiment at the centre of our linguistic scholarship.



Towards a Sociolinguistics of Ho Bothofatsa

Mrs Tlalane Lehanya-Tshikare, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Drawing on Botho/Ubuntu philosophy as “the wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology” (Ramose, 1999:49) and an undeniable invitation for cosmic resonance, I propose Ho Bothofatsa as a framework for sociolinguistic analysis that reflects pan-epistemic and trans-signification approaches to ways-of-being, knowing, believing and meaning-making. In this sense, Bothofatso is a – necessarily imperfect – remembering of our ancients’ ways of being and their wisdom before violent interruption by colonialism-capitalism. To make my point, I turn to the spirit (moya) which is conceived as the transcendental essence of life that is not restricted to human beings. It is a concept that allows us to disrupt – from an Indigenous perspective – the anthropocentrism that, all too, frequently still shapes work in sociolinguistics. Grounded in a long-term ethnography (and auto-ethnography) of Basotho ways-of-being, I suggest that working from within different ontologies of being and signification allows us to reimagine the work we do as sociolinguists.

A Morphosemantic Argument for *Isintu* as a Practice of Discursive Ontology

Mx Pule kaJanolintji, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

If “isintu” can be defined as a “Manner of Doing” coherent in an ontology endogenous to Southern Africa (Moyo 2021), what is the history of this concept embedded in the term? I offer here an account of the historical semantics of *-ntu which would explain a cross-linguistic peculiarity about it – that it has the broadest semantics of any root, deferring to that of the “noun class” prefixal system. For example, we note the luVenda reflex series: *muthu* (cl. 1) [PERSON], *tshithu* (cl. 6) [THING], *fhathu* (cl. 16) [PLACE]. Van De Velde (2019:244) has also pointed out “a semantic hierarchy of agreement patterns for entities and locations respectively” among such series, and we could see this constituting an implicit ontological order.

Informed with such ontological structure, I find in Hyman (2018:226) a note from Williamson wherein she offers support for Stewart’s earlier opinion that the form of the class 9 prefix was archaically a nasalised vowel, which logically results in a number of potential reflexes ($\text{ŋ} \sim \text{ɲ} \sim \text{n} \sim \emptyset$), and I hypothesise that the root *-ntu presents as a fossilised class 9/10 prefix, with a Potential verbal root *-tá “name”.

Taking this as the semantic area, I build on the “prototype theory” of noun class semantics from the experimental study of Kari-Anne Selvik (2001), encountered after I independently devised a similar experiment regarding speaker intuitions about class prefixes. I depart from her findings to contend that so-called “noun classes” are in fact an



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aggregate grammatical apparatus of paradigmatic connotation, functioning as a set of phenomenological lenses restricting the denotation. The root *-ntu, with its potential primordial substructure, and its deferral to the prefixal semantics, pattern the entire ontology as discursive – a relational Becoming rather than stative Being, representing an implicit philosophy latent in intellectual cultures the grammar represents.



Researching ‘Otherwise’: Developing Approaches for a Sociolinguistics of Potentiality

Panelists:

- Dr Jackie Lou, Birkbeck, University of London, UNITED KINGDOM
- Ms Jade Engel & Prof Amiena Peck, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA
- Dr Natalia Volvach, University of Gothenburg, SWEDEN
- Dr Sean P. Smith, Tilburg University, NETHERLANDS

Recent scholarship develops a sociolinguistics of potentiality, where spaces of ‘otherwise’, or alternative social worlds, contrast the dominant narratives of linear and universal modernity (Kerfoot & Stroud, 2024). Alternative ways of seeing and knowing have been formulated within Sociolinguistics of the South, including the concept of Linguistic Citizenship, but also by following feminist scholarship that foregrounds ethics of care as well as sensory ways of knowing and doing research. While these frameworks address established power structures and ethical accountability in research, approaches that include ways of researching ‘otherwise’ have also been critiqued. In this colloquium, we take these frictions as an invitation to discuss the methods of researching ‘otherwise’. For this, we consider the role of emotion, creativity, multisensory embodiment, and attunement in our respective research sites across the global South and North. While these directions might be described as ‘out of line’ (Ahmed, 2006, p. 136) in sociolinguistics, we maintain that beyond addressing the field’s ongoing concern with language and power, developing ‘practices of otherwise’ emphasizes the place and ethical obligations of the researcher in knowledge-making (Volvach & Kerfoot, *etc.*). Noticing, sensing, and attuning into the creative happenings ultimately means ‘nurturing’ (Moriarty, 2025) the potential worlds and challenging normative structures and ways of knowing.

Visualising Voids: Creativity as ‘Space of Otherwise’

Dr Jackie Lou, Birkbeck, University of London, UNITED KINGDOM

This paper explores creativity as a ‘space of otherwise’ (Kerfoot & Stroud 2024) by reflecting on a personal, creative project exploring memory and loss in the aftermath of Covid-19. Approaching the infamous PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing booth as an iconic fixture of Covid-19 in China, I experimented with their redaction from and reinsertion into the semiotic landscapes of Shanghai as visual metaphors for collective memory and its erasure in a pop-up installation. Drawing on nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon 2004) as the conceptual framework, I examine my own trajectories, experiences, and identities which had shaped this non-academic project. During this detour, I found not only a space for healing and resilience but also an alternative approach to understanding voids and absences in the semiotic landscape (Deumert 2022; Volvach 2024).



Vulnerable motherhood: investigating agency and voids of refugee mothers in South Africa

Ms Jade Engel & Prof Amiena Peck, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

Childbirth is one of the greatest and most precarious experiences women undergo due to invasive procedures, marked body exposure and incredible pain. For refugee mothers, the experience of birthing their child arrives with spatial, discursive and emotive challenges with their bodies becoming sites of surveillance, contestation and rejection. To explore their experiences in South African hospitals and clinics, we draw on Linguistic Citizenship to investigate agency and voice as well as voids and absences when interacting with South African nurses. This paper investigates the refugee mother's bodies as they are discursively constructed and constrained in healthcare facilities. Additionally, we operationalize absences and voids to elucidate the lack of Linguistic Citizenship amongst refugee mothers at their most vulnerable. Ethics around researcher's access and positionality during walking methodologies and the relegation of interviews in favour of 'in-between' conversations and personal drawings are discussed as emergent methodologies in a pluriversal frame.

Knowledges in the shadows: Sensing the In/visible through an ethnography of ghosts

Dr Natalia Volvach, University of Gothenburg, SWEDEN

As sociolinguists, we seldom consider the entire sensorium as a way towards knowing. We often rely on vision or hearing as modes of meaning-making. In this talk, building on my fieldwork in Qırım-Crimea after its occupation by Russia, I turn to the sensing body and argue that, especially in contexts touched by violence, attention to the senses often unveils in/visible traces that dispossession inflicts. I discuss how an approach of a ghost ethnography allows one to study phenomena in the landscape that haunt. Rather than treating them as 'data' isolated from the viewer, I see them as entangled with the researcher who senses and becomes affected. By taking a relational perspective, I illuminate how the body as a sensing agent can facilitate different ways of knowing in contexts where violence and its aftermaths enact absences, thus shedding light on knowledges that otherwise remain in the shadows.

Towards a sociolinguistics of attention: from semiotic ideology to attunement in spaces of otherwise

Dr Sean P. Smith, Tilburg University, NETHERLANDS

The concept of an 'otherwise' underscores that space can be experienced multiply, yet modernity enshrines belief in a singular, universal space. This paper analyzes how discourse constructs 'modern' space and considers sociolinguistic approaches to



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destabilizing modernity's universality. Through an analysis of interviews together with digital data from Instagram and Google Maps at a tourism site in the Sultanate of Oman, space is shown to be interpreted through a semiotic ideology, or a discourse of what signs mean and how they were created (Keane, 2018). Yet ideology further shapes what signs in space are identified, as attention brings one interpretation of space into focus while rendering others invisible (Ahmed, 2006). A sociolinguistics of attention is proposed as a framework for challenging 'modern' space, grounded in attunement to signs that modernity does not recognize as legible: e.g., counter-hegemonic histories, or more-than-human lifeways and processes. In revealing such 'spaces of otherwise', this case further outlines a scope for ethically incorporating 'data' involving participants who may conceive space differently.

Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke University Press.

Deumert, A. (2022). The sound of absent-presence: Towards formulating a sociolinguistics of the spectre. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 45(2), 135-153.

Kerfoot, C. & Stroud, C. (2024). Towards a sociolinguistics of potentiality: Linguistic citizenship, quasi-events, and contingent becomings in spaces of otherwise. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 287, 1-22.

Moriarty, M. (2025). 'Volume as Vulnerability: Semiotic Landscapes of Collapse and Transformation'. *Linguistic Landscape* 16. University of Duisburg-Essen.

Volvach, N. (2024). Shouting absences: Disentangling the ghosts of Ukraine in occupied Crimea. *Language in Society*, 53(3), 523-548.

Volvach, N. & Kerfoot, C. (forthcoming). *A sociolinguistics of the spectre: Language, space and memory*. Bloomsbury.



Dehumanization and genocide in Palestine: Do we need a more human(e) sociolinguistics?

Participants:

- Dr Lara Krause-Alzaidi, Leipzig University, GERMANY
- Prof Kristina Hultgren, The Open University, UNITED KINGDOM
& Jaspal Naveel Singh The Open University, UNITED KINGDOM
- Dr Julia Molinari, The Open University, UNITED KINGDOM

This colloquium takes its cue from El-Kurd's (2025) discussion of Palestinian dehumanization within the historical trajectory of Zionist settler colonialism. The contributions mobilize sociolinguistic concepts and theories to explore how such dehumanization occurs in the context of the genocide in Gaza, and also how it is resisted, grieved and counteracted. Papers include empirical approaches to making dehumanization visible with concepts like iconization, and to analyzing institutional silencing of Palestine activism. Others explore grief and resistance to genocide in African poetry on Palestine. The panel also conjures counterforces to dehumanization from within sociolinguistics, reflecting on what makes academic writing human(e) during a genocide. It challenges academic writing practices by insisting that they be decolonized (Said 2004, Fúnes-Flores 2024, Tbakhi 2023). This would require academics to instigate a writing Intifida by shaking off, for example, enduring monolingual and impersonal writing practices (Hultgren and Molinari 2022; Canagarajah 2022) that continue to convergence to anglophone positivist linguistic norms. Mindful of the very productive posthumanist turn (Pennycook 2018) and animal turn (Cornips 2025) in recent sociolinguistic research, in this colloquium we ask: If sociolinguistics wants to become response-able (Haraway 2016) towards genocide, do we need to recenter the human and the humane to counter dehumanization?

“I kill two khamas”: Material-discursive iconization and the justification of genocide

Dr Lara Krause-Alzaidi, Leipzig University, Germany

Taylor O. Gray, Penn State, UNITED STATES

We analyze phonological, semantic, and ideological dynamics around the word Hamas that we observe after October 7th 2023. Exploring these processes through an assemblage of video, written, and image data from online blogs, social media and YouTube, we show how, through a process of iconization facilitated by a phonological slippage between the Arabic and Hebrew pronunciation of Hamas, the Arabic semantic content of Hamas is reworked and wrongly attributed the Hebrew meaning ‘violence’. This



process participates in the material-discursive production of Palestinians as inherently violent, which helps justify Israel's genocide in Gaza. Combining sociolinguistics, biblical studies, and new materialism, we argue that said iconization a) works in part by enrolling the Hebrew Bible as what we call an iconization device that gives weight to the misdefinition of Hamas as "violence," and b) is not merely ideological or representational but material-discursive, and therefore directly implicated in the genocide.

Universities' silencing of Palestine activism

**Prof Kristina Hultgren, The Open University, UNITED KINGDOM
& Jaspal Naveel Singh The Open University, UNITED KINGDOM**

To justify profiting off the dehumanization of Palestinians, institutions in the global north deploy several sociolinguistic silencing strategies (Jaworski 1993, Pervez 2025) that suppress their members' expressions of solidarity and calls for decolonization. Drawing on ethnographic and questionnaire data collected during the last two years of the genocide in Gaza, we show three interrelated sociolinguistic strategies deployed by British universities to silence students and employees who speak up against their institutions' complicity in the genocide and Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories.

1. *Weaponization*: inverting EDI policies to suppress minoritized voices,
2. *Interception*: shutting down communication channels,
3. *(In-)securitization*: intimidation, surveillance, physical force.

Our critical analysis of these silencing strategies also demonstrates how scholars/activists over time developed human(e) counter-strategies that recentre the human experience, affect, and sense of shared humanity on this planet.

What makes academic writing human(e): a sociolinguistic, political, and decolonial call to action

Dr Julia Molinari, The Open University, UNITED KINGDOM

English academic writing – its texts, practices, purposes, and writers - has evolved to value positivist ideals (Judd, 2003). These are exemplified by terms commonly used to describe it, such as 'formal', 'objective', 'neutral', 'balanced', 'transparent', and 'linear'. Cumulatively, these ideals combine to create an imaginary of academic discourse that is 'detached' and authorless, making it non-human and arguably inhumane. Known as the 'view from nowhere', detached discourse is exemplified by the over-determination of passive syntax; the avoidance of emotive and creative language; and increasing standardisation, compounded by Large Language Models (LLMs) trained on archives that perpetuate the myth that because of its alleged neutrality, English academic discourse affords an unmediated view of the world (Bouchard, 2024). My talk interrogates the role and responsibility of academic writing in times of human crisis (Fúnez-Flores, 2024; Ziadah, 2025). Specifically, I show that 'impartiality' undermines academia's mission to further knowledge, truth, and human flourishing.



A Sociolinguistics of the Spectre: Language, Space and Memory

Participants:

- Dr Natalia Volvach, Stockholm University, SWEDEN
- Dr Lara-Stephanie Krause-Alzaidi, University of Leipzig, GERMANY
- Dr Andreas Nuottaniemi, Stockholm University, SWEDEN

This colloquium addresses the challenges of studying the violence with which resurgent wars and enduring colonial practices confront us. It is inspired by Derrida's ([1994]2006) notion of absent-presences, understood as spectres that haunt, articulate the voices that history has tried to repress, and provoke dissonance in existing narrative orders and paradigms. We seek to provoke a conversation on the potential of the spectral as a "future forming orientation" (Gergen 2014) for sociolinguistics. In attending to the absent presences that violence produces, we consider the capacities, risks, and limitations of the spectre in opening the way to new questions, practices, and ethico-political deliberations.

To do justice to the multi-dimensional nature of the spectral, this colloquium draws inspiration from human geography, memory studies and anthropology. Studies from Spain, Zanzibar, the UK and Sweden illuminate the fragile presences of the past in shadows, traces of sound or script, fleeting encounters, and buried histories. Together, they problematize what counts as "data", question the role of the researcher, and advance methodologies that foreground embodied, affective, and more-than-human ways of knowing. While forging spectral directions in sociolinguistics, this colloquium also invites us to find a voice from which to speak and act against erasure.

Ghosts at the crossroads: Linking the Southern with the Spectral turn in sociolinguistics through an interdisciplinary conversation

Dr Lara-Stephanie Krause-Alzaidi, University of Leipzig, Germany

This conversation – a decolonial, collective format allowing for openness to alternative onto-epistemologies – is an exchange between the Southern turn and the Spectral turn in sociolinguistics. The former pushes for a counter-hegemonic sociolinguistics centring Southern onto-epistemologies, helping to "interrupt our compliance, connivance and complicity with the apparent universality or neutrality of our theories of language." (Menezes de Souza 2022: xvii). The Spectral turn unsettles present-focused sociolinguistics, engaging absent presences. For us, ghosts link these turns: In Indigenous, Southern ontologies real ghosts are often part of everyday life. But, in the Spectral turn, sociolinguists use ghosts



as metaphors, or remain agnostic regarding their existence. We articulate these different senses of ghosts through questions like: Does the Spectral fit with the Southern turn in sociolinguistics? What challenges do real and metaphorical ghosts bring to sociolinguistics? Might Southern ghosts push us to question metaphorization and move towards analytical repertoires for a Southern, Spectral sociolinguistics?

The Ghost in the Green Machine: On the Fetishisation of Labour and Language in the Green Transition

Dr Andreas Nuottaniemi, Stockholm University, SWEDEN

This presentation addresses the ghostly logic of capitalist abstraction in the green transition, focusing on language and space in the battery manufacturer Northvolt's workplace-residence regime in Skellefteå, Sweden. Ethnographic data from barrack villages and language classrooms show how workers' bodies are disciplined and silenced, even as corporate discourse celebrates creativity and purpose. Applying Marx's concept of fetishism, the study demonstrates how linguistic practices are commodified, reducing language learning to gamified fragments while ignoring its role in social reproduction. The barracks function as semiotic landscapes of placelessness, indexing temporariness and control. By tracing these spectral dynamics, the paper argues for a sociolinguistics that re-centres embodied labour and communicative practices in debates on sustainability and justice.



Performance and Perception of the Tagamo3 accent: Sociolinguistic perspectives on Dialect, Identity, and Translanguaging in Urban Egypt

Ms Jannah Abdelaziz, American University in Cairo, EGYPT

In recent years, Egyptian social media platforms have witnessed the emergence of what is popularly referred to as the Tagamo3 accent (TA), a speech style associated with elite urban identities, international schooling, and affluent lifestyles. While the label Tagamo3 invokes a specific geographic area in New Cairo, the accent itself extends far beyond this location, functioning instead as a socially enregistered style linked to class, education, and access to global cultural capital. This paper examines how TA is performed, perceived, and ideologically evaluated in digital spaces, and how it comes to index power and inequality in contemporary Egypt.

The study is theoretically grounded in the concepts of enregisterment (Agha, 2003), style and indexicality (Eckert, 2008), language ideology (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994), and performance (Johnstone, 2001). Methodologically, it adopts a qualitative multimodal discourse analytic approach, drawing on naturally occurring TikTok videos in which content creators use TA in lifestyle and fashion-related contexts, alongside public audience commentary. Analytical focus is placed on salient phonological and prosodic features commonly associated with TA, including exaggerated emphatic vowel realizations in English lexical items, stylized consonant articulation, rising intonation patterns, and consistent Arabic–English code-switching. These linguistic cues are examined not as fixed structural features, but as socially meaningful resources mobilized in performance.

Preliminary analysis suggests that TA is widely interpreted as a marker of elite status, cosmopolitanism, and modern femininity, while also attracting critical evaluations framed in terms of inauthenticity, elitism, or social exclusion. These competing perceptions reveal how linguistic styles become sites of ideological struggle, reflecting broader tensions surrounding class mobility, globalization, and linguistic legitimacy. By foregrounding digital performance and public metalinguistic discourse, this paper contributes to sociolinguistic discussions of language, power, and inequality, and highlights the central role of social media in accelerating the enregisterment of emerging urban speech styles.

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Reimagining Multilingualism and Superdiversity - Decolonising Linguistics from a Global South Perspective in Tema, Ghana

Mr Bulukia Abdullah, University of Melbourne, AUSTRALIA

In this presentation I share insights from my Ph.D. project which explores the complex landscape of multilingualism in Ghanaian schools and responds to the urgent call to decolonize linguistics by introducing Global South perspectives. In Ghana, colonial language policies have historically privileged English while sidelining indigenous languages. This has contributed to ongoing inequalities in education and public life. Decolonizing linguistics in this context is critical to valuing local knowledge systems, linguistic practices, and multilingual realities that have been overlooked or misrepresented in linguistic research. The project focuses on two dominant linguistic concepts, “multilingualism” and “superdiversity,” often framed through Eurocentric lenses. Drawing on decolonial scholars such as Makoni, Ndhlovu, and Makalela, this research challenges and reimagines these concepts by grounding them in local experiences. The research involved 5 teachers, 170 students, and 16 parents from two schools in Tema, Ghana. Using a community-based approach and Ubuntu Research Methodology (Ndhlovu and Makalela, 2021), the study employed culturally grounded methods such as storytelling, informal interviews and language portraits (Busch, 2012). Preliminary findings suggest that while teachers and students operate within an English-dominated school environment, they creatively draw on their multilingual repertoires in everyday interactions. Participants also expressed a strong desire to preserve their indigenous languages despite institutional, ideological and societal pressures. These findings challenge dominant narratives that portray multilingualism as a problem, instead revealing its role in shaping identity, belonging, and resilience.

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Unpacking Implicit Attitudes Toward English Varieties in South Africa: The Use of the Implicit Association Test on Young White L1-Afrikaans speakers

Dr Pedro Álvarez-Mosquera, Universidad de Salamanca, SPAIN / North-West University, SOUTH AFRICA

Ian Bekker (North-West University, SOUTH AFRICA)

In South Africa, the historical relationship between the two languages originating from Europe and their white speakers is a complex one. While there is evidence of long-standing antagonism, there is also a history of contact and mixing (Giliomee, 2009). Nonetheless, some individuals and groups continue to perceive the rising status of English as a threat to the vitality and future of Afrikaans, particularly within the sphere of education. This presentation explores the implicit language attitudes of over 90 young, L1-Afrikaans speakers towards Standard South African English and Afrikaans-accented English in a university context. To this aim, a mix-methodological approach was used to investigate the interrelationship between participants' Implicit Association Test (IAT) results towards the two selected accents and contextually relevant socio-demographic and sociolinguistic factors (Campbell-Kibler, 2012). Results show that L1-Afrikaans speakers present a stronger implicit bias towards their in-group accent. In addition, *Gender* and *Family Language* emerge as quantitatively significant factors in explaining these results. More specifically, females were found to show significantly more in-group bias than men, while subjects reporting *both* English and Afrikaans as family languages showed the most in-group bias. Further research into the role of gender and language-loyalty within this speech-community through narrative-based elicitation methods is recommended, especially given the arguably counter-intuitive result of females showing positive bias towards Afrikaans-English, the variety most closely associated with covert prestige in this speech-community (Trudgill, 1972).

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Giliomee, H. 2009. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (2nd ed.). Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Trudgill, P. 1972. Sex, covert prestige and linguistic change in the urban British English of Norwich. *Language in society*, 1(2), pp.179-195.



Fieldwork practices vs institutionalized research frameworks

Ms Mary Alyousef, Utrecht University, NETHERLANDS

Anne-France Pinget (Utrecht University, Netherlands)

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

The incongruence between the standardized research ethics and the local fieldwork practices in conflict settings is a concern to researchers in linguistics. Researchers encounter methodological, ethical and contextual challenges in both fieldwork and post fieldwork phases, especially when institutionalized research protocols confront with context-specific research practices. Drawing on the language research models proposed by Cameron et al (1992), this research adopts an ethical research framework in which researchers seek to reduce difficulties for the researched communities and to acknowledge their efforts.

Based on two months sociolinguistic fieldwork conducted in Syria in 2021, this study explores, first, the friction between fieldwork practices in wartime context such as Syria and the standardized ethical requirements of European institutions, including norms of voluntary participation and hierarchal researcher/participant relationships. Secondly, it addresses the transformation of fieldwork realities to bureaucratic constraints such as forms of granted consent and material compensation. Thirdly, the study explores the challenges encountered in the post-fieldwork phase of this research, particularly data privacy and management of obtained knowledge under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018).

This investigation invites researchers to consider the differences between the two worlds (the East and the West, as in this study) and to examine how both socially constructed and institutionalized research ethics might be reconciled together.

Keywords: Research ethics, fieldwork in wartime, local practices, Data privacy

Cameron, D., Frazer, E., Harvey, P., Rampton, B., & Richardson, K. (1992). *Researching language: Issues of power and method*. Routledge.

Council of the European Union. (n.d.). *The general data protection regulation*, 2018. Available online at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/data-protection-regulation/>



Does that sound like [a ↗ plan?]: negotiating agency and commitment in dispatch decision-making

Prof Jo Angouri, University of Warwick, UNITED KINGDOM

Shawnea Sum Pok Ting (Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, UK), Matthew Booker (Centre for Academic Primary Care, University of Bristol, UK), David Rawlinson (Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS), Lauren Williams, (Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust, UK), Cendl Xanthe, (Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust, UK), David Lockey (Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS), Lyba Nadeem, (Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick, UK), Nigel Rees (Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust, UK).

Decision making for ambulance dispatch in pre-hospital critical care is distributed across professionals, technologies, and institutional arrangements rather than residing in a single role, organisation or individual. While some roles, such as Critical Care Practitioners (CCPs), occupy a central position within this process, decision making is accomplished through interaction between professionals who must negotiate competing priorities and resource constraints in a time-sensitive and high-risk environment.

This paper examines how CCPs manage and negotiate requests for support and dispatching of scarce resource, and how commitment to action is achieved in interaction. Drawing on analysis of naturally occurring emergency (999) cases in the UK, we show that agency and commitment are co-constitutive, and negotiated through practices such as questions, reformulations, and justifications. These practices enable participants to make relevant their epistemic positions, orient to clinical protocols, and account for operational and institutional constraints as part of the decision-making process.

The analysis is informed by the P.A.T.H.S. framework (Participants, Artefacts, Transition stages, Historicity, and Setting), a textual trajectory approach that captures how decision-making unfolds across sequences of talk, texts, and actions as cases progress. The model was developed within the 999 R.E.S.P.O.N.D. project, which examines information flow and decision-making in pre-hospital critical care dispatch in Wales.

By tracing how agency is negotiated in situ, this paper demonstrates the value of .A.T.H.S. as a sociolinguistic framework for analysing shared decision-making in high-risk, complex contexts. Our findings contribute to landscaping linguistic practice in critical care and suggest ways to inform training, policy and further research.



Achieving ‘sounding young’ in older age

Prof Jo Angouri, University of Warwick, UNITED KINGDOM

Lynn Clark (University of Canterbury, United Kingdom), Elena Sheard (University of Canterbury, United Kingdom)

Chronological age is a stable analytic category in sociolinguistics and is routinely associated with linguistic variables undergoing language change. At the same time, work in gerontology (e.g. Biggs 2005) and sociolinguistics has demonstrated that ‘age’ is not merely demographic but is also socially constructed (e.g., Hejné & Jespersen 2021).

Our work brings into dialogue two strands of sociolinguistics, variationist and interactional, that have largely remained analytically separate, to examine how chronological age is actively negotiated, oriented to, and accomplished in interaction.

Drawing on recent and ongoing work exploring sociophonetic variation among speakers of New Zealand English aged 65+ (Sheard et al, in prep), we investigate speakers who self-identify as older/younger than their chronological age and analyse the phonetic features and interactional work they perform in the context of a sociolinguistic interview. We interrogate whether, and how, these speakers “sound” old or young, and what such categorisations mean in context.

By integrating sociophonetics and interactional sociolinguistics, we offer a comprehensive account of how age can be indexed, negotiated, and become socially consequential in everyday talk. The study demonstrates the value of multi method analysis particularly in the context of understanding how age-identity is constructed. We close the paper by sharing some observations from our work and introducing an agenda for future studies.

Biggs, S. (2005). Beyond appearances: perspectives on identity in later life and some implications for method. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 60(3), S118-S128.

Hejné, M., & Jespersen, A. (2021). The coming of age: How do linguists tease apart chronological, biological and social age?. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 15(1), e12404.

Sheard, E., Clark, L., & M. McAulize (in prep) Community sound changes in later life: chronological age, speaker self-perception, and the realisation of New Zealand English short front vowels. Ms.



The digital raciolinguistic commodification of an Asian persona: The stylistic bricolage of *Uncle Roger* and indexical meanings of a generic Asian Englishes

Mr Gary Ao leong Wun Un, University of Macau, MACAU

This study explores the racialized, mediated performance of Uncle Roger, a popular middle-aged Asian male character on YouTube. This study conceptualizes the persona as a digital raciolinguistic commodification – a process wherein the persona is discursively racialized and ideologically packaged as a marketable product that calibrates mainstream racialized ideology among viewers. Adopting the notions of stylistic bricolage and indexicality, this study investigates how the performer shapes his bricolage through different linguistic resources as indexically linked with Asian-ness to commodify an Asian persona.

Drawing upon eight representative videos since his 2020 debut to 2025, this study employs Fairclough's critical discourse analysis to examine the stylistic bricolage at discursive, meta-discursive, and structural levels. Analysis of his micro-linguistic features, compared with the common features of different varieties of Asian Englishes (e.g., Schneider, 2010), demonstrates that the performer resembles and reinterprets shared morpho-syntactic and discourse features to configure a generic variety of Asian Englishes as a socially recognizable linguistic composite. Through two topically prominent extracts of food discourse, analysis of meta-discursive framing reveals that the performer subverts the mainstream racialized hierarchy by privileging Asian-ness and delegitimizing White-ness. By scaling from discursive practices to racialized ideology, this stylistic bricolage creates a proud and ludic Asian persona -Uncle Roger - as the new indexical meanings. This study argues that the persona which is strategically commodified functions as digital raciolinguistic capital within a viewership-driven marketplace. Ultimately, while the digitalized, globalized economy enables the reinterpretation of indexical linkage between language and Asian persona to transcend nation-state boundaries, this racialized performance simultaneously reinscribes the structural distinction between Asian-ness and White-ness. This study explores a paradoxical form of digital racial capitalism through the raciolinguistic perspective by exposing the contradictions of post-national yet de-globalizing economy.

Schneider, E. W. (2010). *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. Cambridge University Press.



Traces of trauma and hope: A social semiotic analysis of commemorative practices on the landscape

Prof Arlene Archer, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Many researchers in linguistic landscape studies raise questions of how to study violence and its aftermath by looking at the absences that it manifests (Volvach 2024) and the ‘traces’ it leaves behind (Archer and Björkvall 2026). This presentation explores absences and traces by looking at the practices of *self-authorized memorials* on the landscape. These ‘traumascapes’ can mark acts of violence and murder and blur the lines between commemoration and protest. The presentation investigates the memorialization of two gender-based student murders in different locations in Cape Town through analyzing photographs of the sites of protest. The framework for analysis is social semiotics which helps us to understand the material traces of social action that indexically point to semiotic acts. At times the trace can be a material and symbolic void, indicating something that should be there but is no longer there – what Volvach (2024: 525) calls a ‘shouting absence’ or a ‘vibrant void’. Since society regularly absorbs and repurposes its symbolic resources, protest needs to constantly reinvent its semiotic repertoire of resistance. In this sense, acts of protest draw on and rework existing visual and signifying systems. The presentation examines the signifiers of memorialization as protest in the two sites, the ways in which the participants employ a variety of material or semiotic means to communicate, and the traces these signifiers leave on the landscape.

Archer, A. and Björkvall, A. 2026. Means of protest actions: traces on the landscape. In A. Abdelhay, S. Makoni and C. Severo (eds.) *Sociolinguistics of Protesting. Embodied histories, imagined worlds, emplaced resistance*. Berlin: De Gruyter. 175 – 194.

Volvach N. (2024a). Shouting absences: Disentangling the ghosts of Ukraine in occupied Crimea. *Language in Society*. 53, 3. 523-548.



The impact of digitalization on global linguistic diversity

Dr Andreas Baumann, University of Vienna, AUSTRIA

Juliane Benson (University of Vienna, Austria), Hannes Essfors (TU Wien, Austria), Hannes Fellner (University of Vienna, Austria), Julia Neidhardt (TU Wien, Austria), Katharina Zeh (University of Vienna, Austria)

The ongoing digitalization of society has profoundly influenced global linguistic diversity, amplifying existing inequalities between languages. While English represents only about 5% of the world's native speakers (19% including second-language users), it dominates online spaces, accounting for 31% of posts on Twitter/X, 52% of all websites, and 93% of GPT-3's training data. This "digital language divide" [1] highlights how digitalization can marginalize less-resourced languages and potentially accelerate language extinction [2]. However, digital platforms can also facilitate language preservation and community connectivity, suggesting that digitalization has both harmful and beneficial effects on linguistic diversity. Hence, the question that we address is in which way both domains are related to each other.

To examine this ambivalence empirically, our country-level analysis combined linguistic data from two databases [3-4], generating probability distributions over languages per country. Linguistic diversity was quantified using Hill-numbers [5]. A composite digitalization index was constructed from seven established digitization indices. Regression models tested the relationship between digitalization and linguistic diversity.

Results show that the relationship strongly depends on how diversity is measured. A weak positive correlation between digitalization and linguistic richness suggests a supportive effect, possibly through language conservation. However, for diversity measures sensitive to speaker proportions, the effect differs. Thus, while digitalization may increase the number of languages represented, it simultaneously reinforces linguistic hierarchies.

[1] Bella, G., Helm, P., Koch, G., & Giunchiglia, F. (2023). Towards bridging the digital language divide. arXiv:2307.13405

[2] Kornai, A. (2013). Digital language death. PloS one, 8(10), e77056.

[3] Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (2022). Ethnologue: Languages of the world (25 ed.). Dallas, TX: Dallas: SIL International.

[3] Joshua Project. (2025). Joshua project: People groups of the world.

[5] Hill, M. O. (1973). Diversity and evenness: a unifying notation and its consequences. Ecology, 54(2), 427-432.



French as a foreign language: reframing a colonially-disseminated language through Plural, Multilingual and Pluricentric perspectives

Dr Paul Berger, Université de Strasbourg, FRANCE

The history of the spread of French as a foreign language initially took place in the context of the expansion of the French colonial empire in the 19th century. At that time, French colonisation was associated with assimilation, a concept that aimed to erase all the distinctive features of the colony so that it would be a perfect copy of the metropolis (Taraud 2018). From a sociolinguistic perspective, French became a tool of colonial domination. From an educational perspective, ethnocentric, monolingual and monocultural views promoted a "Gallocentric" approach to teaching and learning French (Klinkenberg, 2013).

Two centuries later, the promotion of a plural, multilingual and pluricentric French is fuelling language policies. However, the reality in the workplace shows that teaching practices centred on France persist (Berger, 2025).

In this contribution, we seek to understand why French language teaching follows practices that could be described as neocolonial. By working on the articulation between social representations, attitudes and teaching behaviours, we propose to reflect on teacher training towards decolonial practices (Brisson, 2025) where the Western norm gives way to all the varieties that represent a language, breaking down the divide between North and South (De Sousa Santos, 2014).

Berger, P. (2025). " L'enseignant locuteur natif " de français langue étrangère au temps des F/francophonies : enquête sur les représentations des apprenants et des enseignants en contextes hispanophones " [Thèse de doctorat, Université de Strasbourg].

Brisson, T. (2025). La désoccidentalisation des savoirs. La Découverte. <https://doi.org/10.3917/dec.briss.2025.01>

De Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: justice against Epistemicide*. Routledge.

Klinkenberg, J. M. (2013). La francophonie : pour qui ? pour quoi ? Dans V. Castellotti (dir.), *Le(s) français dans la mondialisation* (pp. 17-38). Éditions modulaires européennes.

Taraud, C. (2018). L'assimilation n'a touché que les colonisés. Dans C. Taraud (dir.), *Idées reçues sur la XVIe-XXIe colonisation : la France et le monde : siècles* (pp. 65-70). Le Cavalier Bleu.



Cultural aspects of using language portraits in multilingualism research: Case studies from Cameroon

Dr Rahel Beyer, SIL Cameroon, CAMEROON

Language attitudes constitute a well-established branch of sociolinguistic and multilingualism research. In recent years, methods have been developed to place individuals and their perspectives even more centrally in research by avoiding the use of scientific conceptualizations and terminology when eliciting data. One such approach is language portraits (cf. Busch 2012). Through *language portraits*, individuals share their linguistic repertoires by mapping all varieties important to them on a blank body silhouette using different colours. Subsequently, participants describe their drawings verbally. However, lay linguistic judgments are often criticized for being unclear, inconsistent, or incomplete (Beyer & Plewnia 2021; Niedzielski & Preston 2000).

The question of reliable and meaningful information provided by speakers arises even more in contexts with low levels of education (i.e. low language awareness) and in collectivist cultures, (especially regarding personal experiences). Combinations of these two conditions are typically found in parts of Africa.

The paper discusses outcomes of a study on language portraits carried out in three Cameroonian communities, the Daba (North), the Badwe'e (East) and the Kwasio (South). A total of 34 language portraits were created.

Initial inductive, qualitative analyses show that the drawings convey a certain sense of the significance of the various languages. However, participants only rarely make use of body parts or colours to talk (metaphorically) about language use, language competence etc.,. Furthermore, these explanations are fragmentary and refer mostly to (conditions of) acquisition rather than to emotional aspects.

Beyer, Rahel/Plewnia, Albrecht (2021) „German or not German: That is the question! On the status of the autochthonous dialects in East Lorraine (France).“ *Languages* 6(1).

Busch, Brigitta (2012) „The linguistic repertoire revisited.“ *Applied Linguistics*, 33(5), 503-523.

Niedzielski, Nancy A./Preston, Dennis R. (2000) *Folk linguistics*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.



Exploring the use of AI in research practices – some methodological reflections

Mr Jens Christian Borup Green Jensen, University of Copenhagen, DENMARK

The advent of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) is profoundly affecting research practices. As a response, we have seen a surge in quantitative studies that explore researchers' perceived use of GAI (e.g. Andersen et al., 2025). However, few studies are based on observational data of actual practices. In this work-in-progress presentation I explore how the multimodal and -dimensional nature of researcher-GAI interactions can be approached analytically. Using video recordings of researcher-GAI interactions, I exemplify and discuss how approaches originating in ethnomethodological conversation analysis (EMCA) can illuminate the negotiation of meaning within researcher-GAI interactions. However, EMCA does not account for elements that lie beyond the observable data, and therefore needs to be contextualised in relation to the assemblage in which the interaction is situated (Raudaskoski, 2023). I propose a methodological and theoretical argument for a contextualisation based on Goodwin's (2013) notion of 'laminated actions' and the concept of 'heteroglossia' (Blackledge & Creese, 2020). The presentation unpacks the dissonance and consonance between the ontologies involved, and explore how to construct a theoretical bridge between them that allow for a coherent understanding of how the different agents influence the emergence of meaning.

Andersen, J. P., Degn, L., Fishberg, R., Graversen, E. K., Horbach, S. P. J. M., Schmidt, E. K., Schneider, J. W., & Sørensen, M. P. (2025). Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in the research process – A survey of researchers' practices and perceptions. *Technology in Society*, 81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2025.102813>

Blackledge, A., & Creese, A. (2020). Heteroglossia. In *The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Ethnography* (pp. 97–108). Routledge.

Goodwin, C. (2013). The co-operative, transformative organization of human action and knowledge. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 46(1), 8–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.09.003>

Raudaskoski, P. (2023). Ethnomethodological conversation analysis and the study of assemblages. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8, 1206512-. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1206512>



Mining Heritage Tours: Identity and Community in the East Midlands (UK) and the Ruhr Area of Germany

**Prof Natalie Braber, Nottingham Trent University, UNITED KINGDOM and
Prof Evelyn Ziegler, University of Duisburg-Essen, GERMANY**

John Bellamy (Manchester Metropolitan University), Nantke Pecht (University of Münster), Vanessa Angenendt (University of Duisburg-Essen), Antony Hoyte-West (Nottingham Trent University)

This paper explores the sociolinguistics of mining heritage tours in two historically significant coal-mining regions: East Midlands (UK) and Ruhr Area (Germany). The ways these legacies are preserved and presented diverge significantly. Mining heritage in the East Midlands has traditionally focused on material objects, although there is a shift towards greater recognition of intangible cultural heritage such as pit talk. In contrast, the Ruhr's presentation tends to foreground narratives of industrial transformation and cultural renewal, aligning with broader regional identity construction (Berger and Golombek 2019).

Drawing on audio data from guided museum tours (10 hours in each region), we investigate (using NVivo) how language is used to perform mining identities and community narratives in post-industrial contexts. Using discourse-analytic approaches (Bellamy 2022), we compare the linguistic practices of miners (Braber 2022) with those employed in the narratives of the heritage tours.

Guided tours are not merely sites of memory, but active arenas of linguistic negotiation, where identity, community, and heritage are redefined. By comparing two distinct sociolinguistic landscapes, the paper contributes to current debates about language, place-making, post-industrial transformation and shifting identities. It calls for greater attention to the voices of former workers, whose linguistic practices offer valuable insights into the complexities of regional identity and remembrance. These findings can support South African museums preserve the intangible heritage of miners' language.

Bellamy, John. 2022. Discourse analysis of spoken interaction. In Ruth Kircher and Lena Zipp (eds.) *Research Methods in Language Attitudes*, pp51–65. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berger, Stefan and Jana Golombek. 2019. Memory culture and identity constructions in the Ruhr Valley in Germany. In Stefan Berger (ed.), *Constructing Industrial Pasts: Heritage, Historical Culture and Identity in Regions undergoing Structural Economic Transformation*, pp199–215. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Braber, Natalie. 2022. *Lexical Variation of an East Midlands Mining Community*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.



The role of parenthood in Indigenous language reclamation: From insecurities to resilience

Ms Anette Briksdal, University of Oslo, NORWAY

Pia Lane (University of Oslo, Norway)

Across the globe oppressive policies have led to a devaluation of Indigenous cultural and linguistic practices, contributing to disruption of language transmission in the family. While the home is a crucial arena for language revitalisation, it has received less attention than educational settings (Hinton, 2011), and there is a need for more knowledge of the experiences of families in processes of revitalisation. Drawing of data from sociolinguistic and biographical interviews with three Sámi mothers, this paper explores the experiences of three women who started speaking Sámi—an Indigenous language of Norway—when becoming mothers. Parenthood may act as a *muda*—a key life moment that reshapes linguistic practices (Pujolar and Puigdevall 2014) —because children offer a renewed motivation for language reclamation.

Norway implemented oppressive policies towards its Indigenous groups, contributing to loss of languages and emotional scars – a reminder that European nations also colonised ‘at home’ (Lane 2023). In such contexts, speakers’ linguistic repertoires (Busch 2017) may be marked by negative emotions, which can lead to language barriers and have implications for both language learning and use. Often this is connected to consequences of a colonial past (McKinney and Molate 2022) and parenthood may be a *muda* that gives speakers strength to face scars caused by colonialization (King & Hermes, 2014). The mothers recounted a determination to not pass this burden on to their children and creating safe spaces for the use and learning of Sámi. By centering the lived experiences Indigenous mothers, we highlight the transformative potential of the parental *muda* and propose a stronger focus on the home as a space for language reclamation. By examining language transmission and socialization in an Indigenous context, our study also contributes to ongoing efforts to broaden the scope of Family Language Policy.

Busch, Birgitta. 2017. Expanding the notion of the linguistic repertoire: On the concept of *Spracherleben*—The lived experience of language. *Applied Linguistics*, 38, 340–358. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amv030>

Hinton, Leanne. 2011. Revitalization of endangered languages. In Peter. K. Austin & Julia Sallabank (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages*. Cambridge University Press.

King, Kendall. A. & Mary Hermes. 2014. Why is this so hard?: Ideologies of endangerment, passive language learning approaches, and Ojibwe in the United States. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 13, 268–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2014.939029>

Lane, Pia. 2023. From silence to silencing? Contradictions and tensions in language revitalization. *Applied Linguistics*, 44, 833–847. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amac075>

McKinney, Carolyn & Babalwayashe Molate. 2022. Coloniality and family language policy in an African Multilingual family. *Diversifying family language policy*. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350189928.ch-013>

Pujolar, Joan & Maite Puigdevall. 2015. Linguistic mudes: How to become a new speaker in Catalonia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2015, 167–187. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2014-0037>



Topics of language and culture in an English for Specific Purposes Journalism course

Ms Daniela Cleusa de Jesus Carvalho, University of São Paulo, BRAZIL

This presentation examines how topics of language and culture (Kramersch, 2004) were approached within an English for Specific Purposes Journalism course (Hyon, 2017) at a Brazilian federal university. The course followed principles of critical academic literacies (Souza, 2011) and communication accommodation theory (Dragojevic; Gasiorek; Giles, 2016). Students engaged with written and aural genres from media outlets exhibiting a range of political orientations and analyzed their rhetorical dimensions, contexts of production, and intended audiences, deepening their understanding of socio-historical and cultural dimensions embedded in texts. By observing the power relations texts manifest, students were encouraged to reflect on whether they could strategically converge with, diverge from, or maintain their own stance in response to differing viewpoints. This instructional design aimed to raise awareness of the multiple perspectives students will encounter in their communities of practice. Student feedback on the course was positive, particularly valuing the introduction to genres integral to their future professional environments and to academic genres that promote transferable skills. Besides addressing syllabus limitations and proposing refinements, this presentation discusses the potential of such a course to promote language education by stimulating critical reflection on divergent perspectives and the rationales informing media content.

Dragojevic, Marko, Gasiorek, J. ; Howard Giles. "Accommodative Strategies as Core of the Theory." *Communication Accommodation Theory: Negotiating Personal Relationships and Social Identities across Contexts*, edited by Howard Giles, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 36–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cb09781316226537.003>

Hyon, Sunny. *Introducing Genre and English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315761152>

Kramersch, Claire. *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.27.02kr>

Souza, Lynn Mario T. Menezes de. "O Professor de Inglês e os Letramentos no século XXI: métodos ou ética?" *Formação "Desformatada": práticas com professores de língua inglesa*, edited by Jordão et al., Pontes, 2011.



Governing Translation in a Multilingual City-state: A Multi-layered Analysis of Singapore's Translation Policy

Mr Jimmy Yukun Chen, Institute of Language Sciences, Shanghai International Studies University; China Center for Language Planning and Policy Studies, CHINA

Singapore's multilingualism is sustained by a sophisticated, top-down translation governance framework. This research investigates the synergy between state initiatives, such as the Citizen Translator project, the Translation Talent Development Scheme, and the Community-in-Translation Events Grant, and the their socio-material realization, Drawing on Spolsky's tripartite model of language management (2009) and Meylaerts' conceptualization of translation policy (2011, 2017), this study employs an ethnographically-informed approach to examine the interplay between translation management, practices and beliefs.

Preliminary analysis of policy documents and fieldwork data reveals the Singapore's translation policy has transitioned from functional communication to a strategic tool for nation-state-in-the-making and social cohesion. By triangulating archival research with semi-structured interviews and linguistic landscape observations, this project uncovers a complex negotiation between macro-level state logic and micro-level individual agency. Initial findings suggest that while top-down policies standardize public discourse, the "Citizen Translation" model introduces a participatory dimension that blurs the boundaries between traditionally professional translation and the emerging community translation practices.

This research contributes to sociolinguistic scholarship by shifting the focus from translation as a linguistic product to translation as a socio-political process. It highlights how translation policies act as a mechanism for managing super-diversity and globalization, offering a comparative lens for understanding language planning in multilingual urban centers.

Keywords: language management, translation policy, multilingualism, Singapore

1. Jain, R. (2021). *Multilingual Singapore: Language policies and linguistic realities*. Routledge.
2. Meylaerts, R. (2011). Translational justice in a multilingual world: An overview of translational regimes. *Meta*, 56(4), 743-757.
3. Núñez, G. G., & Meylaerts, R. (Eds.). (2017). *Translation and public policy: Interdisciplinary perspectives and case studies*. Routledge.
4. Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language management*. Cambridge University Press.



Igama Lakho Ungubani? The Symbolic Significance of *Amagqirha* Names

Ms Pumela Yolisa Chitani, University of South Africa and Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

In amaXhosa society, personal names carry profound significance, functioning not as arbitrary labels but as vessels of collective world-sense, epistemology and philosophy. They embody cultural, ancestral, and spiritual beliefs, as well as socio-political and historical experiences, parental expectations, and broader communal values. Considerable scholarly attention has been given to naming practices among amaXhosa (Neethling; Kapa & Makhenyane), yet the ritual naming of *abakhwetha* (initiates) during *ukuthwasa* (traditional initiation of healers) remains significantly underexplored. This paper therefore investigates how names bestowed during *ukuthwasa* construct the identities of *abakhwetha* and *amagqirha* (fully-fledged traditional healers) while simultaneously reflecting communal values. The principal argument is anchored on Oyěwùmí's (1997) concept of world-sense alongside linguistic anthropological theories of indexicality and identity (Silverstein). The dataset comprises ritual introductions (n=15) recorded during initiation ceremonies and semi-structured interviews with *abakhwetha* and *amagqirha* (n=10). These materials are analysed through discourse analysis, selected for its ability to reveal how metaphoric language, euphemism, and ritual performance encode cultural meaning. By specifying both textual and ethnographic sources, the study demonstrates that names function not only as symbolic texts but also as communicative acts that embed cosmological beliefs and communal expectations into *abakhwetha* and *amagqirha*'s identity. The findings highlight the multi-layered meanings encoded in naming practices of *amagqirha*, demonstrating how ritual speech indexes authority, sovereignty, belonging, and spiritual transformation. This paper contributes to decolonial sociolinguistics and extends the appreciation of indigenous African naming practices, while acknowledging the threads of modernity interwoven into this discourse.

Keywords: names; world-sense; *abakhwetha*; *amagqirha*; *ukuthwasa*



Teacher Disposition and Linguistic Ideologies in Multilingual Classrooms: Insights from three studies on code-switching and translinguaging practices in multilingual grade 6 and 7 classrooms

Ms Leona Claasen, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

This paper investigates how teacher dispositions and underlying language ideologies influence the implementation of multilingual pedagogies in South African primary school classrooms. Drawing on a series of interconnected studies, from early research on code-switching in Mathematics to later work on translinguaging in multilingual Mathematics and English First Additional Language classrooms, the paper examines how teachers' attitudes toward learners' home languages shape classroom practice.

Situated within the framework of Translinguaging theory (Garcia, 2009), the study draws on qualitative data from multilingual Grade 6 and 7 classrooms in the Western Cape. Data include classroom observations, interviews, and focus-group discussions with teachers and learners across bilingual and multilingual settings.

Findings show that while most teachers recognize the pedagogical value of learners' home languages (such as Kaaps, Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and Sesotho), their classroom practices often reflect monolingual ideologies that privilege English when faced with curriculum demands, assessment pressures, or uncertainty about acceptable language use. Teachers who exhibited positive dispositions toward linguistic diversity implemented more flexible, learner-centred strategies such as translinguaging and peer-assisted learning, which enhanced learner engagement and comprehension. Those who maintain rigid, monolingual stances inadvertently reinforce exclusion and underachievement. The paper argues that the success of multilingual education depends not only on policy but on cultivating teacher reflexivity to transform inherited linguistic hierarchies.

By foregrounding teacher disposition as a key mediator between language policy and classroom practice, the study underscores the need for teacher education and professional development that explicitly address linguistic ideologies, translinguaging pedagogy, and reflective practice.

García, O. (2009). Education, multilingualism and translinguaging in the 21st century. *Social justice through multilingual education*, 140-158.



Plurilingualism, afro-diasporic repertoires, and the monolingual limits of English teaching in the Global South

Mrs Naiara Santos Felipe Costa, Federal University of Bahia, BRAZIL

This presentation departs from a situated experience in Salvador, Bahia, a territory where African-derived languages, Indigenous languages, and other non-hegemonic linguistic practices coexist in everyday life yet remain largely invisible in official educational documents. Drawing on ongoing doctoral research developed at the Federal University of Bahia and currently deepened during an independent research period in South Africa, this paper interrogates what I propose to call Plurilingual Afro-education (Felipe Costa, 2024): a pedagogical orientation that refuses to treat the multilingual repertoires of Black and Indigenous students as noise, but rather as the starting point for any meaningful language teaching, including English.

While the 2022 Brazilian Census registers 295 Indigenous languages across 391 ethnic groups (IBGE, 2022), and while African-heritage linguistic practices rooted in Yoruba, Fon/Ewe, and Bantu languages continue to shape everyday communication, the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC, 2018) centers English as the only foreign language worthy of formal instruction. This replicates a coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005) that renders linguistic diversity politically mute. The paper argues that English teaching, rather than reproducing this erasure, can become a site of linguistic resistance, but only when disentangled from the Common European Framework, the myth of the native speaker, and neoliberal commodification.

Placing the Brazilian case alongside debates on linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2001) and multilingual policy in post-apartheid South Africa, this talk asks what becomes visible when two Southern contexts examine each other's linguistic struggles. Speaking from the Afro-Diaspora to an audience inside Southern African linguistic realities, this talk holds a necessary tension: we do not share the same Africa, but we share a colonial grammar that still insists there is only one language worth teaching. Why do our schools still act as if English is the sound that matters the most?



Amplification or appropriation?

Mediatized voices in Andres Serrano's Sign of the Times

Dr John Scott Daly, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, HONG KONG

Adam Jaworski (University of Hong Kong)

In 2013, the New York artist Andres Serrano bought around 200 signs from homeless people all around the city, paying, on average, USD20 per sign. After photographing them, he strung them together in a video piece entitled *Sign of the Times*. The video was posted on YouTube and embedded in the online version of a newspaper article written by the artist which explains the work (*The Guardian*, 2013). The video and article attracted 56 and 343 comments, respectively, before both threads were closed. This paper examines the artwork and the reader/viewer comments in terms of Agha's (2011) *mediatization* (i.e. the linking of processes of communication with those of commodification), and Blommaert's (2005, p. 4) *voice* (i.e. 'the way in which people make themselves understood or fail to do so'). By critically exploring the voicing structures of this sequence of recontextualizations, which includes the homeless people and their signs, the artist, his artwork and newspaper article, and the commenters and their comments, we note that commenters' uptake tends to fall along two opposing lines: Those that view the artwork as *amplification*, and those who see it as *appropriation*. Ultimately, the paper's aim is two-fold: First, we offer a framework for theorizing a critically engaged piece of text-based art. Second, we bring the paper to an ongoing conversation on whether the subaltern can speak (Spivak, 1988), and if not, who, if anyone, can speak for them?

Agha, Asif. 2011. Meet mediatization. *Language and Communication* 23: 231–273.

Blommaert, Jan. 2005. *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. Can the subaltern speak? In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Macmillan Education. 271–313.

The Guardian. 2013. I started buying the signs that homeless use to beg. Here's what happened. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/18/andres-serrano-signs-of-the-times-homeless>



Growing Up During the English Boom in Vietnam: A Reflection on English Hegemony and Neoliberalism

Ms Quynh-Giang Dang, University of Pennsylvania, UNITED STATES

The global hegemony of English has received much scholarly attention recently, especially from a top-down perspective (Phillipson, 2018), and its ties to neoliberalism compellingly argued (De Costa, Park & Wee, 2019; Park, 2021). In Vietnam, research on the rise of English has looked at the role of the Communist Party's English policies (Bui & Nguyen, 2016) with a quantitative focus. To make or research education policies, it is important to keep in mind the deeply personal experience of a child going through an educational system. Following the call for research that look inward at the raciolinguistic experience of scholars of color by Wu & Goodman (2025), this talk aims to contribute to the English language policy discourse in Vietnam through an autoethnography.

In this autoethnography, I capture the affective component of my upbringing through what I term the English Boom in Vietnam, framing it within theoretical discussions in sociolinguistic surrounding English hegemony and language ideologies, specifically neo-liberalist and nationalist ideologies. Three different snapshots from my life are chosen to show the evolution of my relationship with language. The first snapshot shows how I used to subscribe to the English Boom and its neoliberal ideologies. The second snapshot features the turning point when I learned sociolinguistics and started to critically examine my language attitudes towards English and Vietnamese. Lastly, the third snapshot shows how my stance on multilingualism has refined through continued engagement with sociolinguistics. At every step, learning (socio)linguistics theories has helped me better understand what I lived through and find a path forward for myself. Ultimately, I highlight the transformative power of learning sociolinguistics and advocate for the explicit teaching of sociolinguistics ideas in schools, as well as advocating for using qualitative research to study the experiences of those affected by language policies.

Keywords: English hegemony, neoliberalism, English Language Policy, educational linguistics

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Internal vs. External Relations: Role Division Among Educators of Mông Students

Ms Quynh-Giang Dang, University of Pennsylvania, UNITED STATES

A new wave of language education policy research has grown since Menken and García's (2010) call for a focus on the role of educators in negotiating education policy. Riding this wave, this paper study the negotiation of Mông language education policy in Sapa, Vietnam. Within the ethnic minority languages of Vietnam, Mông is one of the few that has received official status and been taught at state schools. Top-town governmental policies regarding minority language education policy in Vietnam has been studied (Bui & Bui 2009, Nguyen & Nguyen 2019), and the effectiveness of such Mông-specific policies has been evaluated through quantitative methods in an UNICEF-funded Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education program (MOET & UNICEF, 2012).

My research of Mông in Vietnam complements top-down policy and quantitative data with a bottom-up perspective studied through qualitative research: interviews with two educators who are working on a Mông minority language program in a primary school in Sapa over the summers of 2022 and 2023. I analyzed the educators' language orientations, interview dynamics and alignment with the government to show that they are performing two distinct roles. Additionally, I did Critical Discourse Analysis of policy texts to understand the environment that the educators are working in (Johnson 2009). This paper shows that two educators in the same primary school in Sapa, Vietnam are playing different roles—internal and external relations—and contributing to Mông language programs in their unique ways. The Principal does external relations, communicating to government officials and those external to the Mông community, while the Teacher does internal relations, connecting with the Mông community. The study advocates for more research on the individual agency of educators and suggests that advocacy for minority groups can benefit from having policymakers of different ideologies and who can connect to different stakeholders.

Keywords: minority language, language policy, educational linguistics

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Bridging the Language Gap: Negotiating Power and Inequality through English Medium Instruction in Translingual Rural Early Childhood Classrooms in Alice, Eastern Cape

Mrs Sibongile Dayimani, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA

This paper explores the challenges and possibilities of using English as a medium of instruction in translingual rural Early Childhood education classrooms in Alice, Eastern Cape, situating the discussion within broader debates on sociolinguistic consonance and dissonance in the pluriversal world. Based on qualitative research conducted in selected rural schools, the study interrogates how English Medium Instruction (EMI) both enables access to global knowledge and perpetuates inequalities by marginalizing indigenous languages and epistemologies. While English is often positioned as a gateway to opportunity, its dominance risks reinforcing monolingual ideologies and epistemic hierarchies. The paper draws from diverse sources on EMI and translingual practices, highlighting the importance of multilingual and multimodal approaches in addressing linguistic diversity and promoting inclusive education. Findings reveal that learners and teachers navigate pluriversal realities by mobilizing multiple repertoires; particularly isiXhosa alongside English; through code-switching, translanguaging, and multimodal communication. These practices bridge linguistic gaps, enhance feedback literacy, and foster critical thinking, yet challenges remain, including inadequate teacher training, resource constraints, and policy frameworks privileging English. The paper argues for context-sensitive pedagogies that move beyond English-only policies, recognizing the value of translingual practices in constructing equitable learning environments. By foregrounding the lived experiences of rural learners and teachers, the study contributes to ongoing conversations about language, power, and inequality, demonstrating how EMI can be reimagined to empower students while dismantling entrenched hierarchies in rural South African contexts.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, English Medium Instruction, Multilingual education, Language, Translingual practices.



Beyond self-reports: real language use as a window into immigrants' psychological well-being

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Margherita Di Salvo (University of Naples, IT), Michael Bender (Tilburg University, NL, and Gratia Christian College, HK), Ad Backus (Tilburg University, NL)

Extensive research explored the relationship between language, culture, and psychological well-being (WB) in immigrant groups (Ward & Szabó 2023), with some works reporting positive links between bilingualism, biculturalism, and higher WB levels (Chen et al. 2008). However, most of these studies rely on self-reported measures of language competence and use, which do not capture what bilinguals actually do in interaction.

This paper addresses this gap by integrating real language use with self-assessed measures encompassing the linguistic, cultural, and psychological dimensions of acculturation. It examines whether interactional features of bilingual behaviour can serve as structural, linguistic indicators of acculturation and WB, without implying causal direction.

Analysing over 30 hours of authentic interactional recordings from 50 first- and second-generation Italians in Bletchley and Bedford (UK), alongside forthcoming questionnaire data on self-reported language competence and use, acculturation orientation, and WB indicators from the same communities, the study examines whether specific linguistic patterns—(a) the contextual distribution of monolingual use and (b) the forms and functions of code-switching (Gardner-Chloros 2009)—predict acculturation orientation and WB levels (e.g., life satisfaction, positive and negative affect). Specifically, we test whether more equivalent use of both languages across contexts and greater diversity in the forms and functions of code-switching predict a stronger bicultural orientation, more positive affect, and higher life satisfaction.

We discuss implications for both sociolinguistic theory, by exploring how concrete language use in real contexts reflects psychological states, and acculturation research, by assessing the value of observed natural linguistic behaviour in understanding acculturation and WB.

Chen, S. X., Benet-Martínez, V., Harris Bond, M. (2008). Bicultural Identity, bilingualism, and psychological adjustment in multicultural societies: immigration-based and globalization-based acculturation. *Journal of personality*, 76(4), 803-838.

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Students' use of Facework strategies as an indicator of interactional competence: Findings from the EMI classroom

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[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

Over the past two decades, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has become a normalized feature of higher education systems around the world. As a result, students are increasingly required to engage in complex academic interactions in a language that is not their first. Institutional gatekeeping often centers on standardized proficiency tests such as IELTS or TOEFL, yet these primarily assess linguistic knowledge rather than the interactional abilities that are required for successful participation in EMI classrooms. This is particularly relevant in internationalized learning environments, where students must also negotiate new academic norms and sociocultural expectations.

Interactional competence, conceptualized as the integration of linguistic, interactional, and identity resources (Young, 2011), offers a valuable lens to examine how students navigate these demands. This study investigates Facework (Goffman, 1967) as one key component of students' interactional competence in EMI classrooms. Drawing on five recorded classes involving ten students (i.e., a mix of local and international participants) in a graduate-level course at a Belgian university, the analysis focuses on naturally occurring lecturer-student and student-student interactions. Adopting a multimodal, qualitative approach, the study identified instances of face-threatening acts (e.g., requests, disagreements, interruptions, corrections, and expressions of linguistic insecurity) and analyzed participants' verbal and embodied responses.

Findings highlight the most frequent Facework strategies employed by students and how these vary according to interactional context, instructional mode, and task type. Finally, observed uptake patterns indicate which Facework strategies are considered interactionally successful, drawing attention to students' ability to adapt their communicative behavior to the unique demands of EMI classroom environments.

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: essays on face-to-face interaction*. Aldine.

Young, R. F. (2011). Interactional competence in language learning, teaching, and testing. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 426-443). Routledge.



Negotiating authenticity and appropriation: Linguistic genre conventions in the contemporary New York City blues scene

Mr Romeo De Timmerman, Ghent University, BELGIUM

Matthias Heyman, Prof Stef Slembrouck

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

This paper examines how contemporary blues artists negotiate artistic authenticity through linguistic practice, focusing on the role of African American English (AAE) as an index of genre affiliation and cultural legitimacy. While authenticity in the blues has long been theorized in musical and cultural terms, the linguistic dimensions of this process remain understudied. Drawing on twelve semi-structured interviews with blues performers based primarily in New York City, this study explores artists' metalinguistic reflections on vocal style, accent, and lexical choices, and how these are entangled with broader concerns surrounding ethnicity and cultural appropriation. Using iterative thematic inquiry, we identify competing orientations toward linguistic authenticity: some artists frame linguistic features associated with AAE and Southern US English as essential "vocal traditions" that must be honored to sound recognizably blues, whereas others view overt adoption of such features, especially by white or non-Southern artists, as performative, inauthentic, or even offensive. Participants describe a tension between idiomatic competence and ethical responsibility, highlighting the fine line artists must navigate between honoring an African American musical tradition and risking racialized appropriation. We argue that linguistic features in the blues function not merely as stylistic resources but as socially charged indexical markers through which performers negotiate artistic legitimacy and accountability. This study contributes to sociolinguistic research on style, performance, and the social meaning of linguistic variation by demonstrating that genre authenticity is not an inherent quality but a negotiated process mediated through language. In doing so, it advances theoretical discussions on indexicality, voice and style, showing how linguistic practices in popular music genres can reproduce, challenge, or reconfigure racialized hierarchies.



The Transformative Potential of Bi/Multilingual Pedagogies in South African Higher Education

Ms Firdous de Villiers, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

Despite the deeply multilingual reality of South Africa, higher education institutions in the country are still English dominant. Drawing on the notion of Critical Language Awareness as proposed by Fairclough (1992) and the goals of Translanguaging as explored by Garcia and Wei (2014), the paper explores the potential of bi/multilingual pedagogies within a South African university. The paper argues that bi/multilingual pedagogies have the potential of fostering transformation within higher education in South Africa.

The paper employs a qualitative case study approach, drawing on interactional lecture hall data from a third-year linguistics module. Findings suggest that within this module the use of oral bi/multilingual strategies are more accepted than written bi/multilingual strategies. Additionally, the findings highlight that while English remains the dominant language for this module there are meaningful efforts to engage with the bi/multilingual reality of students. The paper contributes to the current discussion about the importance of bi/multilingual pedagogies in a multilingual environment such as South Africa. More broadly, the paper contributes to discussions about the difference in reception of oral and written bi/multilingual strategies.

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Garcia, O. & Wei, L., 2014. *Translanguaging*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.



Plurilingualism, identity, and educational transformation in the Ladin Valleys

Dr Chiara Facciani, University for Foreigners of Siena, ITALY

Martina Bellinzona (University of Florence, Italy), Carla Bagna (University for Foreigners of Siena, Italy)

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

Across Europe, educational settings in minority language regions provide fertile ground for exploring how language and identity are constructed, negotiated, and transformed. In northern Italy, the Ladin valleys of Val Badia and Val Gardena (South Tyrol) offer a particularly rich example of institutionalized multilingualism. Here, three autonomous school systems operate under the Provincial Law on School Autonomy, which ensures a balanced distribution of teaching hours among the three official languages of the area (German, Italian, and Ladin). From early schooling onwards, students experience structured alternation among these languages, alongside English as a curricular subject (Salzmann & Videsott, 2024). Recent demographic changes have brought additional linguistic diversity, as immigrant languages have entered local schools. While the historical trilingualism of the region is institutionally protected, these new linguistic presences remain largely peripheral in educational practice (Guarda & Mayr, 2023).

This contribution examines how educators and school leaders perceive linguistic diversity in this evolving context and implement inclusive plurilingual activities within their classrooms. In order to do so, the paper draws on semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and classroom materials collected as part of an ongoing two-year research project (2025–2027). Findings reveal tensions between strict language divisions and more flexible, heteroglossic practices both in participants' attitudes and in the teaching materials they produced. Together, these dynamics point to a transformative process in which linguistic diversity is increasingly recognized and leveraged to foster inclusive, identity-affirming educational environments.

Guarda, M., & Mayr, G. (2023). Responding inclusively to linguistic diversity in the classroom: Preliminary findings from the COMPASS initiative with primary school teachers in South Tyrol (Italy). In P. Hohaus & J.-F. Heeren (Eds.), *The future of teacher education* (pp. 255–285). Brill.

Salzmann, K., & Videsott, R. (2024). I segnali discorsivi interazionali nel parlato di bambini plurilingui: Aspetti acquisizionali e fenomeni di contatto tra ladino, tedesco e italiano. *Linguistik Online*, 131(7), 49–97.



Multilingual texts as migrant landscapes

Dr Chiara Facciani, University for Foreigners of Siena, ITALY

Martina Bellinzona (University of Florence, Italy)

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

This article presents the findings of the PRISMA project, a multilingual writing initiative implemented in Italian public schools that adopt a multilingual pedagogical framework (e.g., CUNY NYSIEB, 2020). The initiative involved students aged 11 to 14 to produce original texts recounting real migration stories using their full linguistic repertoires and a wide range of semiotic resources. Drawing on a corpus of 109 student-authored texts, the study explores how migration is narrated. The analysis develops across three complementary dimensions: the textual morphologies and multimodal layouts employed by students, the multilingual and translingual practices activated in their writing, and the multisensory representations of migratory experiences. The results demonstrate that these texts do not merely describe migration as movement through space; they act it as an embodied, emotional, and semiotic experience. Each text is approached both as a linguistic landscape and as a dynamic site where migrant landscapes are constructed and performed. The study proposes a theoretical and methodological expansion of linguistic landscape studies (Gorter, 2013) by extending the notion of landscape beyond static urban signage to include narrative and textual spaces (Prada, 2024). Furthermore, it introduces the concept of migrant landscapes evoked through student narratives. By situating multilingual narratives within a pluriversal (Mignolo, 2000) sociolinguistic frame, the study contributes to ongoing debates on linguistic justice, migration, and multilingual education.

CUNY-NYSIEB (City University of New York–New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals) (eds.) (2020), *Translanguaging and transformative teaching for emergent bilingual students: Lessons from the CUNY-NYSIEB project*, London, Routledge.

Gorter, D. (2013) Linguistic Landscapes in a Multilingual World”, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 33, pp. 190–212.

Mignolo, Walter D (2000) *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Prada, J. (2024), “Sensescares in multilingual environments: A case study”, *Language, Culture and Society*, 6(1), pp. 105–130.



Reflective Diaries as Tools for Investigating Teachers' Engagement with Plurilingual Pedagogies

Dr Chiara Facciani, University for Foreigners of Siena, ITALY

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

Educational systems worldwide face challenges in addressing linguistic diversity, often oscillating between positive views on bilingualism and deficit perspectives of migrant students' language practices. Recent scholarship stresses the urgent need for pedagogical approaches that support linguistic diversity and inclusive education (Guðjónsdóttir et al., 2025). In this context, teacher training plays a key role in preparing educators to create effective, inclusive learning environments for diverse student populations (Day & Gu, 2007).

This study examines an intervention involving 40 Italian public-school teachers working in settings with a high percentage of students with migratory background as they implement pedagogical approaches that support plurilingualism. As part of the project's initial phase, the teachers received specific training on plurilingual pedagogies before starting classroom activities.

The presentation primarily focuses on understanding the effectiveness of this training, investigating how it influenced teachers' practices, perceptions of inclusive education, and their ability to design activities that valorise students' linguistic repertoires. To do this, the data collection comprises teachers' reflective diaries that were compiled by the participants throughout the school year, documenting classroom activities and personal insights related to implementing plurilingual practices. The diaries' intrinsic longitudinal dimension (Johnson & Coleman, 2023) allowed mapping teachers' progression over time, showing if and how their roles, proposed activities, and classroom management evolved starting from the initial training. Most participants reported a change in their teaching role and a shift in their understanding of inclusive education. However, a smaller number of teachers expressed challenges in fully implementing pedagogical practices that consistently embrace all students' linguistic repertoires. The findings also raise methodological considerations, highlighting a key tension: although the diary was methodologically valuable for capturing teachers' trajectories over time, many participants found it burdensome and preferred oral exchanges with colleagues.

Gu, Q., & Day, C. (2007). Teachers' resilience: a necessary condition for effectiveness. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(8), 1302-1316

Guðjónsdóttir, Hafþís, Jónína Vala Kristinsdóttir, Gunnhildur Óskarsdóttir & Samúel Lefever. 2025. Preparing pre- and in-service teachers in Iceland to work in multilingual classrooms. In Anne Reath Warren, Jonas Yassin Iversen & Boglárka Straszer (eds.), *Teacher education for working in linguistically diverse classrooms: Nordic perspectives*, 77–97. Berlin: Language Science Press.

Johnson, D. & Victoria Coleman (2024) Teachers' research diaries – reflection and reconnection in times of social isolation, *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 47(1), 79-92.



Navigating the postmonolingual paradox: the case of unmarked multilingualism in a Swedish suburban school

Mr Nicolas Femia, University of Gothenburg, SWEDEN

In dominant discourses of language in educational spaces, multilingualism is commonly framed either as a problem that needs to be eradicated or as a resource for multilingual students' learning. Despite these two perspectives being often perceived as mutually exclusive, teachers and students navigate the tension between a *monolingual habitus* (Gogolin, 2002) and a *multilingual habitus* (Gogolin & Duarte, 2017), which have recently been argued to simultaneously co-exist in school environments (e.g., Jaspers, 2024). This is also true in the Swedish school context, where spaces for multilingualism are supported and encouraged, but the general habitus continues to construct monolingualism as the unmarked case. In contrast, the current study explores a Swedish upper-secondary school environment in which both monolingualism and multilingualism are treated as unmarked. To shed light on this seemingly paradoxical situation, the study employs nexus analysis to focus on entanglements of language in ethnographic data from this school context. By observing this case through the lenses of the *postmonolingual condition* (Yildiz, 2012), the double unmarkedness is revealed to be non-contradictory, as multiple discourses of language are co-present without erasing each other, while both a monolingual habitus and a multilingual habitus are shown to be simultaneously absent.

Gogolin, I. (2002). Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Europe. *European Educational Research Journal* 1: 123–138.

Gogolin, I., & Duarte, J. (2017). Superdiversity, multilingualism and awareness. In *Language awareness and multilingualism: Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 375–390). Springer.

Jaspers, J. (2024). *Monolingual policies in multilingual schools: Tensions, ambivalence, and thinking teachers*. Oxford University Press.

Yildiz, Y. (2012). *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*. Fordham University Press.



A Multisemiotic Appraisal Analysis of the Representation of Jonathan Moyo in four newspapers from 200-2018

Dr Ferris-Leone, F.S., University of South Africa, SOUTH AFRICA

Muchena, T.C. (Midlands State University)

The objective of this research is to multi-semiotically examine and critique the evaluative options available to Zimbabwean newspapers in their portrayal of politicians. Specifically, this study employs a case study method to investigate the representation of Jonathan Moyo, one of Zimbabwe's most vocal politicians, from 2000 to 2018, spanning from a prominent member of the ZANU-PF party to ostracism from it. To achieve a comprehensive portrayal of this politician, the analysis concentrates on headlines, images, and editorial cartoons found in two weekly publications, The Standard and The Sunday Mail, as well as two daily newspapers, The Herald and The Daily News. Adopting an Appraisal theoretical perspective, the research explored how evaluative resources related to attitude, engagement, and graduation are utilized in the depiction of the politician. This was supplemented by a multi-semiotic discourse analysis framework to provide a comprehensive understanding of not just the linguistic representations but also the portrayal of Jonathan Moyo through the choice of his photographs and editorial images. While existing literature has already established the presence of bias in journalistic writing across various dimensions, the current paper aims to explore this bias in a narrowly defined context, where two types of newspapers track one politician's fluctuating political allegiances. The compelling inquiry is whether these newspapers will indeed alter their representations in response to his changing status within the political landscape.



Rethinking Chinese privilege: The semiotics of multilingualism in Singapore's state-regulated signage

Dr James Fong, The University of Hong Kong, HONG KONG

Recent scholarship on Chinese privilege in Singapore (e.g., Lazar, 2022) predominantly links racial and linguistic dominance to the visibility of the Chinese language and symbolism in commercial signage. However, this focus may conflate market-oriented communication practices with institutional privileging. Drawing on Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) presumed reader condition—which suggests that language choice in signage reflects assumptions about audience literacy—examining commercial signage seems to offer some insight into Chinese privilege. Instead, state-regulated signs in public housing estates, transport systems (notably airport terminals and the metro), and public roads provide revealing sites for analysing how Singapore's multilingual policy is materially enacted and whether visible language hierarchies are state-sanctioned. This study investigates the visual and spatial reproduction of Chinese privilege in state-regulated signage, analysing the positioning and prominence of Singapore's four official languages. Data were collected via photographic documentation in tourist areas in August 2025. Applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020) multimodal framework—specifically information value, salience, and framing—the analysis explores how signage arrangements narrate official multilingualism in practice. Findings indicate that the visual and spatial hierarchies of language in the signage reflect pragmatic goals to meet the potential needs of local and global audiences. By directing attention toward state-managed signage, the study reframes Chinese privilege as an inquiry into the semiotic realisation of official multilingualism. It contributes to ongoing debates on Singapore's evolving linguistic landscape, demonstrating that multimodal approaches are essential for revealing how official multilingualism is embedded in state language practice in urban spaces.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2020). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099857>

Lazar, M. M. (2022). Chronotopes of 'Chinese' privilege: Class-inflected racialisation in condominium hoardings. *Language in Society*, 51(5), 839–859. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S004740452200063X>

Spolsky, B., & Cooper, R. L. (1991). *The languages of Jerusalem*. Clarendon Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198239086.001.0001>



Discourses of diversity in Hong Kong Universities: belonging, identity & ideology in a cosmopolitan, Confucian & Christian city

Dr Philip Freestone, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, HONG KONG

Based on a three-year ethnography, this project uses sociocultural discourse analysis to explore the description and performance of “diversity” in two leading Hong Kong universities, drawing on interviews, fieldnotes and institutional texts to trace how queer inclusion is talked about, enacted and resisted in everyday life. It investigates the interplay of ideology with social and linguistic practice by comparing the language used by universities with the ways minority group identities are articulated and negotiated by queer staff and students as they narrate their experiences of visibility, marginalisation and erasure on campus. To do this, it closely analyses instances of language pertaining to inclusion and scrutinises absences of queer representation, highlighting how participants revoice and contest official slogans in their own words, and how they index safety, risk and respectability through stance-taking, metaphor and code choice. When universities make claims to labels such as “diverse” and “global” in their printed and online material, I ask how this corresponds to life on the ground for queer staff and students, as seen through their linguistic and semiotic identity performance in talk, email exchanges, campus signage and visual self-presentation.

Recent legislation and institutional policy mandating greater inclusion has become influential, and language and practice related to diversity is proliferating, yet participants’ accounts show that these changes often produce ambivalent and uneven forms of recognition. Recognising and promoting diversity is complex, as it means serving the needs of a broad spectrum of stakeholders, and the analysis reveals how staff and students navigate conflicting expectations from management, peers, families and wider publics as they position themselves as “good” workers, citizens and kin while remaining queer. Studying these themes in Hong Kong is of particular value to sociolinguistics, because related debates reflect the city’s complex matrix of influential value systems, ranging from broadly “cosmopolitan” to “traditional” and “Eastern” to “Western”. The study charts some nuances of this sociolinguistic context by tracing dominant ethical and moral value systems and showing how participants’ words negotiate or subtly subvert them, exposing complexities of identity work underlying common stances on Asian, Chinese and Western ways of being queer and on Confucian, Christian and cosmopolitan philosophy.

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‘Forcing Pidgin’: Indexes of Ownership in Pidgin Comedy Posts on Instagram

Dr Gavin Furukawa, Sophia University, JAPAN

As a stigmatized language variety, Hawai‘i Creole or Pidgin is often viewed as being a difficult language to collect in naturalistic settings and one of the only common places to see it being naturally used is in comedy performances. While these performances were a staple of Hawai‘i nightlife for decades, the shift to social media has transformed how this humor is consumed. This presentation uses the sociocognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis to examine Pidgin comedy Instagram posts. The corpus started with 150 posts on Instagram and then narrowing the selection to high validation posts to focus on content with endorsement from the viewing audience. Initial thematic analysis pointed out to certain themes well established in Pidgin comedy, but also pointed to new themes related to ownership of the language and authenticity in the face of changing demographics.

The research here addresses two primary questions: 1) How do popular (high validation) Pidgin comedic posts on Instagram multimodally reflect the concerns of the Pidgin speaking population? and 2) How is ownership of Pidgin and authentic local identity negotiated through these digital performances? The findings showed that there is significant concern over the changing population of Hawaii and the diaspora of many local families to other parts of the United States as well as a perceived lack of fluency in Hawaii Creole among local youths. By connecting the discursive, cognitive, and societal levels, this presentation demonstrates how these performances navigate the overt and covert forms of linguistic prestige in a changed Hawaii. The results suggest that Pidgin Instagram is a site where the changing battles of language ideologies within Hawaii can be explored and that it is the site of exploration for many in finding their identities in relation to Pidgin.



Sociolinguistic Factors Affecting isiXhosa-speaking Grade 1 Learners in Afrikaans Medium Primary Schools in the Eastern Cape

Dr Mirriam Nosiphiwo Ganiso, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA

This paper examines the sociolinguistic factors affecting isiXhosa-speaking Grade 1 learners who begin their schooling in Afrikaans-medium primary schools in the Eastern Cape. The South African Constitution ensures that every learner has the right to education in the language of their choice whereas many isiXhosa-speaking learners face linguistic exclusion in Afrikaans-dominant classrooms. This situation leads to language acquisition confusion, emotional distress, and identity conflict as learners struggle to express themselves and participate fully in learning.

The study is grounded in sociolinguistics and sociocultural theories which explain how social attitudes, language policies, and community language practices influence learners' experiences and underscores the role of social interaction and scaffolding in supporting language and cognitive development. The study employs a qualitative study approach using interviews, classroom observations, and book analyses. The study also highlights the relationship between learners' home language proficiency and second-language acquisition.

The findings reveal that learners experience linguistic insecurity, frustration, and social isolation due to limited comprehension, teacher impatience, and an inadequately inclusive curriculum. The study concludes that linguistic inequality persists in multilingual educational contexts and recommends the adoption of bilingual education, teacher training in multilingual pedagogy, and curriculum reform to promote linguistic justice and affirm learners' home languages as assets in learning and identity development.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, factors affecting isiXhosa speaking, grade 1, Afrikaans Medium Primary, School, Eastern Cape



Language, Power, and Racialized Privilege: Unpacking Ideologies in Colombian Bilingual Policies and (Social) Media Discourses

Dr David L. García León, PhD, University of New Brunswick Saint John, CANADA

Dr Javier E. García León, PhD, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, UNITED STATES

This presentation critically explores how language ideologies (Flores and Rosa 2015; Irvine and Gal 2000; Zavala and Back 2017) embedded in Colombian media discourses reproduce power asymmetries and racialized hierarchies within bilingual education policies. Colombia, a multicultural and multiethnic nation, has historically promoted English acquisition through language policies and initiatives such as hiring international “native” foreign instructors (NFIs). In the past decade, there has also been a notable rise in social media influencers (SMIs), often white and North American, who promote and teach English in the country. Using (Social Media) Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak and Meyer 2016; KhosraviNik 2018), this research project examines both governmental initiatives and the role of SMIs in shaping discourses around English learning. A corpus of 42 media texts published between 2010 and 2023, including government YouTube videos, news articles, and SMIs’ posts, was analyzed to uncover the ideological foundations of these narratives. Preliminary findings reveal three interrelated ideologies: (1) a hierarchical language system privileging English over local languages, (2) native-speakerism as a relational construct shaping teacher legitimacy, and (3) racialized privilege tied to whiteness and “nativeness.” These ideologies perpetuate colonial logics and marginalize pluriversal citizenship by framing English as a gateway to modernity and social mobility. This presentation focuses on the last two ideologies, situating them within broader debates on language, power, and inequality. Ultimately, the study calls for decolonial approaches to language policy and media representation that challenge Global North epistemologies and foster equitable multilingualism in Colombia.

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Translators' Experiences and Perceptions of Machine Translation and Artificial Intelligence in the Translation of Academic Materials into isiXhosa and Sesotho in South African Higher Education

Miss Anesipho Gqozo, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

This proposed qualitative study will explore translators' experiences, perceptions, and challenges regarding the use of Machine Translation (MT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in translating academic materials from English into isiXhosa and Sesotho in South African higher education. The study will be situated within the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) Language Development Project at Rhodes University, an institutional initiative aimed at implementing multilingualism. While human translation remains central to this work, increasing time pressures and resource constraints have led to growing interest in using MT and AI tools to support academic translation practices. Rather than evaluating MT or AI tools on computational accuracy, the study will adopt a human-centred approach to investigate whether translators use these tools, how they integrate them into their workflows, and how they perceive their usefulness and reliability. Translation Competence Theory will provide the theoretical framework, conceptualising MT and AI as resources embedded within translators' competence systems and foregrounding human judgement and responsibility. The study will employ a qualitative multi-method design using questionnaires and focus group discussions with student translators. By mapping these lived experiences, the research will aim to generate context-specific insights to inform ethical and sustainable approaches to AI integration in higher education, while reinforcing the continued importance of human intervention in the development of multilingual academic knowledge.



Negation Without Stigma: Toward Anti-Bias in Experimental Methodology

Dr Jessi Grieser, University of Michigan, UNITED STATES

Frances Blanchette, The Pennsylvania State University; Cynthia Lukyanenko, George Mason University; Paul Reed, University of Alabama

Matched guise study is often used to probe ideologies which connect linguistic performance to social personae. Originally the domain of multi-dialectal speakers (e.g. Purnell, Idsardi and Baugh 1999, see also Wright 2023), it is prone to an ethical concern: in asking people to respond to guises, are we encouraging their biases?

This work investigates structures involving Negative Concord (NC), where multiple syntactic negations work together to create a single semantic negation. Using eye-tracking technology, we examine participants' gazes when they read one of four sentences which differ in negation strategy. As participants read, they they are provided with three faces normed in the Chicago Face database and tagged for the viewer with locations representative of Mainstream US English (MUSE; Pennsylvania USA), Appalachian English (AppE; Tennessee USA) and African American English (AAE; Washington, D.C., USA).

For example for the frame “He always had trouble getting along with people, so ____”:

Commonplace vernacular: he didn't like nobody.

Common mainstream: he didn't like anybody.

Less common vernacular: nobody didn't like him.

Unattested: anybody didn't like him.

Participants from the same three locations as the hypothetical speakers (PA, TN, and DC) will see a sentence with one of the four negations, and then will be tracked as to which speaker they attribute the sentence. Based on Squires (2013), we expect that listeners will attribute the vernacular structures to speakers associated with minoritized varieties, and will likely attribute the unattested structure to a non-mainstream speaker. Differences between the commonplace and less common NC sentences will allow us to probe knowledge of mainstream, AppE and AAE grammars without priming participants' a priori associations between socially minoritized speakers and stigmatized varieties. In so doing, we demonstrate an empirically valid and ethically sound way to examine knowledge of stigmatized grammar without adding to linguistically discriminatory associations.

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When everyday life becomes language: The sociolinguistics of emerging IsiXhosa idioms and proverbs

Associate Professor Nozuko Zukiswa Gxekwa, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA

This paper investigates the emergence of contemporary isiXhosa idioms and proverbs derived from everyday experiences, including technology, social media interactions, urban life, popular culture, and ordinary objects. Responding to sociolinguistic concerns about language change, innovation, and meaning making, the study explores how isiXhosa speakers creatively transform contemporary social experiences into figurative expressions that communicate cultural knowledge, social values, and collective perspectives. Rather than viewing indigenous oral forms as static or endangered, the paper argues that isiXhosa speakers continuously expand and renew their linguistic resources in response to changing communicative environments.

The study aims to examine how new idioms and proverbs are created, how they acquire social meaning, and how they circulate within different speech communities. It further investigates the role of these expressions in reflecting contemporary identities, negotiating social relationships, and commenting on societal change. Data is drawn from conversational speech, social media platforms, and community interactions and analysed through a qualitative interpretive approach.

The theoretical framework combines Communities of Practice, Discourse Analysis, and Sankofa Theory. Communities of Practice provides a lens for understanding how speakers within particular social groups collectively generate and popularise new expressions. Discourse Analysis facilitates an examination of how these idioms and proverbs function within specific communicative contexts to construct social meanings, express evaluations, and position speakers in relation to others. Sankofa Theory offers an indigenous epistemological perspective by demonstrating how contemporary linguistic innovations maintain continuity with inherited cultural knowledge while adapting to present realities.

Findings reveal that emerging isiXhosa idioms and proverbs serve as important sociolinguistic resources through which speakers interpret modern experiences, construct identities, critique social behaviour, and negotiate cultural belonging. The study contributes to broader discussions on linguistic innovation, language change, and African sociolinguistics by demonstrating that contemporary isiXhosa remains a dynamic medium through which communities creatively engage with both tradition and modernity.

Keywords: IsiXhosa, Sociolinguistics, Linguistic Innovation, Language Change, Discourse Analysis, Communities of Practice, Sankofa Theory, Idioms and Proverbs.



The online linguistic landscapes (OLL) of South African and United States universities: The dissonance of languages other than English (LOTes)

Prof Richard Hallett, Northeastern Illinois University, UNITED STATES

This presentation investigates the online linguistic landscapes (OLLs) of universities in South Africa, which has twelve official languages of widely varying social, historical, and academic prestige, and the United States, which has no de jure official languages but one de facto unofficial named language. Building on current OLL research on US Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), this presentation offers a comparative international approach to choices for OLLs of higher education institutions purporting to recruit and serve multilingual students.

South Africa is a classic example of the Outer Circle of the World Englishes model (Kachru 1992, *inter alia*) due to its large number of people who speak English as a second or other language. Despite having twelve official languages, Afrikaans, English, (isi)Ndebele, Northern Sotho (Sepedi), Southern Sotho (Sesotho), (isi)Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, (isi)Xhosa, (isi)Zulu, and South African Sign Language, South Africa still positions English as the hegemonic language of tertiary education (Wildsmith-Cromarty et al. 2023). By comparison, the US, which is a classic example of the Inner Circle of World Englishes, also only positions English as the language of higher education, even at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Scholars have repeatedly found that students feel more welcomed and, arguably, perform better when they see their own languages represented in their schools (Malinowski 2015, Menken et al. 2018, Bernardo-Hinesley 2020, Seals 2020). However, a cursory examination of the OLL of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) reveals the almost exclusive use of English, despite the language only being the mother tongue of 40% of UWC's incoming students (Prather 2019:10). This finding corroborates Hill's assertion that "the South African university system is a domain in which the intersection of language, race and social class has made mobilization – in languages other than English – particularly difficult" (Hill 2024:14). Moreover, no South African university uses an indigenous African language as "a pan-disciplinary medium of undergraduate teaching" (Hill 2024:19). In the US, the only colleges and universities that have been found to feature languages other than English (LOTes) in their OLLs are Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

This project is not the first linguistic landscape analysis of South Africa (Stroud and Jegels 2014; Bock and Stroud 2019, Baro 2020, Cerimaj et al. 2020; *inter alia*). It is, however, perhaps the first of its kind to offer a comparative approach to the OLLs of South African universities and HSIs in an attempt to assess what works (and what does not) for promoting and supporting multilingualism and multilingual students in higher education settings. In so doing, this presentation partially responds to Thomas and Maree's (2024:108) call for the incorporation of African languages in tertiary education.



“I’m not enjoying this”: Identity, conflict, and surplus-enjoyment in the production of the tourist language learning commodity

Dr David H. Hanks, The Pennsylvania State University, UNITED STATES

A commercial Indonesian language school in a popular Balinese tourist town offers foreign visitors the chance to learn the national language toward fostering “a harmonious and integrated society” (school website). Students are taught how to haggle and taken to a local marketplace and prompted to leverage their newly-learned language skills by negotiating prices with sellers. However, despite haggling being presented as a congenial affair in promotional and curricular materials, and in the language classroom, students are sometimes surprised when their attempts are met with frustration and occasionally even anger. In an economy typified by commodification of everyday social engagements, such touristic interactions become complex socioeconomic sites of identity negotiation. Building on data collected during a multi-year ethnography of language policy (Hornberger et al., 2018), this paper explores the ways interactions between these language-learning foreign visitors and market sellers illuminates how the commodification of language education emerges from the structuring of an affective economy (Ahmed, 2014) of enjoyment. I employ a narrative inquiry approach to discourse analysis (Wortham & Reyes, 2021) to look at student–seller interactions and what they reveal about how these sellers’ labor is extracted and alienated from the local socioeconomic milieu and transformed into surplus-enjoyment (Žižek, 2022) in service of materializing the language learning commodity. Findings suggest that an important part of students’ evaluation of their language learning experience as “enjoyable” is its supposed capacity to offer a novel identity other than *tourist*.

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Analysing the Prayer of Masks as a Space of Silenced Knowledge: A Decolonial Lens

Ms Atrimecia Hass, Central University of Technology, SOUTH AFRICA

This paper explores the Prayer of Mask (poem) as a means of communication through which knowledge, memory, and identity are expressed external to colonial ideas of language. Instead of viewing the masks as objects, the paper recognises them as living forms of language that connect through movement, ritual silence, sound, and spiritual presence. In some African cultural ceremonies, wearing masks, the beat of drums, and moments of silence together express teachings about heritage, community responsibilities, and connections with the land without using spoken language. Through a decolonial lens, this paper challenges such practices that have frequently been dismissed by Western colonial definitions of knowledge, language, and communication. By drawing from decolonial theories, this paper argues that colonial control systems have historically advantaged written and oral European languages while excluding African Indigenous, embodied, and spiritual methods of expressing making. The paper aims to emphasise that this removal has damaged a community's ways of knowing, where complete ways of connecting and knowing have been suppressed.

This article adopts a qualitative and interpretive methodology, highlighting respect, collaboration, and accountability in knowledge practices. This approach draws from ethnographic and performance-based methods by focusing on close interaction with mask prayer practices within their cultural and spiritual contexts. Instead of regarding mask prayer as data to be analyzed from a distance, this study approaches it as a relational practice that must be encountered with care, humility, and consent. In decolonising sociolinguistics, this paper expands the scope of what counts as language and calls for greater acknowledgement of embodied, spiritual, and shared forms of communication that continue to shape meaning outside colonial frameworks. The paper recommends that masks as research methods should be encouraged as respectful and non-extractive ways of studying mask practices rather than translating them into Western types.

Keywords: African, communication, decolonial, language, masks, prayer

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Who Produces the Signs? Authorship and the Production Process of the Shop Façades in Yokohama Chinatown

Mr Ryota Ishii, Institute of Science Tokyo, JAPAN

In Yokohama Chinatown, distinct Chinese character forms—simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, and Japanese—coexist in urban space. This study clarifies the production process of the linguistic landscape (LL) on shop façades. The author conducted LL observations and interviews with shop personnel. A sign-making company recurrently emerging across interviews was identified, and its client interactions were content-analysed. This study empirically identified the production process leading to sign emplacement: design by the *decision-maker* and *designer* hand the design to the *fabricator*, with *authority* and *technical infrastructure* involved throughout. LL are classified into: (A) outsourced signs (the sign-making company serves as *designer*), (B) self-produced signs (the sign owner assumes roles except *fabricator*), and (C) externally-produced signs (replicating an existing process through the design stage). This study also found cases where the sign owner lacks initiative over design decisions. In several cases, even when the *decision-maker* was a shop representative, no instructions on language or script were given; the sign-making company, as *designer*, selected language, script, and typeface, primarily producing the textual representation. Additionally, posters for snacks and chilled foods were frequently produced by wholesale distributors, constituting externally-produced signs in which a distributor dominated the entire process, with the sign owner uninvolved. In social semiotics, LL authorship has been characterised as a distributed process irreducible to individual LL actors; however, this argument conflates the processes of meaning interpretation and physical production. This study reveals that entities absent from the LL space can lead design decisions, demonstrating that authorship can be—at times radically—dissociated from the sign owner even within physical production alone.

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Rethinking epistemologies: *Thovil* as ‘spiritualscape’ in the linguistic landscape of Aragalaya protests, Sri Lanka

Ms Upeksha Jayasuriya, Victoria University of Wellington, AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

This study seeks to further epistemic decolonisation by foregrounding relational ways of knowing and meaning making rooted in Southern knowledge systems. Drawing from a larger study on the linguistic landscape of Aragalaya protests in Sri Lanka, I explore *thovil* – a ritual conducted to expel evil energy or harmful beings – as a method of communication used to disseminate protest’s messages of dissent. Using photographs from Aragalaya protest, along with qualitative interviews and archival data, the analysis focuses on how meaning emerges multimodally, affectively, and spiritually in this indigenous ritual of *thovil* conducted at the protest site. The findings further frame meaning as relational and co-produced by humans, non-humans, materialities, and cosmic energies – an idea often discounted in dominant knowledge traditions. I contend that a decolonial approach adds a critical layer to meaning making of *thovil* by recognising alternative knowledge systems which legitimise the spiritual meaning of *thovil*. In so doing, I position *thovil* at Aragalaya as a spiritually and epistemologically complex linguistic landscape – or a ‘spiritualscape’ – that could potentially decolonise our very understanding of linguistic landscape. Overall, this study invites future research to move beyond binary forms of epistemological systems and instead recognise how diverse knowledge traditions can mutually deepen and extend one another.

Keywords: Southern epistemologies, epistemic decolonisation, linguistic landscape, meaning making, spiritualscapes, protests



Socializing with AI: Academic literacy in the age of generative artificial intelligence

Mr Kasper Engholm Jelby, University of Copenhagen, DENMARK

The rise of technologies based on generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is fundamentally changing university students' academic literacy practices. This has implications for the ways in which students engage with texts, as well as how they are socialized into disciplinary discourse communities. Previous studies have analyzed the discursive and structural characteristics of AI-generated writing (Jiang and Hyland 2025). However, few studies have explored students' use of GenAI tools as part of their situated academic literacies, and what implications these technologies have for students' academic literacy socialization. Drawing on data generated through linguistic ethnographic fieldwork among undergraduate health-science students at a Danish university in the spring semester of 2025, this presentation explores how generative artificial intelligence tools are integrated into students' situated academic literacy practices. By triangulating analysis of data generated through sound, video and screen recordings from participant observation of students' group work, I argue that students assign to GenAI interlocutors interactional roles previously reserved for (human) peers. Based on this analysis, I combine Bakhtin's (1981) notion of dialogicality with concepts from posthumanist sociolinguistics (Pennycook 2018) to suggest that academic literacy in the age of generative artificial intelligence involves the ability to navigate dialogic spaces inhabited by both human and GenAI actants. In this way, the presentation contributes to the conference theme by discussing how consonance between humans and non-humans is reshaping social worlds in higher education.

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Pennycook, Alastair. 2018. *Posthumanist Applied Linguistics*. London: Routledge.



Transformation Discourse and the Politics of Inequality in South African Higher Education: Evidence from a South African University

Dr Ian Lyndon Johnson, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

Purpose – This paper examines how transformation and inequality are constructed in executive governance reporting in South African higher education. While transformation is often measured through demographic indicators and policy targets, it is also discursively produced through institutional language (Fairclough, 1995).

Design/methodology/approach – Drawing on Critical Discourse Studies (Fairclough, 1995) and sociolinguistic theories of institutional power (Blommaert, 2005), this study treats Vice-Chancellor quarterly reports to Council as strategic discursive artefacts. A qualitative document analysis (Prior, 2008), informed by reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), was conducted on a corpus of executive reports. The analysis is further situated within organisational legitimacy scholarship (Suchman, 1995) to examine how reporting constructs institutional identity and manages accountability.

Findings – The findings reveal a discursive shift from transformation framed primarily as equity and redress toward increasing alignment with compliance, performance metrics, and institutional sustainability. Inequality is variously foregrounded, technicised, or absorbed into managerial discourse. Executive reporting does not merely describe change; it constructs narratives of legitimacy in a contested higher education environment.

Originality/value – By integrating discourse analysis and higher education governance scholarship, the study shows how transformation discourse operates as a strategic resource in mediating the politics of inequality in post-apartheid South Africa.

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Three Women: Of Corporeal Landscapes, Affect and Agency

Dr Koki Kapa, University of the Witwatersrand, SOUTH AFRICA

An embodied sociolinguistics focuses on the body as a unit of analysis, and recent Linguistic Landscapes research has sought to shift towards engagement with corporeality. Through an analysis of an embodied speech act, a naked protest, this paper attempts to show that a focus on the body is enriched by engaging with affect.

The naked protest under analysis happened during the 2nd year of the #FeesMustFall protests in South Africa, which called for free, decolonised education, and were met with police violence. In an attempt to stop the violence *during* a student protest, three Black women staged a naked protest, a profound act of linguistic citizenship. The protest, and its outcome, I argue, show that clear ideological links can be drawn between bodies, social categories and culturally and interactionally specific roles (Bucholtz & Hall, 2016). Through a Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the protest and related media texts, I show that race *and* gender impact how the body is authored and read (Peck & Stroud, 2015), and this is all mediated by affect (Ahmed, 2004). To fully understand the communicative act of the protest, to understand the limits of agency in the authoring and reading of the women's bodies, we must analyse the body and affect *together*.

Keywords: MMCD, affect, embodiment, linguistic landscapes, linguistic citizenship, corporeal landscapes, skinspaces



Branding Belonging: Power and Multilingual Inequality in Dubai's Development Naming Practices

Dr Magdalena Karolak, Ph.D., Zayed University, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

As the emirate of Dubai has been undergoing a second urban boom, this paper examines the linguistic landscape (LL) of Dubai's new real estate developments as a window into how language participates in the production of urban power and inequality under conditions of intensified labor migration and capital mobility. Drawing on a corpus of 238 project and community names collected from billboard advertising and realtor communications (July 2022–December 2025), the study codes lexical origins and connotative fields to trace how developers brand place for a transnational market. The results show a strong dominance of English and Romance-language (and Romance-inspired) naming, while Arabic and other linguistic resources appear only marginally. This distribution is read as a form of symbolic governance: naming practices privilege globally legible registers associated with luxury, lifestyle, and elite cultural capital, producing an “international” urban imaginary that aligns with Dubai's global-city positioning rather than reflecting the multilingual realities of its resident population. The thematic analysis further demonstrates that nature imaginaries such as greenery and water are repeatedly mobilized as commodified signs of comfort and prestige in an arid ecology, revealing tensions between sustainability needs and market-driven aesthetics. In parallel, a distinctive futurist register emerges through abstract labels and stylized orthographies (e.g., creative spellings and alphanumeric forms), which index innovation, speed, and digital culture and appeal to younger, globally mobile consumers. By comparing naming strategies across language groups and semantic clusters, this study argues that development names function as signs of belonging: they elevate certain cultural references while rendering other languages and majority expatriate identities largely invisible. The study contributes to research on multilingualism and mobility by showing how top-down, commercial naming reshapes what counts as “public language” in a rapidly expanding metropolis, with implications for place-making, social cohesion, and linguistic inequality.



A comparative study of forensic linguistics and linguistic prejudice in South Africa and the United States of America with reference to selected case law

Prof Russell H Kaschula, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

Matthew J Gordon (University of Missouri), Rod Uphoff (University of Missouri, University of the Western Cape)

This paper uses forensic linguistics as a point of departure to critique the notion of linguistic prejudice within the courtroom systems of both South Africa and the United States of America. Both of these countries are constitutional democracies with specific linguistic and cultural histories. However, it is suggested in this paper that these linguistic complexities are subsumed and obfuscated under an English-only language of record within the courtroom systems of both countries. Specific case law and case studies are presented where the litigants have experienced some sort of linguistic prejudice. Both document analysis (in the form of policy documents) as well as specific and selected cases form part of the methodology. These include the case of *State of Florida v. George Zimmerman* where the witness used African American English to testify, and *State versus Kelly Smith* as well as *State versus Omotoso* and the Mbenenge Tribunal in South Africa. This paper further suggests that such linguistic prejudice, where it is found to exist, contributes towards the failure of delivery of justice in multilingual and multicultural societies. The paper concludes with specific recommendations and suggestions for the respective justice systems in both countries.

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‘I’m above you’: Gendered normativity and hierarchies in the discursive practice of *maunto* in Japanese YouTube animated series and online discussion

Ms Airi Kawakami, Sophia University, JAPAN

Maunto is a discursive practice widely observed in Japanese everyday interaction, conventionally among women, referring to interactional acts of self-positioning that index superiority. Previous studies show that it often creates a superficially friendly atmosphere through affiliative speech functions such as praise, advice, and self-deprecation, while implicitly signaling speakers’ superiority. Examining data from the YouTube animated series *Momo-Ume* and online threads on the women’s forum *Girls Channel*, the study investigates how *maunto* is performed, negotiated, and represented in interaction and media in Japan.

The research employs Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), drawing on Goffman’s (1981) notion of footing and Blommaert’s (2007) orders of indexicality and polycentricity. These notions highlight how speakers orient to multiple normative centers such as gender expectations, occupational and economic hierarchies, and educational background, while negotiating alignment and tension. *Momo-Ume* humorously depicts common *maunto* in banter among female office workers using multimodal resources (linguistic, visual and auditory) from a third-party perspective. In contrast, *Girls Channel* threads present personal experiences and concerns about *maunto*, revealing its linguistic and perceptual complexities.

The analysis reveals that *maunto* reflects multiple, and sometimes competing, norms of femininity in Japanese society, such as the “good mother,” “attractive woman,” and “career woman.” These conflicting standards produce a discursive space where women continuously negotiate and contest hierarchical relations. By focusing on discursive features and underlying ideologies, the present study shows how competitive display and affiliative resonance coexist in *maunto*. Ultimately, it contributes to understanding how enduring gendered norms in Japan produce psychological strain in women’s daily communicative practices, mediating expectations of femininity in contemporary Japanese interaction.

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Evolving COVID-19 Narratives: How Did Young Japanese Women Adapt and Stop Talking about COVID-19 Impact?

Ms Mugiho Kojima, Mie University, JAPAN

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

This study aims to examine how COVID-19 narratives evolved after the outbreak of the disease. Using young Japanese women's longitudinal conversation data, we focused on how the participants display their perspectives on COVID-19 over time and how they eventually stopped talking about it. Although a number of countries including Japan enacted strict COVID-19 prevention measures from 2020, these restrictions were eased and lifted in a few years. The study explores how the social situation influences the participants' daily lives, especially how they influence their linguistic behavior in their narratives. As methodologies, this study employs the narrative analysis approach to observe young women's naturally occurring conversations collected by qualitative longitudinal study targeting 41 women since 2018 in Japan (the study focuses on the data from 2020 to 2023). The participants are long-time friends, and their conversations were recorded in-person, online and hybrid.

Almost all the participants talked about COVID-19 in 2020, discussing shortages, discrimination against elderly people, and concerns about economic influence. However, they spent less time on discussing COVID-19 impacts in 2021, and then they eventually stopped talking about it in their naturally occurring conversations in 2022 and 2023. Some cases when they still mentioned the disease included when the researcher asked questions and when one of the participants was exposed to COVID-19 and joined the recording online. These data show that the participants adapted the pandemic and their interest in it has waned as time passed. Even when their lives are still affected by it, they perceive their lives with the disease as natural and normal. In sum, during a long-span disaster such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants adapted to "unusual" and built their lives based on it. This case study captured how they adapted to the social change through the close observation of their linguistic behaviors.



Who is heard by voice AIs? Automatic speech recognition and multilingual talk

Dr Kinga Koźmińska, Birkbeck, University of London, UNITED KINGDOM

Speech technologies have been reported to underperform for multilingual speech (e.g. Cihan et al. 2022). In this talk, I focus on automatic speech recognition (ASR) to argue that from a linguistic point of view neither the technology's task nor transcription as a practice are neutral. I propose that to ethically implement such tools requires an in-depth understanding of ASR's task, design, purpose, and context of use.

I first present video material from a project on multilingual family practices in London, funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council. I compare human and ASR transcripts of the selected multilingual interaction to problematize ASR accuracy in relation to factors affecting the system's performance. My error analysis demonstrates that any ASR transcript relies on human input and action, reflecting back what designers have deemed worthy of their tools, what other humans have put on the web, and what humans interacting with machines did at the time of speaking. I link my observations to work in socio-computational linguistics (e.g. Kantharuban et al. 2024) revealing biases built into ASR tools. I demonstrate how sociolinguistic knowledge calls for more informed decisions about when, how and why to turn to automation.



Recentring Environmental Knowledge: African Languages, Indigenous Epistemologies, and Environmental Education in Kenya

**Dr Michael M. Kretzer, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA;
RWTH Aachen University, GERMANY**

Grace Kamweru (Department of Architecture, Design and Planning, Technical University of Kenya)

Environmental degradation and climate change are not only ecological but also linguistic and epistemological challenges. In Kenya, where over 60 African languages coexist alongside English and Kiswahili, the medium of instruction continues to shape how environmental concepts are perceived and transmitted. This study explores the intersection between language policy, Linguistic Landscape (LL), and indigenous environmental knowledge within the framework of the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF). Drawing on qualitative data from multilingual schools – including teacher interviews, classroom observations, and LL documentation – this study analyses how linguistic hierarchies and translation practices affect the teaching of environmental education (EE). Findings reveal that while environmental topics feature prominently in the BECF, their delivery remains linguistically constrained, with most content mediated through English. Teachers express difficulties in translating scientific and sustainability terminology into African languages without losing cultural nuance, underscoring the tension between scientific discourse and local epistemologies. Building on Kretzer and Oluoch-Suleh's (2022) work on curriculum reform and African languages, and Kretzer and Kaschula's (2021) research on schools as decolonial semiotic spaces, this paper argues that reintroducing African languages into EE is essential for epistemic justice and pedagogical relevance. By integrating translanguaging pedagogies and LL-informed practices into classroom and schoolscape design, environmental education can become both culturally resonant and scientifically grounded. This study concludes that embracing multilingualism and indigenous ecological wisdom within Kenya's education system is key to decolonising environmental learning and fostering a sustainable, community-rooted understanding of nature.

Kretzer, M. M., & Oluoch-Suleh, E. (2022). (Hidden) potentials for African languages in curriculum reforms: examples from Kenya and South Africa. *SN Social Sciences*, 2(8), 154.

Kretzer, M. M., & Kaschula, R. H. (2021). Language policy and linguistic landscapes at schools in South Africa. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(1), 105-127.



Reclaiming Schoolscapes: Decolonising Education through Multilingual Linguistic Landscapes (LL) in Southern and Eastern Africa

**Dr Michael M. Kretzer, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA;
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Despite decades of political independence, African education systems continue to operate under linguistic hierarchies inherited from colonial regimes. The dominance of former colonial languages – English, French, and Portuguese – as languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) marginalises African Languages and epistemologies. This study critically examines schoolscapes (Brown, 2012) as semiotic arenas for rethinking and reclaiming African educational spaces through Linguistic Landscape (LL) analysis in Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, and South Africa. Drawing on ethnographic LL data collected from primary and secondary schools, this study combines photographic documentation, observation, and semi-structured interviews with teachers and pupils to investigate how linguistic hierarchies manifest visually and materially within educational environments. Findings reveal that while African languages dominate oral exchanges, they remain largely absent from written and evaluative domains. However, bottom-up multilingual signage, created by pupils and teachers, signals emerging forms of linguistic resistance and identity reassertion. Building on Kretzer and Kaschula's (2021) argument that schoolscapes serve as microcosms of language policy implementation, this paper foregrounds how locally driven LL practices can disrupt colonial language ideologies. By revalorising African languages as epistemic resources, multilingual schoolscapes contribute to a more equitable, contextually grounded education across the continent. This paper invites dialogue on how LL research in Africa can move beyond descriptive mapping towards activist, participatory approaches that empower communities to redesign the linguistic and semiotic fabric of their educational spaces.

Brown, K. D. (2012). The linguistic landscape of educational spaces: Language revitalization and schools in southeastern Estonia. In *Minority languages in the linguistic landscape* (pp. 281-298). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Kretzer, M. M., & Kaschula, R. H. (2021). Language policy and linguistic landscapes at schools in South Africa. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(1), 105-127.



Unity in Diversity? Exploring language ideologies, ownership, and values in mono- versus multilingual societies

Dr Annika Labrenz, Victoria Olhia and Heike Wiese, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, GERMANY

While multilingualism is the global norm, societal perspectives and policies on linguistic diversity vary widely. European nation-states historically fostered a monolingual habitus, and also exported this ideology to some settler colonies, e.g. Australia. The ideological nexus of “one nation - one language” influences constructions of language value and ownership, leads to a stigmatisation of multilingual practices and reinforces standard language ideologies. In contrast, in countries with a multilingual orientation such practices are considered a normal part of everyday communication. Against this background, this study compares ideologies of standard language and purism in two multilingually- (Singapore, Namibia) and two monolingually-oriented (Australia, Germany) societies and their effects on multilingual speakers regarding language ownership and values.

Using narrative analysis, we analysed data from semi-structured focus groups in six multilingual communities: Malay and Tamil speakers in Singapore, German heritage speakers in Namibia and Australia, and Turkish and Vietnamese heritage speakers in Germany. Exploring themes of standard language ideology and purism, ownership, and value, our preliminary findings reveal both differences and commonalities. In Singapore and Namibia, multilingual practices, including the use of mixed lects, are proudly claimed by locals, weakening the link between standard language competence and ownership. In Australia and Germany, however, these practices are often devalued by the majority society, contributing to an Othering of multilingual speakers who feel pressured to prove proficiency in the majority language through standard language use or by shifting away from the minority language. Noted across all contexts is the marginalisation of non-standard contact varieties in formal settings, relegating their use and legitimacy to primarily informal domains, reflecting hierarchical language beliefs and purist ideological leanings.

The findings show that while multilingual societies foster “unity in diversity,” to some extent, hierarchical language ideologies persist across contexts, emphasising the need to address them for more inclusive and just societies.



Colonial traces in the linguistic landscape of present-day Namibia

Dr Annika Labrenz, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, GERMANY

In 2021, Germany formally acknowledged the genocide against the Herero and Nama and apologized for colonial atrocities, yet a reconciliation treaty remains unsigned, largely due to disputes over reparations. Despite German-speaking Namibians constituting only around 1% of Namibia's population, Swakopmund's public spaces continue to reflect a strong German linguistic presence—evident in street names, shop signage, and commemorative monuments. This study examines lingering traces of German colonialism in the linguistic landscape (LL) of Swakopmund, Namibia with the following research question:

To what extent can the LL of Swakopmund inform us about asymmetries of power between different local speech communities?

Drawing on Landry & Bourhis's (1997) LL framework and Scollon & Scollon's (2003) geosemiotics, this study investigates the social meaning of two key sites, the Marine Monument and a colonial soldiers' memorial, in addition to various street and hotel names, by analysing their placement in the material world. Data stem from field photographs and participatory observation (2 weeks, Nov. 2025), including field notes from dialogues with a Herero activist. Integrating Southern epistemologies, the study moves beyond analysis towards transformative insights.

The findings suggest that the LL in Swakopmund presents a narrative that is uncritical of Germany's colonial past, while marginalizing the suffering of the Herero and Nama. This selective visibility may not only hinder reconciliation but also reflect enduring power asymmetries. Through critical analysis of public signage and reference to ongoing struggles, the study emphasizes the importance of inclusive, decolonial approaches to memory and representation to move further towards healing and justice in postcolonial Namibia.

Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16(1), 23–49.

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2003). *Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World* (1st ed.). Routledge.



Inequality in Conceptual Metaphors for Unmarried Women and Men: A Cross-Linguistic Study of English, German, and Slovene

Dr Lasnik Mateja, Providence University, TAIWAN

Chiang Wen-Yu (National Taiwan University)

Humans are inherently social, and marriage is often seen as the norm. Yet some individuals remain unmarried, and society often labels them as outside this norm. Although terms for unmarried individuals have been studied in major languages, metaphorical conceptualizations in smaller languages such as Slovene remain underexplored. This study investigates how language reflects inequality through conceptual metaphors for unmarried women and men across English, German, and Slovene.

We focus on metaphorical framings and how X-phemisms (euphemisms and dysphemisms) reveal gendered ideologies. Data were collected via an online questionnaire from 430 native speakers, who provided frequent terms for unmarried women and men and rated their connotations. Responses were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively using Excel and R, following Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), and prior work on gendered language, metaphor and culture, and X-phemisms (e.g., Kövecses, 2010; Allan & Burridge, 2006).

The findings reveal clear gender asymmetries. Even in smaller language communities like Slovene, patterns similar to those in larger languages emerge. Unmarried women are often labeled with dysphemisms, such as *stara devica* (Slovene) and *alte Jungfer* (German), both literally meaning “old virgin,” and “spinster” (English). They are also associated with companion animals (e.g., “cat lady”), reflecting social expectations that women cannot be alone. Unmarried men, by contrast, are described with neutral or positive terms (e.g., “bachelor”), emphasizing freedom and autonomy. While younger English speakers sometimes refer to unmarried women as “bachelorette,” the overall pattern remains strongly gendered. Across all three languages, these tendencies are captured by the conceptual metaphors UNMARRIED WOMEN ARE LEFTOVERS and UNMARRIED MEN ARE VALUABLE/INDEPENDENT ENTITIES.

Overall, this study contributes to understanding how language, power, and inequality intersect across cultures, highlighting the role of metaphor in shaping social perceptions.



Living with Voice Assistants: Multilingual Practices at the Online-Offline Nexus

Ms Didem Leblebici, European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), GERMANY

This paper contributes to current discussions on the “online-offline nexus”, a concept central to recent sociolinguistic theorization of communication in post-digital societies (Androutsopoulos, forthcoming). It offers an empirical perspective by examining user practices involving voice assistants such as Alexa and Siri. Determining which data counts as “online” becomes particularly challenging in this context. Devices may activate or record utterances without users’ awareness, process speech into digital data, or fail to respond when prompted. Such ambiguities position voice assistants as a productive site for examining how digital connectivity is embedded in embodied and emplaced practices.

The study adopts ethnographically informed mediated discourse analysis and nexus analysis to investigate technology practices of migrants from Turkey living in Germany. Data collected between 2021 and 2023 include interviews, participant observations, and Alexa archive data. Building on Tagg and Lyons’ (2021) concept of the “networked individual”, the study moves beyond device- or platform-centric perspectives to situate individuals within their personal polymedia environments, where communicative choices across devices, channels, and semiotic resources index social and emotional meanings.

Findings indicate that practices with voice assistants extend beyond functional uses, as they are also mobilized to mediate social relationships and perform tech-savvy identities. By foregrounding the lived experience of multilingual technology users, this study offers an ethnographically grounded perspective on human-machine interactions as a form of human-to-human interaction mediated by diverse semiotic resources. It contributes to digital sociolinguistics by empirically grounding the notion of technological pluriverses.

Androutsopoulos, J. (forthcoming). Online-offline nexus: Genealogies and trajectories, scales and sites. In A. Georgakopoulou & T. Spilioti (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Digital Communication* (2nd edition). <https://www.researchgate.net/doi/10.13140/RG.2.2.28305.08802>

Tagg, C., & Lyons, A. (2021). Polymedia repertoires of networked individuals: A day-in-the-life approach. *Pragmatics and Society*, 12(5), 725–755. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ps.20051.tag>



The use of the isiXhosa dialects in the foundation phase for epistemic advancement

**Dr Jeremia Lepheana, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA and
Dr Nokuzola Gqeba, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA**

This study explores the use of isiXhosa dialects in Foundation Phase classrooms to enhance learning outcomes for home-language speakers. While isiXhosa is an official medium of instruction in many South African schools, the standardized variety often differs from the dialects learners use at home, including isiMpondo, isiBhaca, isiHlubi, and isiGcaleka. This linguistic mismatch can hinder comprehension, participation, and early literacy development. Drawing on Funds of Knowledge Theory and research on translanguaging, this paper argues that intentional inclusion of local dialects bridges the gap between home and school literacies. It examines how teachers can leverage dialectal vocabulary, idioms, and oral traditions to scaffold concept development in literacy and numeracy, reduce learner anxiety, and affirm cultural identity. A qualitative research approach informs this paper. Findings suggest that dialect-inclusive pedagogy improves learner engagement, facilitates clearer explanation of abstract concepts, and strengthens the transition to standard isiXhosa and English. The paper concludes with practical strategies for teachers, including code-switching guidelines, dialect-aware resource development, and community collaboration. It recommends that teacher training and CAPS-aligned materials acknowledge dialectal diversity as an asset rather than a barrier to learning in the Foundation Phase.

Keywords: isiXhosa dialects, Foundation Phase, mother tongue education, translanguaging, early literacy, South Africa



Exile as linguistic-semiotic assemblage – A sociolinguistic analysis of the South African liberation struggle

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Prof Ana Deumert (University of Cape Town)

In 1961, Umkhonto We Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, was formed to fight for freedom and against the increasing violence of the apartheid regime. Soon many of its guerrillas found themselves in exile: from Lesotho to Zambia, from Angola to Tanzania, but also in the former Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. In this paper we take up the theme of 'exile' which has a firm place in South Africa's history and reflect on its semiotic and linguistic articulations during the historical period of roughly 1960 to 1990/1994.

In doing so we draw on three sets of data:

- (a) the memories of one of the authors who, himself, was in the guerilla camps in the 1980s and has first-hand knowledge of the local linguistic practices in these (military) contexts;
- (b) the political magazines Sechaba and Rixaka, which communicated the South African armed struggle to a broader audience; and
- (c) the soundings of South African musicians who were prevented from returning to their home, and who used their music as a weapon against apartheid.

In the context of (a) we show how local multilingual practices were influenced by global entanglements with, especially, the Russian and Cuban military; in the context of (b) we provide an analysis of the use of multimodality (image/text assemblages) to create political affects; and in the context of (c) we consider The Blue Notes and explain the ways in which their music spoke, from exile, to ideas of liberation and freedom.

Through these three case studies, we seek to broaden the subject matter of historical sociolinguistics beyond its traditional focus on language variation/change. We argue – following recent developments in sociolinguistics – that historical sociolinguistics needs to find ways of approaching meaning-making-beyond-language, both methodologically and theoretically.



Becoming “My Friend”: Language, Identity and Integration of Pakistani Immigrants in South Africa

Ms Anomusa Magwa, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

Migrant communities rely on language as a central resource for negotiating identity, accessing opportunities, and facilitating social integration in host societies. While existing scholarship has examined migrant language practices in European and Asian contexts (Esser, 2006; Givens, 2007), limited attention has been paid to migrant experiences within linguistically complex African settings such as South Africa. Addressing this gap, this qualitative study investigates the role of language in shaping the integration and identity construction of Pakistani immigrants in Gqeberha Central, South Africa.

The study is theoretically grounded in sociocultural linguistic approaches to identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), Bourdieu’s (1991) concept of linguistic capital, and Esser’s (2006) multidimensional model of social integration. These frameworks enable an analysis of how language functions not merely as a communicative tool but as a form of symbolic power that structures access to social networks, economic opportunities, and belonging within a multilingual society.

Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, the study employs semi-structured interviews Pakistani migrants selected through purposive and snowball sampling to explore participant’s lived experiences of language use, proficiency, and identity negotiation. Thematic analysis reveals that limited proficiency in dominant local languages constrains access to public services, and broader social participation, reinforcing patterns of marginalisation. At the same time, participants demonstrate agency through strategic linguistic practices, including code-switching, the use of English as a lingua franca, and the maintenance of heritage languages such as Urdu and Punjabi. These practices enable migrants to balance cultural continuity with economic adaptation while navigating South Africa’s multilingual power dynamics.

By extending debates on linguistic capital and migrant integration to a Global South context, this study contributes to sociolinguistic scholarship on migration, multilingualism, and postcolonial urban spaces, while offering policy-relevant insights for linguistically inclusive integration frameworks.

Bourdieu, P., 1991. *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard university press.

Bucholtz, M. and Hall, K., 2005. Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse studies*, 7(4-5), pp.585-614.

Esser, H., 2006. Migration, language and integration. Berlin: WZB.

Givens, T.E., 2007. Immigrant integration in Europe: Empirical research. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 10(1), pp.67-83.



Beyond symbolic multilingualism: The dilemma of language policy implementation in two Higher Education Institutions in South Africa

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Menzi Zamokwakhe Thango (University of the Witwatersrand, Wits School of Education)

According to the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) and the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions (2020), public university councils and senates are required to develop institutional language policies that promote the development of African languages through multilingualism. However, research (Madiba, 2013; Kaschula, 2013; Ngubane, 2024) indicates that most South African higher education institutions face a dilemma, although multilingual language policies are well planned and theoretically sound, in practice, they remain highly contested within institutional executive boardrooms.

Despite their intention to promote multilingualism and redress historical imbalances—particularly the linguistic marginalisation of indigenous African languages and their speakers—the main challenge lies in policy implementation. This paper, therefore, examines the perceptions of academic staff at two South African universities regarding the difficulties of implementing language policy, with specific attention to the gap between policy prescriptions and social realities.

The study adopts a qualitative research approach, analysing policy documents and semi-structured interview responses. Data were coded and thematically analysed. Preliminary findings indicate that academic staff perceive a significant gap between language policies and their practical implementation. Consequently, this paper recommends that higher education institutions adopt more realistic and sustainable language policy strategies that move beyond symbolic multilingualism.

Keywords: dilemma; language policy implementation; multilingualism; higher education institutions; perceptions; African languages; linguistic marginalisation; institutional governance; qualitative research



A Gramscian critique of English hegemony in South African higher education: Conceptual and political pathways

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This article advances a conceptual and political critique of multilingualism, pluriversality, and epistemic freedom as currently theorised within decolonial scholarship on higher education, taking English as its central object of analysis. While multilingualism and pluriversality are normatively oriented toward justice and inclusion, the article argues that they rest on an under-theorised account of power and an unexamined assumption that epistemic coexistence can resolve historically entrenched relations of domination. Treating language as epistemology rather than a neutral communicative medium, the analysis contends that English is historically constituted and institutionally embedded as a carrier of colonial value systems, aligned with processes of exploitation, dispossession, and epistemic degradation. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and war of position, multilingual policy, pluralist discourse, and institutional practice are interpreted as political strategies that stabilize English as the epistemic centre across both political and civil society. Policy ambiguity and inclusionary rhetoric are thus read not as administrative failures, but as mechanisms through which linguistic domination is reproduced under neoliberal and neocolonial conditions. Empirical evidence demonstrating the pedagogical efficacy of indigenous African languages is interpreted not as validation of multilingual equilibrium, but as a refutation of claims regarding their inherent unviability. Against prevailing decolonial remedies of pluralism and coexistence, the article advances *displacement* as a conceptual alternative, defined as the deliberate and institutionally organised withdrawal of English from its position of epistemic authority. It concludes that epistemic freedom requires organised counter-power and a sustained war of position capable of dismantling linguistic hegemony in higher education.

Keywords: Multilingualism, decoloniality, epistemic freedom, pluriversality, English hegemony, indigenous African languages.



University Science Teachers' Language Awareness (TLA) and the Multilingual Ecology of EMI Classrooms in South Africa

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Sakyiwaa Boateng (Walter Sisulu University, South Africa)

South African higher education is characterised by deep linguistic diversity, yet most universities continue to rely on English-medium instruction (EMI) as the dominant mode of teaching and assessment. This creates persistent sociolinguistic dissonance, as students and lecturers navigate complex multilingual repertoires in classrooms where the linguistic demands of scientific discourse are high. Concepts such as Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) and translanguaging have emerged as critical in addressing these tensions. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the study first surveyed 19 purposively selected science lecturers with a closed-ended Likert-type questionnaire to explore their perceptions of language demands in scientific discourse, teaching practices, and assessment strategies. Follow-up semi-structured interviews deepened understanding of how teachers identify and address language-related challenges when teaching first-time entering students (FTENS). Findings reveal a preparedness paradox: teachers express strong confidence in recognising language barriers, modifying instructional language, using visual aids, encouraging questions, and occasionally drawing on students' home language practices to create localised consonance. However, significant disagreement emerged regarding formal training and institutional support, exposing systemic dissonance between individual pedagogical intentions and broader structural conditions. Ambivalent responses around assessing language proficiency and ongoing professional development further illustrate uneven enactment of language-aware teaching. Framed by sociocultural theory, the study argues that strengthening TLA in EMI science classrooms requires institutionally supported professional learning, alignment between policy and practice, and assessment approaches that recognise multilingual meaning-making. The paper contributes to pluriversal understandings of science pedagogy by highlighting TLA as a key lever for linguistic justice and epistemic access in African higher education.

Keywords: Teacher Language Awareness (TLA); English-Medium Instruction (EMI); Multilingual Higher Education; Translanguaging; Linguistic Justice



Negotiating Power Through Language: Sociolinguistic Consonance and Dissonance in Pluriversal African Contexts

Ms Abulele Mapukata, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

Limpho Makapela (University of the Western Cape)

According to Cenoz (2013), multilingualism is defined as the ability to speak, read, or write in more than one language. In multilingual African societies, language operates as a resource for social cohesion (consonance) and a mechanism for exclusion (racial, cultural, economic) and hierarchy (dissonance) among others. This study aims to examine how language practices in Southern Africa and other African contexts (a comparison to Zimbabwe as an African country will be made) produce sociolinguistic consonance and dissonance in relation to power and inequality.

Specifically, the study seeks to investigate how dominant and marginalized languages shape access to social, economic, and political resources, and how pluriversal linguistic practices could challenge or reproduce existing power structures. Colonial and postcolonial language regimes have privileged former colonial languages such as English, Portuguese, and French in governance, education, and economic mobility, often marginalizing indigenous African languages and their speakers (Rakgogo 2023). This dynamic enables structural inequalities along lines of class, ethnicity, geography, and gender (Rakgogo 2023).

The methodology will include a qualitative, interpretive approach that will make use of public documents such as the The Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953), The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, The Use of Official Languages Act 12 of 2012, The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights, 198, The Report on the use of African languages as mediums of instruction in higher education (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015), and the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions, 2020.

A comparative multi-stakeholder case study design will be used consisting of stakeholder interviews (South African and Zimbabwean nationals that have experienced language constraints during the apartheid, to explore similarities and differences. By situating South African sociolinguistic realities within a pluriversal framework, the research should argue for a reconceptualization of linguistic justices that value epistemic diversity and local knowledges. Data collection will consist of semi-structured interviews with (educators, students, policy makers and community members), exploring the use of english versus indigenous languages.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Sociolinguistic, Epistemic diversity, Translanguaging, Pluriversal



Translanguaging as a pedagogical resource and reflection of real-world linguistic experiences

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This paper examines the classroom discourse of a grade 10 Geography teacher as he interacts with his learners. In his communicative practices with the learners, the teacher does not focus on the official language of teaching but uses the learners' full linguistic repertoire as a pedagogical resource. By embracing the learners' language repertoire in a monolingual classroom setting, the teacher acknowledges the notion of pluriversality. He ensures that through translanguaging the language demands of the classroom and the reality of the learners' sociolinguistic background are met. Using a qualitative approach, this paper analyses selected interactional extracts between the teacher and the learners to determine the pedagogical value of the teacher's discourse practices. One of the main findings of the study is that translanguaging in classroom settings is used to achieve functions such as clarifying concepts, enhancing learners' self-expression in their home languages, and facilitates negotiation of meaning. More importantly, the learners' tools of communication in the real-world are also recognised as having educational value. The paper concludes that translanguaging is a fundamental linguistic resource in township and rural schools. This enables learners to receive education in atmospheres where their own languages are not rejected as less important for educational purposes. Finally, translanguaging ensures that the multilingual experiences of teachers and learners are not replaced through imposition of a monolingual teaching and learning system.



A Dialogue Between Brazil and South Africa on Gender-based Violence

Mrs Giovana Martins de Castro Marchese, University of São Paulo, BRAZIL

This paper analyzes testimonies given to the Brazilian National Truth Commission (2014) by former political women prisoners who were detained and tortured during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985), focusing on narratives of gender-based violence during torture sessions. Using corpus-assisted methods, the study employs Sketch Engine to examine the testimonies through a Critical Discourse Analysis framework grounded in Latin American decolonial feminism. The analysis shows that these narratives reflect naturalized ideas about gender-based violence, including the belief that women may be deserving of the sexual violence they suffered. The paper argues that the logics governing sexual violence in contexts of political imprisonment and torture are not exceptional, but continuous with those operating in everyday social life. To support this claim, testimonies are analyzed alongside recent cases of gender-based violence in Brazil, demonstrating the persistence of similar rationalities across time. The discussion draws on Rita Laura Segato and María Lugones to examine how violence against women operates within broader historical and social formations in Latin America, including the social norms that regulate women's bodies and condition how violence is perceived, interpreted, and legitimized. These perspectives are placed in dialogue with Pumla Dineo Gqola's concept of the Female Fear Factory, developed in the South African context, highlighting shared dynamics between Brazil and South Africa in the production and normalization of fear and gendered violence.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis. Decolonial Feminism. Testimonies.

Gqola, P. D. (2021). *Female Fear Factory*. Johannesburg: MFBooks.

Segato, R. L. (2025). *La guerra contra las mujeres*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo.

Lugones, M. (2008). *The Coloniality of Gender*. Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise.



Revenge Porn and Dehumanization: Civil Law Responses to Online Gender Violence at the Superior Court of Justice

Mrs Giovana Martins de Castro Marchese, University of São Paulo, BRAZIL

Elaine Alves Trindade (PUC – São Paulo), Luciana Carvalho Fonseca (University of São Paulo (USP))

This paper investigates Civil Law in cases of online gender violence in Brazil, focusing on the dehumanizing misogynistic discourse present in judicial decisions regarding revenge pornography. The study examines how gendered power relations and colonial continuities are reproduced in the judicial discourse produced by the Brazilian Superior Court of Justice (STJ) through the intersection of language, law, and the coloniality of power, knowledge and being. Therefore, we aim to identify, describe, and interrogate the dehumanizing misogynistic discourse and its representations in STJ judicial decisions on revenge pornography. For this purpose, a quantitative and qualitative analysis is being conducted on an electronic corpus composed of rulings from the STJ, using SketchEngine software. The corpus was first compiled based on a predefined lexical set related to revenge pornography, used to filter relevant rulings. However, preliminary corpus evidence suggests that such a lexical filter may present limitations, as there are indications that it does not retrieve decisions that don't contain the predefined lexical items, even when addressing the phenomenon. By extracting keywords, collocations, and n-grams, the analysis allows for a reassessment and expansion of this lexical set, contributing to a more comprehensive identification of relevant cases and to the refinement of corpus construction in studies of legal discourse on revenge pornography.

Keywords: Judicial discourse; Decolonial feminism; Corpus-based discourse analysis

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Lugones, M. (2024). *Hacia un feminismo decolonial: Una antología* (G. Veronelli, Trad.). Buenos Aires: Eterna Cadencia Editora.

Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.



Multilingualism for an African University: Beyond Compliance and Towards Epistemic Transformation

Dr Sisonke Mawonga, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

Prof Pamela Maseko, Nelson Mandela University, SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Jacqui Lück (Nelson Mandela University, RSA), Mx Chanel van der Merwe (Nelson Mandela University, RSA)

The South African Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions (2020) identifies institutional collaboration as a key enabler of multilingualism in higher education, requiring universities to form collaborative partnerships to accelerate the enhancement and use of indigenous African languages as languages of teaching, learning, research, and scholarship. In 2025, Nelson Mandela University (Mandela Uni) and Rhodes University launched the Multilingualism Indaba, a collaborative partnership that brings together years of language policy implementation initiatives to centre Southern perspectives of multilingualism within institutions still dominated by Eurocentric knowledge regimes. These perspectives advocate ontological and epistemic multiversality, centring marginalised African realities in the politics of knowledge production in higher education.

This approach critiques multilingual education policy in the Global South as often reduced to compliance-driven, tick-box implementation, leaving its deeper epistemic and intellectual potential unrealised. Implementation in epistemically rigid institutions should begin not with policy mandates or Northern-derived models, but with an ontological understanding of the institution itself. Drawing on Barnacle and Dall'Alba's ontological turn in higher education, Heugh's emphasis on African languages as vehicles for knowledge production, and Maseko's call to centre African intellectual traditions, we argue for multilingualism as epistemically constitutive: not deliverable content, but a relational mode of being, embedded in existing practices and enabling transformation beyond compliance.

This relational mode of being takes different but complementary forms across both institutions, reflecting two efforts from the South toward a shared end. At Rhodes University, multilingualism is implemented through initiatives that reflect an African perspective, enhancing isiXhosa as an academic language and embedding inclusive multilingual pedagogies. At Nelson Mandela University, groundbreaking work documents and translates early isiXhosa intellectual and literary texts, recovering indigenous knowledge archives to diversify the academic canon, work now used in Historical Studies and other disciplines.

Together, these initiatives advance multilingualism for an African university, grounding knowledge production in African epistemologies, languages, and intellectual traditions moving beyond compliance toward transformative praxis that redefines teaching, learning, and research through epistemic inclusion and institutional reorientation.



Negotiating family language policy online: Affordances of WhatsApp among digital families

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Increasing global economic inequality, conflicts, and climate change have led to accelerated population migration, often resulting in the disruption of traditional family configurations as members are separated from one another. However, the proliferation of digital communication platforms has helped foster and maintain a sense of family by creating more communication opportunities for geographically dispersed families. Because of their extensive reliance on digital communication, they have come to be known as ‘digital families.’ This study deploys the concepts of digital family, family language policy and the notion of affordances to examine perspectives of purposively selected South African-based parents who have children living in Zimbabwe on how they leverage the digital affordances of WhatsApp to participate in their children’s language socialisation as part of their parental duties. Findings reveal that parents’ language ideologies shape their language practices in parent-child online interactions. While parents find the affordances offered by the WhatsApp calling features useful for engendering a sense of presence and explicit language correction, children’s lack of conformity to parents’ home language-centred practices also casts WhatsApp as a site of family language policy contestation and negotiation.

Keywords: Digital families; family language policy; language ideologies; WhatsApp; home language socialisation



“I try, I try”...: navigating and creating inclusive multilingual spaces through vulnerability and Linguistic Citizenship

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Many in the social sciences have noted the need for frameworks of citizenship necessitated by trends of increased mobility as well as flexible, global, and mobile citizenship (Nyamnjoh 2017). There is a need for new and more flexible frameworks of both citizenship and multilingualism “informed by histories of relationships, interconnectedness, networks and conviviality” (Nyamnjoh 2017:266). The work of many Southern scholars suggests that the frameworks that are needed are not in fact new (Maturana and Cabezón; 2001, Makalela; 2016, Nyamnjoh; 2017). New frameworks of citizenship and multilingualism can surely benefit from such precolonial practices which encompass similar values as those of ubuntu (Makalela 2016) and the currency of conviviality, (Nyamnjoh: 2017). Stroud (2015: 22) suggests Linguistic Citizenship (LC) as a framework that focuses on relationality and shifting identities through the use and performance of one’s linguistic repertoire as “acts of citizenship”. These acts refer to “deeds by which actors constitute themselves (and others) as subjects of rights” (Isin 2009: 371) and in this way citizenship is viewed as not only a status but deliberate acts of claiming citizenship (Stroud: 2015). This paper discusses the discursive practices of multilingual black South African staff and students at Stellenbosch University and how they make use of their linguist repertoires to position themselves in varying social space on and around campus. This language use reflects an acknowledgement of the ideological nature of language and how important a tool language is to navigate this. The paper explores the vulnerable act of trying to accommodate and assimilate using multilingual repertoires as well as acts of resistance through the use or refusal to use other repertoires.



From Dissonance to Dialogue: Theorising Multilingual Tutorial Practice through the UCDP Language Development Project at Rhodes University

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South African higher education is marked by a fundamental tension: students enter university with rich, plurilingual repertoires, yet tutorial spaces continue to operate predominantly through the medium of English. This dissonance between students' lived linguistic realities and the monolingual norms of academic discourse constrains epistemic access and participation. This paper draws on the work of the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) Language Development Project at Rhodes University to theorise and reflect on a practice-based response to this tension.

The paper presents two interconnected interventions. The first is a series of workshops for tutors and tutor coordinators, designed to build critical awareness of, and practical strategies for, multilingual tutorial facilitation. The second is the development of a dedicated chapter: *Tutoring in Multilingual Contexts: Roles, Practices, and Possibilities for Engage*, a peer tutor companion workbook produced by the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL). The chapter reframes multilingualism not as a deficit to be managed, but as a repertoire of linguistic resources to be mobilised in support of understanding, participation, and academic success.

Drawing on Kathleen Heugh's notion of transknowledging (Heugh, 2021), alongside concepts of language as a resource and epistemic access, this paper theorises how the chapter was conceptualised and reflects on its potential to position tutors as key agents of linguistic inclusion. Transknowledging offers a productive frame for understanding how multilingual tutors and students do not merely switch between languages, but actively draw on and integrate diverse knowledge systems and linguistic repertoires in the co-construction of meaning. The paper argues that reframing multilingualism as consonant with rather than dissonant from the academic project can transform tutorial spaces into sites of pluriversal affirmation and deeper, more equitable learning.



Attitudes, identities, revitalization, and the making of place in the Woleaian migrant diaspora

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Lenny Saumar (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa; Nathan Fagolmwai, University of Hawai'i at Hilo)

Woleaian (ISO 639-3 woe, Austronesian), is a Micronesian language spoken by those whose ancestral homelands lie on the Outer Islands of Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia. Spoken by <4,000 people (Mayer 2025), due to a traditional history of migration that has been intensified due to global pressures, it is now estimated that there are more community members living in diaspora than in their ancestral homelands. These diaspora communities, mainly based in Guam, Hawai'i, and the United States, show wildly differing levels of language and culture transmission, with a decrease in transmission neatly mapping to geographical distance from their homelands.

This research focuses on the nexus of migration, space, place, language attitudes, and revitalization in order to only assess needs and wants of Woleaian communities in diaspora and homelands, as well as gain an understanding of the ways in which both of these communities operate and interact. It maps linguistic and cultural variation in the atolls from which Woleaian descends, and how this variation transfers onto the diasporic communities, who, in their own way, form atolls in a context of broader societal pressures, prejudice, as well as community building and resilience.

This work centers the resilience in remote and complexly related Oceanic languages, the relationship of variation to highly localized environmental dynamics, multigenerational language and culture transmission, the connection and proficiency of heritage speakers, and the place of intra-community language variation within diasporic identity (e.g., Hall 1990; Canagarajah and Silberstein 2012).

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Hall, Stuart. 1990. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Identity: Community, culture, difference*, edited by J. Rutherford, 222–37. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

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Negotiating Pedagogic Authority Through Reciprocal Multilingualism: A Conceptual Framework for Multilingual Teacher Education

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Teacher education in multilingual societies increasingly recognizes translanguaging as a legitimate pedagogical practice to support learning across languages. However, existing scholarship has focused predominantly on students' multilingual practices, with limited attention to how teacher educators negotiate pedagogic authority when they do not share their students' full linguistic repertoires. This paper addresses that conceptual gap by proposing reciprocal multilingualism as a theoretical framework for understanding multilingual mediation in teacher education. The paper adopts a conceptual research design, drawing on an integrative review and critical synthesis of literature on translanguaging, multilingual pedagogies, sociolinguistics, pedagogic authority, and language ideology. Through thematic conceptual analysis, it identifies convergences, tensions, and gaps in existing scholarship and synthesises these insights into a coherent conceptual framework. The paper argues that pedagogic authority is not diminished when lecturers engage with languages beyond their primary linguistic competence. Instead, authority is renegotiated through reciprocal multilingual engagement, where lecturers and students jointly mobilise their linguistic resources to construct disciplinary knowledge and support meaningful participation. This perspective challenges deficit views of lecturer linguistic competence by positioning multilingual learning as a shared pedagogical responsibility. The proposed framework comprises four interrelated dimensions: lecturer multilingual agency, student linguistic repertoires, collaborative multilingual mediation, and negotiated pedagogic authority. Together, these dimensions foster inclusive participation, deepen conceptual understanding, strengthen target language learning, and support the development of professional identity among future teachers. By repositioning multilingualism as a reciprocal process rather than a one-directional learner strategy, the paper extends current sociolinguistic understandings of translanguaging and offers a new conceptual lens for examining language, power, identity, and pedagogy in multilingual higher education.

Keywords: Reciprocal multilingualism; pedagogic authority; translanguaging; multilingual teacher education; sociolinguistics; multilingual pedagogies; teacher educator identity; higher education.



Bridging morphemes, bridging languages – pluriverses and third spaces in siSwati-English bilingualism

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Emeritus Prof R. Mesthrie, University of Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

Young people in Southern Africa engage with English in education and beyond as an unavoidable and much-embraced language, while valuing a language like isiXhosa and siSwati for intimacy, community and heritage. This paper will explore the extent to which codes within such multilingual repertoires interact in ways that evoke the idea of a pluriverse, including a “third space”, whose elements transcend the borders of the languages in their erstwhile monolingual forms, and go beyond the classic accounts of switching and mixing (e.g. Myers-Scotton, Poplack, Muysken). The present study is based on the practices of 20 young fluent bilinguals in eSwatini, in free-flowing interviews in the medium of mainly siSwati with some English switches (Shongwe 2026). The interviewees covered a range of topics providing a good sense of their social and personal histories. Our analysis focuses on bridging phenomena in multilingualism -- structural elements that facilitate a transition from one language to the other. Among the strategies included here is doubling, including of infinitives (e.g. to *kusita* ‘to help’) and of English prepositions *for*, *from* and *to*, doubled with siSwati elements like prefixes and verbal extensions. A more central type of bridging identified by Mesthrie & Mojapelo (2023) involves the suffix *-isha* to incorporate particular sets of verbs from English into isiXhosa. The present paper considers the extent to which the eSwatini speakers exhibit similar third space effects with *-isha*, showing cross-language constraints.

Mesthrie, R. & L. Mojapelo-Mfazwe 2023. Speaking Xhosa multilingually: a study of contact innovations among Xhosa speakers in Soweto. *Language Dynamics and Change*. 14(1):1-35.

Shongwe, T. 2026. The influence of English on the language practices of urban, bilingual youth in Eswatini. MA thesis, UCT.



The policy discourse surrounding pre-school English-medium education in Hong Kong

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Mian Hu (The University of Hong Kong)

English medium instruction (EMI) is widely studied in universities of many non-Anglophone countries around the world and to a lesser extent in their schools (Bolton et al., 2024; Gu et al., 2025; Rouaghe et al., 2025). However, pre-school education has hardly been noticed in this regard. Anecdotal evidence exists about various forms of English-medium activities at this level in postcolonial as well as other non-English-speaking contexts, but there is very little research on their specific educational and sociolinguistic features. Therefore, adopting a critical sociolinguistic perspective, we explore the policy climate of medium of instruction in Hong Kong kindergartens, specifically addressing the following research question: What are the language policy directions stipulated by official educational policy documents regarding the role of English at this level of education? The data sets include 35 pertinent documents of the Hong Kong Education Bureau (analyzed through qualitative content analysis) and interviews with four expert informants (analyzed through inductive coding). Document findings hardly show any firm line of language policy specifically related to pre-school English-medium education in this context. However, official discourses of teaching and using English, and broader language and literacy mandates reflected in the documents indicate an ambivalent policy discourse. Expert informants' perspectives further explicate some complexities of this policy climate. On this basis, we argue that in the absence of explicit policies, two sociolinguistic forces can determine de facto policy directions at this level: 'the ebb tide effect' of existing school and university EMI prospects, and the broader prevailing image of English as the language of success. We discuss these policies and perspectives within the wider sociolinguistic context Hong Kong and their implications for broader EMI trends and the continued spread and dominance of English worldwide (Mirhosseini, 2025; Mirhosseini & De Costa, 2025).



Critical analysis of versioning in mother tongue-based bilingual assessment: A case study of piloted schools in the Eastern Cape

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The adaptation (versioning) of examination papers from English into African languages has increasingly been adopted as a strategy for widening epistemological access in multilingual education systems across the Global South. In South Africa, this practice has gained prominence within Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) initiatives at the senior secondary level. However, while MTBBE constitutes a pedagogical model aimed at sustained bilingual development, versioning is a distinct assessment practice whose implications remain under-theorised. This study critically examines the effectiveness of versioning Grade 12 preparatory Mathematics and Life Sciences question papers into isiXhosa, with particular attention to its linguistic, pedagogical, and ideological consequences.

Using a qualitative research design, the study draws on focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with 30 purposively selected Mathematics and Life Sciences teachers working within MTBBE contexts, alongside a textual analysis of multilingual question papers administered between 2022 and 2024. Data were analysed thematically, with inductively developed analytical categories across interview, focus group, and document data, enabling triangulation and strengthening interpretive validity.

The findings suggest that versioning plays a limited yet significant role in addressing terminological gaps in Mathematics and the Life Sciences. However, teachers report that versioned assessments do not lead to improved learner performance, largely due to heavy reliance on loanword nativisation, hybrid lexical forms, and inconsistent orthographic practices. These features introduce linguistic instability and increase learners' cognitive load by requiring mental re-translation during assessment. Document analysis further reveals persistent tensions between linguistic authenticity and pedagogical functionality, as well as between standardisation and classroom multilingualism—tensions also evident in multilingual assessment contexts across the Global South.

Rather than locating the problem in versioning per se, the study argues that current challenges stem from its implementation in the absence of coherent linguistic governance. The article proposes structured terminological development, sustained teacher linguistic training, and clearer conceptual separation between MTBBE as a pedagogical framework and versioning as an assessment mechanism as pathways for strengthening multilingual assessment practices.

Keywords: Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE), Assessment versioning, Multilingual assessment, isiXhosa, Language ideology, Cognitive load



Precarization Through the Introduction Programme for Adult Migrants: A Critical Approach

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Guri Bordal Steien, University of Inland Norway

Norway's Introduction Programme, aims to integrate refugees into Norwegian society by enhancing Norwegian language skills and societal knowledge. Two key courses—**Basic Literacy Training** for refugees with limited educational backgrounds and **Parental Guidance** for parents with children under 18—are central components. This study critically evaluates the design and implementation of these courses, drawing on data from a research project following 14 resettled refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo during their participation in the programme.

The project employed an ethnographic approach, with researchers conducting longitudinal fieldwork from 2019 to 2025. Data collection included interviews, classroom observations, and field notes from everyday life. In this paper, we combine theory on colonial discourses, governing technologies, and precarization to investigate participants' experiences in the programme.

The findings suggest that these courses, rather than empowering participants, often perpetuate disempowerment through what we identify as "colonial discourses" and "precaritization" (Lorey, 2015). For example, the literacy course failed to leverage the participants' existing linguistic and cultural resources in favor of a graphocentric approach. This approach left participants unable to reach the programme's formal objectives while providing little practical benefit for their daily life. Similarly, the parental guidance course, treated participants as lacking essential parenting skills. Participants reported feelings of mistrust and alienation, with the programme often undermining their existing parenting strategies and fostering anxiety about Norwegian child-rearing norms.

The study concludes that the programme functions as an intrusive governance tool, shaped by colonial narratives that devalue refugees' existing knowledge and practices. Instead of enabling participants to thrive, the programme may exacerbate their vulnerability and limit opportunities for language learning and meaningful integration into Norwegian society.

Lorey, I. (2015). *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious*. Verso.



Folk linguistic judgements of variation in Lingala (Central Africa): Revisiting perceptual dialectology through a decolonial lens

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Although the approach of perceptual dialectology has been widely applied to “Western” languages and perceptions of linguistic “correctness” and variation, this is a relatively new topic in the study of African languages in postcolonial contexts. Lingala is a widely used language in Central Africa, with an estimated 50–80 million speakers in the DRC, the Republic of Congo, and northern Angola. Designed and “engineered” by Europeans in the early 20th century, Lingala was then employed in the Belgian colonial army. During the period of missionary hegemony as gatekeepers of the educational system and elite, “correct” language use was commonly rewarded with administrative/ clerical posts, while “deficient” use of Lingala was punished with stunted socioeconomic progress, having a long-lasting effect on speakers.

Based on fieldwork conducted in the Belgian diaspora, this paper investigates speakers’ attitudes towards different regiolectal varieties and sociolectal styles of Lingala, a language still often associated with its colonial past. The paper aims to extend perceptual dialectology in the direction of decolonial practices through which speakers in the diaspora and the DRC communicate their awareness of linguistic difference beyond or against colonial ideas. We also intend to show how speakers epistemologically rewrite and renegotiate the historiography of missionary language planning through their folk-linguistic views on variation. One hypothesis is that studying speakers’ opinions beyond elitist discourses may help delink a lingua franca’s colonial history sociolinguistically from speakers’ contemporary language use. This study highlights how integrating decolonial perspectives into perceptual dialectology offers new insights into language attitudes and speaker agency in postcolonial contexts; with fresh empirical data it may contribute to new theory production in the study of variation.

Keywords: Perceptual dialectology, Lingala, Central Africa, diaspora, language attitudes, decolonial linguistics



Decolonising the Discourse on Pan-African Integration: Language, Publics, Culture

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The search for decolonised Pan-African integration has been at the centre of debate since the first Pan-African conference held at the Westminster Town Hall, London from 23-25 July 1900. However, most mainstream research reports on this topic rest on internalised Euro-modernist models that tend to get in the way of thinking anew. The benefits of Africa's diverse cultural, linguistic and traditions of knowing in crafting alternative pathways for thinking otherwise about Pan-African integration have yet to be fully appreciated. Would a decolonial theory of Pan-Africanism that is built from below—that is, from the perspective of lived experiences of diverse African communities of practice—facilitate the realisation of a dream that has eluded mainstream political initiatives for decades? Drawing on insights from the book *Pan-African Integration from Below* (Ndhlovu & Masuku, 2025), this paper brings linguistic, cultural, and grassroots mediators of identity narratives to the well-trodden, but elusive, project of Pan-Africanism. It pulls together three distinct, yet interrelated, strands of social-scientific theorisation—language, publics, and culture—in crafting the vernacular discourse approach as a fruitful pathway for Pan-Africanism that might work for all. The vernacular discourse approach pays attention to the agency of local actors in carving social, cultural, and political spaces to live, to thrive, and literally, to breathe—on their own terms and in ways that sidestep identity narratives imposed by instruments of state-centric colonial ideologies. Ethnographic data collected through oral interviews and focus group discussions on the language practices and experiences of African diasporas in Australia and cross-border traders sampled from three African ports of entry support the overarching themes and arguments explored. The conclusion is that a decolonial mindset must fundamentally be the default setting of how we go about crafting Pan-African integration from below. This is because decolonising enables us to confront, challenge, and ultimately unsettle those colonial matrices of power that stand in the way of rethinking Pan-Africanism anew.



Motivations and Processes for Linguistic Change in the Construction of Gabonese French Locutions and Collocations

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Numerous studies have notably described the different linguistic structures of Gabonisms, i.e., lexical particularities of Gabonese French. Sociolinguistic studies have been limited to the synchronic description of linguistic variations within social classes and/or urban interactions in Gabon. However, many lexico-semantic items in Gabonese French result from the linguistic changes that occur in the French spoken in Gabon. Furthermore, language is influenced by social and/or societal phenomena to reflect its societal or territorial environment. Thus, a hypothesis can be formulated that societal or territorial phenomena could be at the origin of linguistic changes.

This study aims to identify the motivations and the processes of the construction of Gabonese French locutions and collocations through linguistic change. A distinction is made between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. In the context of the description of lexical units, Philips (2008) formulates, within the lexical submorphemic framework, a hypothesis of an extralinguistic motivation of a causal nature. This hypothesis is based on the principle according to which “a linguistic fact is motivated when it appears determined by the extralinguistic” (Cotte 1993: 129). Thus, lexical items such as borrowings and neologisms, which are linguistic processes, are indeed motivated by extralinguistic factors.

Based on the abovementioned hypothesis and within a sociolinguistic theory perspective, this paper adopts a grounded-theory qualitative approach to examine the different extralinguistic phenomena and the linguistic processes participating in the semantic construction of Gabonisms. The corpus used for this study is a set of Gabonese French dictionaries and stories. This makes a total of 5,000 lexical and grammatical collocations of Gabonese French. The methodology consisted of undertaking a lexicological analysis and establishing a nomenclature, and collecting information through a field survey from 100 Gabonese men and women. Findings of this study contribute to the characterization of Gabonese French within the worldwide French language.



A Sociolinguistic Theory Investigation of Students' English Language Deficiency in Namibia

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Various studies have highlighted the English language deficiency amongst the students at the University of Namibia. The current study seeks to identify the root cause of this phenomenon within a sociolinguistic theory. The study proceeds from the theoretical hypothesis that the causes of a social phenomenon that implicates language might be embedded in social factors and cultural norms that influence how people use, perceive, and interact with language. In the context of Namibia, language diversity, the national language-in-education policy and the inter-ethnic daily language interactions are some of the factors that attract interest in understanding students' English language deficiency. This study focuses on undergraduate students at the University of Namibia's Faculty of Education. The study adopts a grounded theory research design and a systematic literature review within a qualitative research methodology perspective to collect data with purposive sampling methods and documentary analysis month. The results of this study are expected to contribute to defining the concept of the sociolinguistic root cause of a social phenomenon, i.e., social factors and cultural norms that influence how people use, perceive, and interact with language. This study paper contains three main sections. Section 1 gives an overview of the English language deficiency issue in the Namibian context. Section 2 reports on the methodological underpinnings and data analysis of the study. Section 3 highlights the findings of the study and provides the discussion thereof.



Whose Child Must be Taught in a Vernacular Language: The Case of South African Schools

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Research shows that the highest cognitive development is attainable through the learner's primary language. Accordingly, the Afrocentric voices in the research fraternity have called for the inclusion of indigenous African languages in the South African education for epistemological purposes. Despite the seemingly tremendous call, the question, "Whose child must be taught in a vernacular?", keeps coming up, obviously from a countering and conservative voice.

Reconciling the endlessness of the debate on the language in education with the said question, the author of this paper decided to examine this question to critically analyse the dynamics of the linguistic landscape in the South African schools. Whilst the main aim of the paper is to expedite the implementation of language equity enshrined in the constitution, the paper examines the possibilities that may have delayed the envisaged changes in the education language policy.

The paper uses the question to reveal some possible contradictions in the advocacy for the epistemological changes.

Keywords: Vernacular language, South African Schools, linguistic landscape, South African Schools, Conflict of interests.



From SANTED to BAQONDE: Multilingualism, Epistemic Access, and Language Policy Transformation at a South African University

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Multilingualism has become a central analytic concern in sociolinguistics, particularly in debates on epistemic justice, language policy, and the transformation of higher education in postcolonial contexts. In South Africa, despite progressive multilingual language policies, English continues to function as the dominant language of teaching and learning, often in tension with the heterogeneous linguistic repertoires of students. This paper engages sociolinguistic discussions by examining how institutional multilingual interventions mediate epistemic access within higher education.

The paper draws on Fricker's (2007) theorisation of epistemic justice to conceptualise access not merely as formal admission to university spaces, but as access to disciplinary knowledge and conceptual meaning making. From this perspective, language operates as a key sociolinguistic resource shaping epistemic inclusion and exclusion. When students' linguistic repertoires are marginalised within academic domains, conditions of hermeneutical and testimonial injustice emerge, constraining engagement, success and retention.

The paper analyses the institutional trajectory from the South African Norwegian Tertiary Education Development (SANTED) to the BAQONDE Project at Rhodes University. SANTED is examined as a catalytic intervention that repositioned language at the centre of teaching and learning, providing impetus for the implementation of multilingual language policy. Building on this foundation, BAQONDE extended the project of multilingualism through the intellectualisation of African languages, including terminology development and multilingual pedagogical practices.

The analysis demonstrates how these initiatives collectively informed language policy revision and contributed to the partial reconfiguration of linguistic and epistemic hierarchies within the university. While moments of consonance between policy, pedagogy, and epistemic transformation are evident, the paper also identifies persistent dissonances arising from institutional constraints and uneven implementation. The paper argues that the SANTED-BAQONDE continuum offers a theoretically generative case for understanding multilingualism as an ongoing sociolinguistic struggle over epistemic authority in pluriversal higher education.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Higher education, Epistemic justice, Language ideology, Intellectualisation of African languages.



Language Policy Meets the Learner: Humanising Pedagogy in South African Higher Education Institutions

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This paper critically examines the tensions between language policy and learner experience in South African higher education, arguing for the urgent adoption of humanising pedagogy as a transformative framework. While institutional language policies often reflect colonial legacies and prioritize English as the dominant medium of instruction, they frequently overlook the linguistic realities and epistemic identities of students from diverse backgrounds. Drawing on decolonial theory and Freirean pedagogy, the study explores how rigid language practices can alienate learners, reproduce inequality, and undermine academic belonging.

Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative design that integrates three strands of evidence: discourse analysis of institutional policy documents, thematic coding of semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students, and classroom observations across multiple faculties. This triangulated approach ensures that policy texts, learner narratives, and pedagogical practices are examined in relation to one another, providing a robust account of how language policy is experienced and enacted in higher education.

Through this analysis, the paper reveals how humanising pedagogy, centred on relationality, dignity, and linguistic inclusion can reframe language policy to better serve the learner. It advocates for multilingual approaches that validate students' home languages, foster critical engagement, and promote epistemic access. In doing so, the paper positions humanising pedagogy not as a supplement to policy, but as a necessary foundation for equitable and responsive higher education.

Keywords: Humanising Pedagogy, Language Policy, Multilingual Education, Linguistic Justice, Decolonial Education, Language-in-Education Policy



Unsettling the monolingual mindset in English offering

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The world over is characterized by a multilingual reality. This reality could be located within individuals and sometimes within society. However, the colonial expansion of dominant languages sought to erase the multilingual reality by imposing a singular language. This imposition presented itself in the form of status planning where, for example, in the case of South Africa, English was made the only official language when the British annexed the land. Similarly, in Mozambique, the colonial Portuguese became the sole official language whilst English became the only official language of Namibia. In all these situations, the education system became the operationalization zone of official languages mostly at the exclusion of other languages. This means that in the education system everything had to be learnt through the official language, sometimes even other languages. In South Africa, for instance, other African languages, especially at postgraduate level, are still learnt through the medium of English such that dissertations and theses of African languages are often written in English. On the other hand, English has continued to adopt a monolingual mindset in that its offering is at the exclusion of other languages. One cannot find any dissertation or thesis of English written in an African language (or any language for that matter). Nonetheless, whilst the pedagogical utility of such practices as code-switching have been frowned upon, there is a gradual shift in English tuition where translingual practices are being cited as formidable in speeding up the acquisition of English foreign language. This paper therefore traces this shift in English offering especially in the backdrop of resistance by certain institutions of higher learning that are fixated on monolingual mindset.

Keywords: monolingualism, multilingualism, translingual practice, code-switching, English language teaching



Lexicographical Dissonance and the Marginalisation of isiMpondo in isiXhosa Dictionaries

Mrs Thandile Ntumba, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

Prof Dion Nkomo (Rhodes University)

isiXhosa is characterised by considerable internal variation, and debates continue regarding standard isiXhosa and its regional varieties. Nyamende (1994) argues that, were it not for missionary and colonial influences, some isiXhosa varieties could have developed as independent Nguni languages. More than two centuries after isiXhosa was first written, speakers of marginalised varieties continue to experience the effects of standardisation, often encountering isiXhosa primarily as an institutional rather than a lived language reality. This is particularly evident among isiMpondo speakers.

Given the central role of dictionaries in language standardisation, this paper examines the lexicographical treatment of isiMpondo in *The Greater Dictionary of (isi)Xhosa, Isichazi-magama Sesixhosa* and *Oxford Isichazi-magama sesikolo*. The analysis draws on front matter texts, abbreviation systems and selected dictionary articles to establish how dialectal variation is represented. While later dictionaries extend lexical coverage beyond isiTshiwo, other varieties are consistently assigned a secondary position behind standard lexical items. This marginal approach renders dialect speakers largely invisible within authoritative lexicographical discourse.

The paper argues that such practices constitute a form of lexicographical dissonance and reflect the enduring influence of language standardisation rooted in missionary and colonial language projects. It further considers whether dictionaries, as historical products of language codification, can be reimagined through more inclusive and dialect-sensitive approaches. The paper underscores the need for dialect-specific dictionaries to complement standard isiXhosa lexicography and promote sociolinguistic inclusion.

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Pahl, W.H. et al. 1989–2006. *The Greater Dictionary of (isi)Xhosa*. Alice: University of Fort Hare.

Tshabe, S. et al. 2008. *Isichazi-magama Sesixhosa*. Pietermaritzburg: Nutrend Publishers.



Critical Scholarship of Hope: Cultivating Equitable Language Teacher Education and Schools in Poland

Dr Aleksandra Olszewska, University of Oslo, NORWAY

The severity of current global and local crises, fueled by hegemonic violence and colonial greed, demands engagement with a pedagogy of hope. This paper illuminates the Critical Scholarship of Hope (CSH) framework, defined as a critically reflective and active struggle enacted in solidarity with others, seeking social justice through the reinvention of power, aiming ultimately for the restoration of humanity. Anchored philosophically in the African concept of *Ubuntu* and Freire's (1970) anti-oppressive struggle, CSH utilizes dimensions of reflection, action, and solidarity.

I contextualize this study in Poland, a country that has seen a significant influx of refugee-background students (RBSs), including between 75,000 and 200,000 Ukrainian students following the 2022 invasion of Russia in Ukraine. Poland maintains an anti-refugee climate, often perpetuating deficit narratives, especially concerning Muslim and non-white refugees, which can be internalized by educators. Also, teachers and language educators remain un- or underprepared to work with RBSs using culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogies. Systemic modifications are needed in professional development (PD) programs to challenge stereotypes and transform beliefs.

In this paper, I describe a PD workshop conducted in a Polish public school—a diverse site near a refugee reception center—as a direct response to these issues. The workshop, co-led with a school insider, aimed to sensitize teachers to the unjust linguistic and academic realms of RBSs and transform their practices. Polish teachers participated in a “sink or swim” (submersion) educational model. Participants then experienced the “immersion” model, learning about Total Physical Response, comprehensible input, and translanguaging. Furthermore, the PD challenged deficit beliefs by platforming RBS counter-stories, often gathered through the prompt, “I wish my teacher knew that...”. By fostering critical reflection and active practice, this intervention demonstrated how PD can lead to the co-construction of knowledge and empower educators to become “agents of social change” for RBSs.



Radical multilingual and multicultural spaces of hope for refugee-background students in Poland

Dr Aleksandra Olszewska, University of Oslo, NORWAY

The current worldwide context continues to witness inadequate responses to the humanitarian crises and forced migration. Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, for instance, demonstrate daily the dehumanizing realities faced by millions of children of refugee background. Guided by the constructs of translanguaging (García, 2009), critical pedagogy and hope (Freire, 1998; hooks, 1994), this qualitative study examines an exemplary school in Poland, in which educators advocate for refugee-background students' (RBSs) language rights and needs as well as affirm RBSs' identities and leverage students' multilingual repertoires. Methods of this qualitative study included field notes, interviews, and informal conversations with RBSs, teachers and school leaders. Findings from this study provide rich insights into the culturally and linguistically sustainable policies and practices of school leaders and educators (Paris, 2012). This presentation illuminates how a public school, situated in Poland, at the crossroads of Western and Eastern Europe, at the historic border of the Soviet and democratic post-Soviet eras, facing a humanitarian crisis at its Eastern border due to Russia's invasion in Ukraine, creates radical spaces of multilingual hope for RBSs. It also demonstrates how the school deals with the triumphs and challenges of multicultural and multilingual education at this historically and socio-geopolitically critical and uncertain present and future in this region. This work's objective is to advocate for imagining new ways of being and languaging so that we can begin to act differently upon the world (García & Li Wei, 2014). As monolingual schools are not an adequate response to the transforming societies of Central and Eastern Europe affected by the ongoing invasion of Russia in Ukraine, we need transformative multilingual pedagogies for RBSs in pursuit of social justice.



“Refugee is the name we have, that’s what they call us”: Refugee-background students’ response to the refugee term

Dr Aleksandra Olszewska, University of Oslo, NORWAY

While the term refugee is legally defined by the United Nations and internationally employed by institutions, the refugee construct is a multidimensional entity, consisting of legal, administrative, political, historical, and social layers (Voutira & Doná, 2007). On one hand, legal terms matter as being granted refugee status “can often mean the difference between life and death for asylum claimants” (Wooley, 2017, p. 379). On the other hand, classifying people as refugees is a violent act of naming and oppression as it becomes a tool of people’s categorisation and essentialisation (Paris, 2019). This paper proposes a framework called Refugee-background Students’ Response to Refugee Term (RRR), which complicates the legal construct of refugee. Data for this paper derive from a larger study conducted with four Chechen refugee-background students (RBSs) in Poland. Based on previous participatory studies (e.g., Busch, 2010; Prasad, 2013), the data sources include interviews as well as language self-portraits and I Am From poems constructed by the participants which provided a multimodal, multilingual, and democratic space for their voices and agency. Guided by RefugeeCrit and UN refugee definition (Delgado, 1989; Strekalova-Hughes et al., 2018; UNHCR, 1951), participants’ responses were shaped by majoritarian stories and counter-stories about and from refugees. The study’s findings have demonstrated that RBSs embrace a spectrum of different responses to the term refugee as they navigate their realities: a) refugee vs. foreigner vs. stranger distinction, (b) being unaware of the refugee term, (c) unquestioned internalizing of the refugee term, and (d) neutral or/and positive positionality toward the refugee term. The RRR model forefronts the complex nature of the refugee term and may be applied as a conceptual tool to voice and illustrate refugees’ own perspectives.



Voices of belonging: Indigenous-language radio as a tool for language preservation and identity negotiation

Dr Kevin Onyenankeya, University of Fort Hare, SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa, a confluence of multi-ethnic groups with racially defined socioeconomic and political structures, is facing linguistic tensions, an identity reckoning, and an intense struggle for belonging. Despite the recognition of 12 official languages, indigenous languages continue to seek a place of pride, especially in the media space, where English and Afrikaans have maintained power and control for over 100 years (Onyenankeya, 2023).

Over the past few decades, indigenous-language radio stations have gained traction in South Africa, particularly among grassroots listeners (BRC, 2023). They provide communities with outlets and linguistic resources to address issues that affect their lives and to navigate identities shaped by tradition and modernity (Fombad & Jiyane, 2019).

This paper examines the role of indigenous-language radio as a platform for identity negotiation, language acquisition, and preservation, and the sociolinguistic dynamics that shape indigenous-language media preferences.

Drawing on cultural affinity theory and sociolinguistic theory, the study employs an exploratory qualitative design involving in-depth, semi-structured interviews with listeners of two indigenous language radio stations. It iteratively analyses the data to explain how programming in Xhosa and Setswana languages helps listeners reaffirm traditional values and express their identities.

Results show that Indigenous language radio is crucial for individuals navigating the intersection of traditional and modern identities. Participants perceived indigenous-language radio as a strategic site for debate and discursive interaction on national and local issues, as well as for deconstructing dominant frames of reference and representations of themselves and others. Broadcasting in an indigenous language proved to be a strong form of resistance to linguistic imperialism and was critical in preserving the mother tongues.

Through its culturally nuanced offerings, indigenous-language radio can revive suppressed or forgotten histories, counter hegemonic narratives, foster a sense of belonging, and empower listeners to navigate group identity despite challenges such as limited resources and low youth engagement.



Rethinking commodification of language in times of artificial intelligence

Prof Joseph Sung-Yul Park, National University of Singapore, SINGAPORE

Critical analysis of language in neoliberalism in the early 2000s explored how language is becoming a subject of managerial control for economic profit, a process discussed as commodification of language (Cameron 2005, Heller 2003), though such studies were also problematized for not fully situating the phenomenon within the capitalist labor process (Block 2018, Holborow 2018, Petrovic and Yazan 2021). This talk revisits the notion of commodification of language in order to understand the current artificial intelligence (AI) boom, centered around generative AI technologies such as large language models (LLMs), from a political economic perspective. For this, it defines commodification of language as a process by which language as doing – free, conscious life-activity through which we transform the world around us (Holloway 2010) – becomes appropriated for capitalist profit. According to this perspective, LLMs, trained through massive amounts of human language data, extract profit from the affective, situated, and transformative doing of human communicative action, while abstracting away that doing so that the machine may appear to have mastered language. I illustrate this through the phenomenon of model collapse, in which AI models that are repeatedly trained on AI-generated data eventually fail. Model collapse occurs because, in stochastic language models, low-frequency events in language data get lost (Shumailov et al 2024). In linguistic terms, those low-frequency tails represent deviations from routinized ways of communicating in which humans seek to transform material conditions of the world around them. In other words, what is lost in AI-generated data is language as doing, evidencing that LLMs can only be sustained by our doing distilled in human-generated data. This suggests that a key way for contesting the relentless commodification of language underlying the AI boom is to remember that it is not the algorithm but our doing of language that gives value to LLMs.



When Language Matters: Complex Linguistic Dynamics in Multilingual Student Counselling

Ms Gwen Payi, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

Prof Dion Nkomo (Rhodes University - SOUTH AFRICA), Dr. Melvin Ouma-Odero

This qualitative study explores the linguistic and cultural complexities experienced by students who speak African languages as their mother tongue when accessing psychological counselling at a historically White higher education institution, viewed as a microcosm of South Africa's broader sociolinguistic reality. It interrogates the intersection of language, psychological support, and institutional language policy at Rhodes University, situating these dynamics within broader debates on decolonisation and transformation in South African higher education. Drawing on semi-structured qualitative interviews, the study reveals persistent dissonance between dominant Western, individualistic psychological frameworks and collectivist African worldviews, particularly those grounded in the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Participants' narratives indicate that culturally embedded expressions are frequently misinterpreted within counselling encounters, while limited recognition of extended familial and communal responsibilities contributes to feelings of judgment, alienation, and emotional disengagement. Although students often possess functional proficiency in English, engaging in counselling in a language other than their mother tongue produces emotional strain, linguistic anxiety, and increased cognitive load, which restricts self-expression and emotional depth. Crucially, language barriers are not limited to English, students also encounter difficulties with counsellors using IsiXhosa as the dominant language, highlighting the complexities of multilingualism within the African context. The study contends that universities must acknowledge the linguistically and culturally pluralistic nature of their student bodies and, in response, implement counselling services that are aligned with students' lived realities through linguistically and culturally mindful practices.

Payi, G. S. (2025). *Language and students' access to psychological provision at a South African university: An exploratory case study* (Unpublished master's thesis). Rhodes University.



EMI with Chinese Characteristics: Evolving Policy Ideologies and Discourses in Higher Education

Ms Yinchun Pei, The University of Hong Kong, HONG KONG

Seyyed-Abdolhamid Mirhosseini (University of Hong Kong)

The evolving policies of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Chinese higher education reflect a shift from an early instrumental view of accessing Western knowledge to current emphasis on promoting national development, global competitiveness, and cultural subjectivity. In response to the dual demands of improving EMI quality and enhancing cultural awareness, the notion of EMI with Chinese characteristics has emerged as a guiding principle, shaping the ideological framing of EMI policies across different levels of governance. In this context, we investigate how EMI is ideologically constructed and enacted across national and institutional levels, specifically addressing two questions: How have national and institutional policies framed EMI in terms of language and cultural ideologies and how have their emphases shifted over time? The institutional analysis is grounded in a corpus of policy texts from different types of universities in Guangdong Province. Combining qualitative content analysis of 58 national policy documents and 15 institutional policy documents from five universities, the study reveals a layered and evolving policy discourse: national policies increasingly position EMI as a means of technological empowerment and cultural export, centered on a triadic framework of “Language, Discipline, Culture” and institutional policies usually tend to frame EMI as a tool for branding and English-language prestige, with varying degrees of engagement with cultural dimensions. Among institutional types, cooperative institutions and regular universities represent two complementary EMI models – one localizing international standards, the other internationalizing local ones – together shaping a diversified EMI landscape with Chinese characteristics. These findings point to an emerging ideological dissonance between policy levels, in which institutional actors selectively interpret and adapt national policy narratives. On this basis, we argue that such dissonance reflects deeper tensions between nationalist-cultural ambitions and global neoliberal imperatives in China’s evolving EMI project.



Legitimacy Across Scales: AI and the Online–Offline Nexus in Transnational Classrooms

Mr Jens Yanzhi Peng, Beijing 21st Century School, CHINA

This paper examines how legitimacy is negotiated in GenAI-assisted classrooms through online and offline communicative practices. Building on work on indexicality and legitimacy (Silverstein, 2003; Blommaert, 2010), I conceptualize the AI-mediated classroom as a polycentric arena where multiple normative regimes - peer, institutional, and transnational - coexist and compete. In such environments, what counts as "good English" or "legitimate work" is continuously evaluated and policed through situated interaction.

Drawing on one year of participant observation in a Grade 10 English-medium classroom at an international high school in China, I examine how teachers and students navigate across an online-offline nexus (OON; Androutsopoulos, 2025) and hybrid communicative spaces (de Souza e Silva et al., 2025). Classroom interaction extends through shared discussion boards, AI-generated texts, and multimodal postings. These environments make communicative practices persistently visible and rapidly evaluated, circulated, contested across offline and online spaces.

AI-assisted outputs become a focal point of scrutiny, where authorship, effort, and creativity are publicly negotiated by both peers and teachers, as objects of celebration and ridicule. Students use AI-generated English to align with transnational educational expectations, while texts perceived as "too good" are discredited through peer evaluation, with evaluations traveling across TimeSpaces. Meanwhile, teacher's use of AI-although institutionally encouraged-is similarly subject to student interpretation, being evaluated as "modern", "efficient" or "lazy".

I argue that these evaluative processes are facilitated by OON and operate across multiple sociolinguistic scales, linking local classroom interaction to institutional norms, transnational education trajectories, and global ideologies of academic literacy. GenAI does not introduce entirely new evaluative criteria; rather, it intensifies the visibility and circulation of semiotic resources, thereby accelerating scale-making processes, through which legitimacy is negotiated. The paper contributes to debates on scale and polycentricity by showing how AI-mediated classroom ecologies reconfigure the relationship between visibility, evaluation, and legitimacy.

Androutsopoulos, J. (2025). Online-offline nexus: genealogies and trajectories, scales and sites. *The Routledge handbook of language and digital communication*. Routledge.

Blommaert, J. (2010). *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge University Press.

de Souza e Silva, A., Campbell, S. W., & Ling, R. (2025). Hybrid Space revisited: from concept toward theory. *Communication Theory*, 35(1), 14-24.

Silverstein, M. (2003). Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language & communication*, 23(3-4), 193-229.



Aspects of Global Citizenship Education of teaching and learning the neighbouring language in a European border region

Prof Dr Julia Putsche, University of Strasbourg, FRANCE

Our contribution aims to present and analyse the socio-educational situation of German at the French-German border in Alsace. Work carried out over the last fifteen years (Putsche, 2011; Putsche & Faucompré, 2022) shows the extent to which geographical and political-educational circumstances do not automatically generate positive attitudes and perceptions towards learning the language. First, we will focus on a detailed and multidisciplinary state of the art (sociolinguistics, sociodidactics, history, sociology) based on field research on the French side of the border (Wassenberg, 2020 ; Haman, 2019). Secondly, we will present the initial results of ongoing empirical research focusing on sensitive and artistic approaches to data collection among teachers and learners of German. As part of a delegation to the Institut Universitaire de France (IUF), we were able to set up a three-year longitudinal study of a cohort of German teachers and learners in Strasbourg. As part of the 'All-Tra-Co' project, we are collecting representations of language, teaching and learning in relation to German and Germany. Learning German is compulsory in Alsace, but despite this language and education policy and the region's history, learning the language is in decline, as sociolinguistic representations clearly show. Our contribution discusses this sociolinguistic aspect from an epistemological and empirical perspective and aims to contribute to sociolinguistic research on border regions in Europe and around the world.

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Putsche, J. (2011). Spracheinstellungen von Grundschülerinnen und Grundschülern in einer Grenzregion : Qualitative Untersuchung in zwei paritätisch unterrichteten ersten Klassen mit Zielsprache Französisch. Peter Lang.

Putsche, J., & Faucompré, C. (2022). Rupture ou continuité ? Des représentations de la langue-culture allemande chez des jeunes adultes en Alsace. Synergies Pays germanophones, 15. <https://gerflint.fr/synergies-pays-germanophones>

Wassenberg, B. (2020). Upper Rhine Region. Dans B. Wassenberg & B. Reitel (Éds.), Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration (p. 808-811). Peter Lang.



Agency, ancestrality and relationality in Indigenous Amazigh women language activists' discourse and memory work in Morocco

Ms Silvia Quattrini, Adelaide University, AUSTRALIA

Morocco recognised the Amazigh language as official alongside Arabic in 2011. With an estimate 40% of the population being Amazigh-speaking, this recognition came after decades of activism led by the Amazigh Cultural Movement as a response to state repression and exclusion policies (Ennaji 2005). Over millennia, Amazigh women heavily contributed to knowledge production and the preservation of Amazigh society, of which language transmission is a fundamental component, however they were often invisibilised in modern narratives (Sadiqi 2014).

This presentation focuses on the narratives and biographical positionings of Amazigh women language activists and their construction of linguistic identity and citizenship and articulations of activist stances (Stroud 2001). The presentation is based on data collected during fieldwork conducted in 2024. It consists of semi-structured interviews, storytelling, and notes recorded with 11 Indigenous Amazigh women educators and activists from different parts of Morocco employing a feminist decolonial approach. The presentation explores expressions of 'ancestral agency' (Sadiqi 2014) through acts of resistance and re-existence (Laghssais and Comins-Mingol, 2023). It looks at how women articulate concepts of ancestrality and relationality through memory and post-memory work (Ndlovu et al. 2024) and how language safeguarding and reclamation is framed around cultural, spiritual, and/or communitarian/family connections.

By centring the experiences of interviewed Amazigh women, the presentation aims at providing a feminist interpretation of the women's discursive framing of their activism to show how they renegotiate and reshape their discursive positioning and organising practices.



‘We don’t know what it means in Pashto’ : Multilingual memory and the disclosure of past experiences in interpreter-mediated interaction

Mrs Lotte Remue, Ghent University, BELGIUM

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

Sociolinguistic research in the field of migration has already demonstrated the critical role of language as a tool to express and assess past experiences in multilingual institutional encounters (Maryns 2006). High quality linguistic support, therefore, seems of the utmost importance. This is, however, not straightforward, as individuals carry unique and functionally organized linguistic repertoires, intrinsically linked to their varying mobilities (Blommaert and Rampton 2011). To explore how language choice and interpreter mediation may influence people’s ability to convey past experiences, this paper looks specifically at memory disclosure between an unaccompanied minor and his legal guardian. It draws on transcribed audio-recordings of ethnographic observations to demonstrate how a lack of congruence between the minor’s and interpreter’s linguistic repertoires affects the ability to convey past experiences, inducing incoherence and even misunderstandings. The results call for critical reflection on the terminology currently employed in (autobiographical) memory studies, and emphasise the importance of transparency about linguistic repertoires, especially in communication with vulnerable populations.

Blommaert, J., & Rampton, B. (2011). Language and Superdiversity. *Diversities*, 13(2), 1-20.

Maryns, K. (2006). *The asylum speaker: Language in the Belgian asylum procedure*. Routledge.



The Sound of Openness: Language, Disability Laughter and Linguistic Citizenship

Mr Jason Richardson, University of Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

This paper explores the relationship between language and vulnerability through the lens of disability. Drawing on Butler's (2006) understanding of vulnerability as an "openness to others," and Stroud's (2001) notion of Linguistic Citizenship I argue that vulnerability is not a deficit but a vital condition of being—one that invites ethical engagement rather than avoidance. builds on recent sociolinguistic work by Kubanyiova & Creese (2024) and Canagarajah (2024),I situate my discussion within the broader work of decolonial and crip theory by bringing theories of vulnerability, ethics, and humour into dialogue This paper employs humour as a mythology (Waston, 2015) to illustrate how laughter can function as a site of both contention and connection—inviting recognition of difference without erasing agency and voice.



Envoicing the planet in a pluriversal world: A posthumanist framework for examining climate communication practices in Irish and German media

Dr Sarah Josefine Schaefer, University of Limerick, IRELAND

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

Climate change and its detrimental effects across all climate zones and ecosystems are the most challenging issues facing the planet today. Against this background, climate journalism aims to inform and warn about climate change and tries to foster audience engagement with climate action. However, climate reporting has so far failed to generate sufficient public momentum, and professional media are frequently criticised for their human-centred coverage and misrepresentations of climate change (Moernaut et al. 2018). Despite this criticism, there is a significant lack of knowledge in sociolinguistics on how anthropocentric discourses emerge in transmodal (linguistic and semiotic) journalistic practices, and the potential that sociolinguistic insights offer for enhancing climate reporting remains largely unutilised.

My presentation is based on a larger project (funded by Research Ireland and the Irish Environmental Protection Agency) which examines issues that lead to misrepresentations of climate change in Irish and German media. In my presentation, I will introduce an innovative methodological framework that is sensitive to the ontological foundations of transmodal media practices and therefore acknowledges how language practices are spatiotemporally entangled with semiotic resources, the material ecology of the newsroom and social activities. In the light of the current onto-epistemic turn in critical sociolinguistics, I will also explain how my framework combining approaches from sociolinguistics (linguistic ethnography), journalism studies, posthumanist philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), and critical cultural studies advances the move towards a more a spatial approach to communication (Pennycook 2018) and moves beyond dissonance between sociolinguistic theory and empirical work.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Moernaut, R., Mast, J., & Pauwels, L. (2018). *Working Mechanically or Organically?: Climate change journalist and news frames in mainstream and alternative media*. *Journalism Practice*, 12(10), 1311–1331.

Pennycook, A. (2018). *Posthumanist applied linguistics*. Routledge.



Silencing of bilingual learners' power of voices: Monolingual Policy and its implications

Dr Beatha Set, University of Namibia, NAMIBIA

This study challenges the assumption that monolingual language policies can be effectively implemented in multilingual classrooms by demonstrating how English-only enforcement mechanisms actively undermine science learning. Drawing on translanguaging theory (García, 2009) and research on flexible multilingualism in educational contexts (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), this qualitative study examines a Grade 4 Natural Science classroom in a Namibian public school where English serves as the medium of instruction for learners of English as a new language. I reveal how explicit sanctions imposed to enforce English-only policies transformed learners into passive recipients of science knowledge, unable to engage meaningfully with scientific concepts. The findings expose a fundamental contradiction in language education policy while the stated goal is to provide learners with access to English and scientific knowledge, the enforcement of English-only rules paradoxically denies them access to both by eliminating the very linguistic tools they need to construct understanding. This research demonstrates that monolingual policies do not simply fail to accommodate multilingualism; they actively produce educational inequality by privileging linguistic compliance over conceptual learning (McKinney, 2017; Canagarajah, 2011). The data show that in multilingual contexts, the gap between policy intention and classroom reality becomes a barrier to learning rather than a pathway to it. This study contributes to debates on language education policy by documenting the specific mechanisms through which monolingual ideologies operate in practice not merely as abstract policy statements, but through daily sanctions that silence learners and constrain meaning making. I argue that redressing these effects demands language education policies that actively legitimize multiple linguistic resources as pedagogical assets rather than deficits to be eradicated.

Blackledge, A., & Creese, A. (2010). *Multilingualism: A critical perspective*. Continuum.

Canagarajah, S. (2011). Translanguaging in the classroom: Emerging issues for research and pedagogy. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 2, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110239331.1>

García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. Wiley-Blackwell.

McKinney, C. (2017). *Language and power in post-colonial schooling: Ideologies in practice*. Routledge.



“Wretched of the Earth”: A Linguistic-Semiotic Analysis of the Graffiti of Bangladesh 2024 July Uprising

Ms Shaila Shams, Simon Fraser University, CANADA

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

Resistance movements and uprisings convey people’s desire for freedom and justice and promise a new world of potentialities. Therefore, the language of such movements needs to be studied through a conceptualization beyond the positivist and social constructionist understanding of language.

Agamben (1999) offers a unique lens to understand ‘language’ and ‘potentialities’ together. Inspired by Walter Benjamin, he suggests conceptualizing the “existence of language as the existence of potentiality” (1999, p.13). Benjamin (1996) conceives language as coextensive with the animate and inanimate world and that everything communicates their mental beings and content through a higher and pure language, a language of knowledge and sense, in other words, “God’s language”. However, the capitalist neo-liberal commodity culture separates humans from the real world and from ‘pure’ language. Drawing on Cabalist tradition, Agamben calls this separation the segregation of *shekinah* (Hebrew), *sakina* (Arabic)- “separating the tree of knowledge from the tree of life” (80), meaning isolation of knowledge from words. Alam (2020) argues that sakina/shekinah disappears from human language when they lose touch with their soul and reappears in the words of the oppressed in their demand for a new world. In this paper, I look for such expressions of higher language of potentiality in analyzing the graffiti of the Bangladesh July movement.

Informed by Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2000) social semiotic approach and critical analysis of multimodal discourse (van Leeuwen, 2003) , this study analyzes eight selected graffiti exploring how they demonstrate people’s desire for a new society. They were selected on themes of potentialities such as coexistence of all living beings, justice, coexistence of all religions and ethnicities, and solidarity with the global resistance movements. I argue that the language and drawings in the graffiti shows a world of potentialities where the ‘right to live’ of the oppressed can materialize.



Shifting Tongues: A Case Study of Domain Loss and Intergenerational Erosion in the Lala Language of Serenje District, Zambia

Dr Pethias Siame, Kwame Nkrumah University, ZAMBIA

This study investigates the sociolinguistic factors contributing to the endangerment of the Lala language in Zambia's Serenje District. Motivated by the increasing marginalisation of minority indigenous languages in favour of dominant languages, particularly Ibibemba and English, the research employs a qualitative case study design. Twenty native Lala speakers from Kabamba and Serenje villages were purposively selected. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, and analysed through the lens of Social Network Theory to understand language vitality and shift. Findings reveal that Lala is largely confined to informal domains such as home and village contexts, while being absent from formal spheres, including education, governance, and urban life. Key factors driving its endangerment include rural-urban migration, the dominance of Ibibemba in institutional and public domains, weakened intergenerational transmission, low social prestige, and a lack of institutional support. Despite these pressures, some community-driven and familial efforts to maintain the language were noted. The study recommends deliberate policy interventions, including the integration of Lala into local educational curricula and media, to foster its sustained vitality.

Keywords: Domain loss, Lala, language endangerment, language shift, minority languages, Zambia



Sociolinguistic Innovation and Identity Politics: The Rise of Kwenyu and Nyuu in Zambian Political Discourse

Dr Pethias Siame, Kwame Nkrumah University, ZAMBIA

This study investigates the sociolinguistic emergence and entrenchment of the lexical innovations *kwenyu* and *nyuu* within Zambia's dynamic political discourse. Arising from the complex multilingual ecology of the nation, these terms serve as potent indices of political alignment, generational identity, and ideological contestation. Grounded in theories of language contact, indexicality, and social meaning, this research employs a qualitative methodology to analyze data gathered from political rallies, radio talk shows, and digital social media platforms throughout 2025. The findings elucidate the etymological pathways, semantic shifts, and pragmatic functions of these forms, revealing how *kwenyu* (from Tonga *kkwenyuna*, 'to mark') has evolved to signify partisan stance-taking, while *nyuu* (a nativised form of English 'new') indexes modernity and political renewal, particularly among youth. The analysis demonstrates that these are not mere lexical curiosities but are symbolic tools that both reflect and constitute social realities, embodying tensions between tradition and modernity, loyalty and dissent. This article contributes to the broader understanding of language politics, ideological negotiation, and identity construction in multilingual African contexts.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Language Change, Political Discourse, Multilingualism, Identity Marking, Zambia, Lexical Innovation



Leveraging Language in Education Policy: African Languages as catalysts for equitable learning outcomes in multilingual classrooms

Mr Sikhumbuzo Sibanda, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

Language continues to be a source of contestation in the South African education system. This is against the country's colonial and apartheid history epitomised by the 1976 student uprising. The Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) (1997) recognises twelve official languages and advocates for multilingualism. Mohohlwane (2019:127) notes that language in education policy is an important tool that shapes language practices in the education system and in society. Lafon (2009) adds that the command of the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) has implications for the acquisition of knowledge. Learners who do not have sufficient academic proficiency in the LoLT often have problems in learning, not necessarily because they do not understand concepts or ideas, but rather because they fail to grasp their linguistic representation. South Africa's then Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Mosthekga, reported on 15 June 2022 that 80% of learners from Grade 4 continue to learn in a language other than their mother tongue. This is against the transformative constitution and its supporting policies and acts like the South African schools Act and the LiEP. Based on empirical research in the Northern Cape, this paper calls for the leveraging of the LiEP for epistemic and social access to knowledge in South African schools. This paper concludes by giving some suggestions for classroom practice.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Language-in-Education Policy, mother tongue instruction

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Motivations behind South African Sign Language Descriptive Toponyms

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Descriptive signed toponyms are geographical name signs which are central to Deaf naming traditions. They symbolise unique physical geographical, historical, or cultural characteristics that define the lived experiences of Deaf communities. At the of the toponyms is the reflection of etymological significance and linguistic features of Sign Languages and Deaf culture. Signed toponyms form a kind of parallel toponymy imbued in Deaf-specific cultural practices and linguistic patterns. They hold potential for rich and interesting data, yet studies in the area remain scarce. Framed within sociocultural models, this study explores the motivation behind descriptive South African Sign Language (SASL) toponyms. It utilised video data of signed toponyms from a broader project on the survey of SASL toponyms of provinces and major cities of South Africa. The study also utilised explorative qualitative strategies to elicit etymological data of the signed toponyms. The results show a limited number of descriptive SASL toponyms. Many of them are arbitrary and therefore influenced by oral language naming traditions. The results confirm that the toponyms are mainly motivated by physical features of the toponym, cultural expressions and historic memoirs attached to specific geographic referents. Future studies are therefore expected to focus on the preservation of SASL and Deaf cultural naming traditions, expansion of SASL toponymic corpus and machine learning of SASL data.

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Ethical Research with Deaf Communities by Hearing Researchers: Methodological Challenges and Possible Solutions

Dr Patrick Sibanda, University of Free State, SOUTH AFRICA

Chrismi-Rinda Loth, Annalene van Staden, Susan Lombaard, Kirsten de Villiers, Annemarie le Roux, Mamotete Mapeshoane, Carla Joubert, Herkulaas Combrink, Sara Siyavoshi, University of the Free State

Ideally, research within communities should be conducted by representatives from that community itself. Nonetheless, there is often a lack of scholarly representation from marginalised, minority and/or vulnerable communities. This is also the case with the Deaf community, who constitutes a complex linguistic and cultural community. From a research perspective, they are frequently defined as a vulnerable group based on the physical facet at the expense of the cultural and experiential difference. However, simply approaching the Deaf as a sociocultural and linguistic minority does not allow for appropriate accommodations with regards to hearing abilities. This is a complex issue that has characterised debates about deafness without conclusive answers.

While the South African Deaf community has built a strong advocacy presence, there are very few Deaf scholars due to historical educational imbalances. As a result, research on issues that affect the Deaf are mostly conducted by hearing researchers. The result is a sometimes-uneasy marriage between the slogan “nothing about us without us” and scholarly expertise. Furthermore, existing ethical frameworks do not address the multiple definitions of the Deaf, that is, as a marginalised group, as a linguistic and cultural minority, as well as a community partially defined by a disability label. Additionally, current international best practices are not necessarily suitable for the local context.

Our research project on South African Sign Language place names necessitated the curation of an appropriate research design. This paper presents some pertinent ethical and methodological challenges and solutions that we encountered during fieldwork and the data management process. Based on the results of our main study, we recommend that future studies test our proposed methodology; thereby collaboratively contributing to the development of a methodological framework that considers best ethical practices for research involving Deaf communities in South Africa.



Ethnicity, Race, and Desire: Performances of Arab Masculinity in Contemporary Brazil

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This paper sheds light on Brazilian men's performances of Arab masculinity in on/offline spaces. These include the use of Arabic tattoos, of gay dating app profile names that display markers of Arab ethnicity, and impersonations of Arab Gulf men. I contextualize this trend in the light of "ternary Orientalism" (Hassan 2024), according to which Brazil's representation of the Arab world is influenced by both Western Orientalist discourses and by the country's historical contact with the Arab and Islamic world. Initially stigmatized by Brazil's post-colonial white supremacist discourse, Arabness has recently acquired prestige in Brazil's neoliberal economy (Karam 2007).

Applying the frameworks of "intersubjectivity" (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) and "scalar performativity" (Moita Lopes 2020), I integrate a multimodal analysis of these performances with interviews with the prosumers. I argue that these performances constitute *pluriversal voices* (Deumert and Makoni 2023) that leverage on colonial oppression to seek inclusion in white-centered spaces. They do so by mobilizing a heteroglossic repertoire that includes Orientalist tropes, Arab Brazilian, and Afro-Brazilian cultural elements. Through the indexing of virility, socioeconomic mobility, and street smartness, Arab masculinity re-emerges in a form that is distinct from dominant Western representations.

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Hassan, Wail S. 2024. *Arab Brazil. Fictions of Ternary Orientalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Karam John T. 2007. *Another Arabesque: Syrian-Lebanese Ethnicity in Neoliberal Brazil*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

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Indexicalities Shaped in War Zones: Family Language Policies in Refugee Families

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Marte Monsen (University of Inland Norway - NORWAY)

Building on research in Family Language Policies (FLP), we examine how the nexus of societal structures and individual biographies informs parents' decisions about their FLPs. We argue that lived experiences of persecution are central to understanding refugee families' explicit and implicit FLPs, as language can be deeply interwoven with histories of violence and displacement.

This paper focuses on the role of the Kinyabwisha language in the FLPs of six multilingual refugee families resettled in Norway from the DR Congo. Three years of ethnographic fieldwork among these families revealed that parents were reluctant to transmit Kinyabwisha—a language they referred to as their “strongest” or their “mother tongue”—to their children. This reluctance, we argue, stems from the language's indexicalities in the North Kivu conflict zone, where it may index “danger” and “exclusion”.

Years after fleeing the DR Congo, parents continued to describe Kinyabwisha as “dangerous” and associated it with “not belonging to the DR Congo” in conversations with the researchers. All participants had fled their villages due to threats of violent attacks by Congolese militias. Parents often linked these threats directly to their use of Kinyabwisha. As one participant, Lucas, explained: “We were attacked due to our language—they think we are Rwandan.”

At a time when home language maintenance and the benefits of multilingualism are emphasized in public discourse, teachers and schools may encourage parents to maintain all languages in their linguistic repertoires. During our fieldwork, we observed schools hiring Kinyabwisha mother tongue teachers for children. However, these external efforts do not always align with how refugee parents perceive their FLPs and may inadvertently evoke painful memories, underscoring the complexity of managing multilingualism in refugee contexts.



Imagining English in Namibia: Scholarly myths and Namibian perspectives

Dr Gerald Stell, University of Lausanne, SWITZERLAND

Upon gaining independence from South Africa in 1990, Namibia adopted English as its sole official language. This move, which reflected the Black majority's desires, came as a shock to Namibia's White establishment, which had been locally promoting a trilingual Afrikaans–English–German language policy, as well as systematically enforcing provisions for indigenous languages as media of instruction in Black education. Driven by different ideological agendas, objections to the new policy shaped a narrative of English as a foreign language in Namibia, and of its new hegemonic status as a recipe for long-term illiteracy in the country. That same narrative spilled over into the World Englishes paradigm, where English in Namibia has been used as an example of a 'non-postcolonial English variety'—or, in other words, of how English can spread in a society without a local history as a colonial language. This paper critically examines the agendas behind the narrative of English as a foreign language in Namibia, with a specific focus on its contemporary articulation within the World Englishes paradigm. Drawing on historical sources, it goes on to debunk that narrative, showing that English has been present in Namibia since at least 1875 and became the country's high-status language as soon as the German colonial regime was dismantled in 1915, as well as the preferred language of education among the Black Namibian elite—thus explaining the near-universal identification with English among the Black majority by independence. Finally, this paper reviews linguistic datasets showing that, far from being a 'non-postcolonial variety', Namibian English is an offshoot of South African English, brought to Namibia by South African occupiers in 1915. Based on these historical and linguistic observations, the paper concludes by discussing how Global South realities such as Namibia's remain at risk of distortion through uncritical Eurocentric perspectives.



DigiTrad: Social Media and Youth Politics in Luxembourg and Switzerland

Dr Catherine Tebaldi, Université du Luxembourg, LUXEMBOURG and Evelin Szgeti and Anne Virgili, University of Luxembourg, LUXEMBOURG

From potato-faced young men in suits to winsome influencers and sophisticated AI-generated propaganda, social media has shaped the way right wing parties appeal to youth. This paper analyzes the social media styles and discourses of ADRenalin, the Luxembourgish far-right party ADR's youth wing, and the Young SVP, the youth wing of Switzerland's main conservative party. Drawing on digital linguistic anthropology (Delfino 2021, Tebaldi 2024) it shows how globally circulating (Gal 2018) reactionary discourses against "wokeness" and "gender ideology" move across the German language media in both countries, characterized as "woke wahn" and "gender gaga". It then looks at how these global anti gender discourses (Borba 2022) are adapted to local contexts and concerns, using two case studies. First, how Adrenalin makes the case for Luxembourgish language as opposed to woke speech, as part of "heulen eis ons ZukunZ zereck/ getting our future back". Second, how young SVP opposes gendered language as a question of preventing "angriff auf unsere Freiheit/attacks on our freedom".

This paper shares initial results from the DigiTrad project exploring social media and reactionary youth politics in Luxembourg and Switzerland, through digital ethnography, interviews, and a digital data corpus to explore the themes, styles, and discourses which parties use to make the ideas of the past appealing to the voters of the future.

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Gal, S. (2018). Registers in circulation: The social organization of interdiscursivity. *Signs and Society*, 6(1), 1-24.

Tebaldi, C. (2024). Metapolitical seduction: Women's language and white nationalism. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 34(1), 84-106.



Strong Language, Strong Schools: Reactionary (language) ideologies in Swiss and Luxembourgish education reform

Dr Catherine Tebaldi, Université du Luxembourg, LUXEMBOURG and Evelin Szgeti and Anne Virgili, University of Luxembourg, LUXEMBOURG

This paper explores opposition to French education in Switzerland and Luxembourg, two multilingual, liberal nations where French is an official language. In Luxembourg, far right party ADR (alternative democratic reform) has called teaching French a potential “implosion of our school system” and a “francophonization” of the county. However, French is the language of state bureaucracy, making literacy in this language key to democratic participation - especially for the 60% of the nation who do not speak Luxembourgish. Education, and in particular literacy, in French is opposed precisely as a vision of civil society, rather than rooted in shared ethnoterritorial identity. In German-speaking Switzerland the “Starke Schule” (strong schools) organization similarly opposes literacy instruction in French before the 5th grade, with more time devoted to German and Math. Here “strength” implicitly genders the discourse as masculine, while focusing on subjects and languages linked to more valued employment markets. This recalls familiar educational policy discourses of “back to basics” (Baum 1976) which also were linked to attempts to shore up male educational power and conservative curricular visions.

These debates about the language of education are debates about authority. The opposition Luxembourgish/French then reflects classical language ideological divisions between civic anonymity and populist authenticity (Woolard 2016), while the opposition German/French in Switzerland centers on visions of strength as participation in the right linguistic markets (Bourdieu 1977), but both with real consequences for the distribution of rights and resources for young people.

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Bourdieu, P. (1977). The economics of linguistic exchanges. *Social science information*, 16(6), 645-668.

Woolard, K. A. (2016). *Singular and plural: Ideologies of linguistic authority in 21st century Catalonia*. Oxford University Press.



Multilingual Academic Subtitling for Higher Education Opportunities and Challenges in South Africa

Ms Anesipho Tshisani, Rhodes University, SOUTH AFRICA

In multilingual higher education settings, teaching and learning often take place in a dominant language that does not fully reflect students' linguistic backgrounds. This situation can create both understanding and tension in the classroom, especially in contexts such as South Africa where students speak many different languages. This paper explores interlingual subtitling as a possible pedagogical intervention through a review of existing literature.

The paper draws on studies in audiovisual translation, sociolinguistics, and education that show how intralingual subtitling has been successfully used for academic purposes, including improving comprehension and learning. It also discusses findings from a study conducted in a high school context, which suggest that interlingual subtitling has the potential to bridge language barriers and support students' academic success. These studies highlight how subtitling can help learners access academic content while engaging with more than one language.

Using the concept of sociolinguistic consonance and dissonance, the paper argues that interlingual subtitling can promote understanding and inclusion, while also revealing tensions related to language dominance in education. At the same time, the literature points to possible challenges, including the time and resources required for developing suitable subtitled materials, as well as students' unfamiliarity with subtitling as an academic learning tool.

In a pluriversal world where multiple languages and ways of knowing coexist, the paper positions interlingual subtitling as a promising, though not unproblematic, approach for supporting more inclusive and equitable learning in higher education.



Meänkieli Online: Linguistic Ideologies and Pluriversal Practices

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Meänkieli is a minoritised and endangered Finno-Ugric language traditionally spoken in Northern Sweden. It became endangered following Sweden's assimilatory and colonial policies 1880-1950 (Hyltenstam & Salö 2023). Following a cultural and linguistic revival, Meänkieli has been recognised as one of Sweden's national minority languages since 2000. A recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission has brought renewed attention to the language, which is currently undergoing various revitalisation measures. However, most fluent speakers are over 50 years old, and community members still report feeling unseen (Lipott 2015; Ackermann-Boström et al. in press).

Against this backdrop of (de)colonisation and revitalisation, this study explores the ideologies behind linguistic practices and variation on social media within the Meänkieli space. The research questions are: What variation and linguistic practices can be observed in the online use of Meänkieli? Which ideologies shape this use?

Theoretically, the study draws on linguistic ideology in endangered- and minoritised-language contexts (e.g. Kroskrity 2010, 2022; Sallabank 2018) and on pluriversity (Mignolo & Walsh 2018; Blommaert 2010). The data consists of 15 purposefully selected social media accounts and websites, that are analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis on three levels: micro (language choice, variety, translanguaging), meso (account purpose, intended audience), and macro (linguistic ideology) (Fairclough 1989).

The linguistic variables identified on a micro level include Meänkieli, Swedish, Finnish, and/or English; the dominant Torne Valley variety versus the more threatened Kieruna and Jellivaara varieties; traditional language versus that of new speakers; and translanguaging/code-switching versus a monolingual model. On the meso level, the purpose of the accounts range from marketing and information-sharing to alliance-building and identity expression. On the macro level, linguistic ideologies are pluriversal: for some, the language holds symbolic and indexical value, while others use it actively, guided by ideologies of standardisation and essentialism on one hand, and pluricentrism and translanguaging on the other.



Methodological Lessons from Memorials of Genocide in Rwanda and Namibia: Guarding against Denial

Dr Lauren Van Der Rede, Stellenbosch University, SOUTH AFRICA

Africa, her peoples and civilizations, have through the discourse of colonialism and its still affective charge, often been knotted to notions of underdevelopment, “barbarity”, and violence. In turning to Africa as concept and method, rather than cartography and geography, this intervention posits Africa as a disobedient object to the discourses of memory and genocide studies. In taking my cue from Frantz Fanon and Aime Cesaire, in this paper I offer a critique of the framing of Africa as “then” and “there” from the “here” and “now”, read through the example of memorial practices in Rwanda and Namibia – both sites of genocide – which I argue not only story but offer new language for thinking the problem of genocide from and through Africa. In abiding by the language of “Kwibuka”, the Rwandan call to remember, this paper asks what methodological lessons these memorials offer for producing a language that guards against genocide denial.

Arunima, G., Hayes, P., & Lalu, P. (Eds.). (2021). *Love and revolution in the twentieth-century colonial and postcolonial world: perspectives from South Asia and Southern Africa*. Springer Nature.



Language Policy Implementation, Court Documentation, and Linguistic Justice in South African Courtrooms

Ms Uyanda Sade Vela, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

The right to a fair trial in a language that court participants can understand is guaranteed by South Africa's multilingual democracy, which recognizes twelve official languages. There is a sociolinguistic conflict between institutional reality and policy goals since legal procedures often put first English as the main dialect of record regardless of this progressive constitutional framework. Language practices in institutional settings often replicate linguistic hierarchies and power relations, according to sociolinguistic research (Blommaert 2005; Heller 2011; Kaschula & Wolff 2007). This study looks at how language policy is applied in South African courts and recorded in official documents, as well as how these procedures influence linguistic justice.

The Senzo Meyiwa murder trial is the main focus of the study's qualitative case study methodology, which also draws on lessons learned from other South African court cases including multilingual courtroom interaction and interpretation. Selected courtroom transcripts, court records, and media stories from 2022 to 2024 are included in the data. The analysis uses Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis (CMDA) (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001; Machin & Mayr 2012) to look at how spoken interaction, multimodal courtroom communication, textual documentation, and interpretation practices affect how indigenous African languages are positioned within legal proceedings.

The analysis shows that English continues to be the primary language of paperwork and legal authority, notwithstanding the usage of African languages in judicial interactions. African language speech is often summarized, skipped over, and partially translated as a result of interpretation processes that prioritize procedural efficiency. These behaviours have the potential to maintain unequal language power relations, restrict participation, and confuse meaning. Opportunities for more inclusive multilingual practices are also revealed by instances of language accommodation.

This paper contributes to sociolinguistic discussions on language policy implementation, multilingualism, and linguistic justice by analysing courtroom documentation as a site of linguistic power. It emphasizes the necessity of stronger multilingual practices to guarantee fair access to justice in South Africa.

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Machin, D. & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis*. Sage.



Inscribing Greekness through food in Johannesburg

Dr Alyssa Vratsanos, University of South Africa, SOUTH AFRICA

Due to several waves of immigration throughout the 20th Century, there is a sizeable Greek community in Johannesburg, South Africa, which firmly established its cultural and national identity within the complex hierarchy of whiteness imposed under apartheid. Greek immigration to South Africa was historically associated with food-centred spaces, such as restaurants and supermarkets, which continue to be a salient part of diasporic Greek identity in Johannesburg. This study takes its cue from the inextricable link between the Johannesburg Greek diaspora and food spaces and from previous scholarship on food and immigrant identity that treat food as a symbol of group belonging. The analysis is embedded in Scollon and Scollon's (2003) geosemiotics framework, which draws on insights and approaches from several fields, including linguistics, anthropology, and geography, to investigate the "social meaning" (p. 3) of signs and discourses in the material world systematically. This study explores food as a meaning-making tool, a *sign in place*, through which we might read the discursive and semiotic modes used by the diaspora to inscribe and perform Greekness in Johannesburg. This approach differs from previous sociolinguistic research on language maintenance by the South African Greek diaspora, bringing it into the contemporary realm of linguistic landscape studies. The study is further valuable as it contributes to decoding and mapping the complex city of Johannesburg.

Scollon, R. and Scollon, S.W. (2003). *Discourses in Place: Language in the material world*. London: Routledge.



Instructors' Views of Varieties for Languages other than English

Dr Jonathan White, Dalarna University, SWEDEN

The question of varieties in language teaching has been an important question when it comes to the English language. Broadly speaking, two sorts of approaches are seen: one focuses on particular varieties as more appropriate because of geopolitical or intelligibility concerns (such as Quirk's classical perspective); and the other broad category takes a more pluricentric approach where all varieties are seen as equally appropriate, although the relative status of these varieties is acknowledged (such as the World Englishes perspective of Kachru).

However, this question has not been greatly discussed in the context of other languages. This presentation deals with how language variation is discussed across the different language subjects at a Swedish university. The author carried out 17 semi-structured interviews with colleagues in all language subjects other than English, Swedish, and Swedish as a Second Language, and discussed to what extent varieties are problematised in these subjects, and in particular in courses for teacher trainees.

It was found that there were two groups of languages, precisely following the division mentioned earlier for English (although each language has one particular approach). One consisted of the newer foreign languages in Swedish schools and universities: Arabic, Japanese, Chinese and Russian. They focused on particular varieties for intelligibility or political reasons, but mostly discussed the relative status of other varieties in terms of regional identity formation. The other group consisted of the traditional foreign languages in Sweden: German, French, Portuguese and Spanish. They took a much more pluricentric approach and allowed all varieties in writing and speaking, excluding stylistic considerations.

Thus, we see that languages other than English have different approaches to varieties, but they are generally problematised in relation to the pluricentric reality of the different languages.



Decolonizing Multilingual Consonance and Dissonance: Latgale (Eastern Latvia) as a Pluriversal Sociolinguistic Landscape

Prof Dr Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, A. Mickiewicz University in Poznań, POLAND

The paper examines Latgale (a historical and ethnolinguistic region of eastern Latvia) as a dynamically changing and gradually fading pluriversal sociolinguistic landscape in which consonance and dissonance have long coexisted as structurally embedded features of linguistic constellation. It explores how imperial, post-imperial, nation-state, and internal-colonial language ideologies have shaped the status, representation, and lived experience of linguistic diversity in the region, and how speakers negotiate these pressures through everyday multilingual practices.

Latgale's multilingualism has historically involved Baltic, Slavic, Germanic, Balto-Finnic, Jewish, and Romani languages, alongside spoken, transitional, and interference-based varieties that resist neat alignment with standardisation models. Latgalian's recurrent marginalisation - despite continuous literary and cultural production - makes it a key site for observing how routine multilingual accommodation (=sociolinguistic consonance) coexists with regimes of prescriptivism, partial recognition, and institutional exclusion (=sociolinguistic dissonance).

From a decolonial perspective, the paper conceptualises multilingual diversity in Latgale not as a deficit or policy problem, but as a historically embedded sociolinguistic condition shaped by successive waves of political domination, shifting literacy regimes, and changing hierarchies of linguistic legitimacy. Particular attention is paid to the role of writing and literacy practices as sites where empowerment and subordination intersect.

Methodologically, the analysis combines historical sociolinguistic inference with qualitative observation, situating Latgale within broader debates on decolonizing sociolinguistics and pluriversal epistemologies. By foregrounding speaker agency, community-based language ideologies, and historically layered multilingual repertoires, the paper argues that Latgale should be understood not as a marginal sociolinguistic periphery, but as a key site for theorising sociolinguistic consonance and productive dissonance.

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Re-imagining pedagogy in higher education: Facilitating epistemic access and student success through multimodal classroom activities

Ms Bronwyn Witbooi, University of the Western Cape, SOUTH AFRICA

The higher education sector in South Africa is characterised by ongoing demands for expanded epistemic access, decolonised curricula, and transformed institutions (Mbembe, 2016). This paper examines the transformative potential of incorporating a multisemiotic pedagogical approach in a third-year Literacy course at the University of the Western Cape to enhance student engagement with academic content. Framed within a decolonial perspective and praxis of multimodal pedagogies (Archer and Newfield, 2014; Mendelowitz, Dixon and Ferreira, 2022), the study shows how multimodal classroom activities, such as creating posters, storytelling, study note artefacts, and role-play, offer students opportunities to interact with academic content across multiple modes, which ultimately better facilitates access to the module content. Data were collected via student reflections and a focus group interview. Thematic analysis reveals three dynamic ways of being in the student experience, which I have termed: the *Ideal*, the *Actual*, and the *Engaged* Student. The data conceptualises the *Ideal* Student as an imagined model of ‘being’ within the academic environment, implicitly ‘prescribed’ by the institution. The *Actual* Student demonstrates initial tension when engaging with the non-traditional pedagogical approach, but gradually displays qualities of an *Engaged* Student - one who exhibits agency with academic knowledge and meaning-making. Although limited in scope, the observed transformation from the Actual Student to the Engaged Student raises important questions about the exclusive reliance on classroom practices that reinforce the Ideal Student within the academic context.

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Navigating ideological tensions in language portraits: A translanguaging lens

Miss Lei Xia, Victoria University of Wellington, NEW ZEALAND

[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

The Mandarin Language Assistant (MLA) programme in Aotearoa New Zealand offers a unique context for language engagement, where the MLAs, while supporting local Chinese teaching, simultaneously navigate English as emergent users in this predominately English-speaking country. This presentation thus draws from a wider ethnographically informed study, which investigates these MLAs' translanguaging and identity process during their period of living and working overseas. Specifically, this presentation explores cases where these teacher-learners dialogically (re)present their lived experience of language in and through the multimodal space of language portrait (LP) activities (cf., Busch, 2018; Krumm, 2001). Informed by social semiotics (Halliday, 1978; van Leeuwen, 2005), I zoom into how the MLAs agentively orchestrate socially motivated semiotic resources to frame their own stories of being and becoming. In doing so, I also draw on a translanguaging lens, attending to how the MLAs continuously (re)negotiate their own sense of self and linguistic legitimacy. Ultimately, this presentation makes the case that the very activity of LP operates as a dialogic translanguaging space (Li, 2018), which not only reflect, but mediate both participants' ongoing ideological becoming, opening up space for participants to reflect on, articulate, and reimagine their lived language experiences.

Keywords: ideology; translanguaging; language portraits; identity

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Multilingual Reality in British Universities – Staff and International Chinese Students’ Language Attitudes and Practices at British Universities

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[ONLINE PRESENTATION]

This paper presents a work-in-progress PhD project. Large numbers of international students (758,855, Bolton et al., 2023) with multilingual repertoires have contributed to linguistic diversity in British universities. However, how the growing multilingual reality is created, perceived and interpreted in language practices at the university campuses has not been comprehensively investigated.

This project examines the language attitudes and practices of Chinese students, one of the largest groups among multilingual international students in UK universities, and of the university staff who interact with them, based on 704 responses from staff and Chinese students at 55 UK universities to an online survey, 48 semi-structure interviews with staff and students, and 98 hours of classroom observations.

In this presentation, I adopt the classic tri-partite model which conceptualises affect, belief and behaviour intentions as three parts of attitude (Kircher & Zipp, 2022) to explore (a) how Chinese students (n=493) feel when using different languages in their study; (b) their beliefs of the languages they know; (c) their language choices and practices in classroom group discussions when communicating with teachers and with their peers in classes; and the relations between these three. I also involve demographic features as factors influencing language attitudes and practices. The study thus adds to our understanding of the multilingual reality in UK or universities, to inform decisions on language policies, language practices, and on support that better meets the needs of international students and the staff who interact with them.

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Deconstructing English Hegemony in South African Higher Education through Innovative Multilingual Practices

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South African higher education remains trapped in a monolingual vice that privileges English as a superstrate in the academy despite three decades of post-apartheid language policy reform. As the language of instruction, English wields power as a gateway for academic success in many universities. The objectives of this paper are twofold: 1) to analyse the theoretical underpinnings of critical and multilingual pedagogy aimed at dismantling English dominance, and 2) to assess the effectiveness of practical, innovative pedagogical strategies designed to challenge the hegemony of English in classroom settings. Using principles of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1998) and decolonial theory (Mignolo, 2011), the paper analyses peer-reviewed articles published between 2015-2025 focusing on pedagogical practices in South African Universities. The review found a persistent policy-practice gap, where progressive institutional mandates are undermined by structural inertia and a deficit view of multilingualism. The findings also suggest that deconstructing English domination necessitates a shift from viewing English as a gatekeeper to treating a student's full linguistic repertoire as a high-level cognitive resource. The study is significant for its potential to inform continuous decolonial curriculum reform and foster cognitive justice. Consequently, the paper recommends the institutionalisation of multilingual pedagogical practices and a shift in assessment strategies to ensure that South Africa's linguistic diversity becomes a tool for empowerment rather than a barrier. The paper concludes by recommending the adoption of a framework for decolonial linguistic justice that addresses the dialectical tension between policy's mere symbolic recognition, and the innovative and transformative multilingual pedagogical practices.

Keywords: Critical multilingual pedagogy, English hegemony, pedagogical innovation, decolonial curricula, South African Higher Education.

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Ideological Insights into Chinese Students' Journeys with English

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Amid the worldwide spread of English and Hong Kong's (HK) English-medium instruction (EMI) regime, English circulates as both aspiration and control, making students' English trajectories a problem of power and justice. This paper investigates how Mainland Chinese undergraduates in HK experience, rationalise, and project English across different life stages, and asks three research questions respectively regarding their (a) retrospective reflections on previous English learning in Mainland China, (b) current engagement with EMI experience in HK, and (c) imagined post-graduation futures with English. The study treats HK not as a neutral English-medium hub, but as a contested multilingual contact zone shaped by Cantonese, Putonghua and English, and by intra-Asian academic migration.

We adopt a qualitative narrative-frame survey with guiding prompts to elicit coherent, nuanced written stories, with each respondent invited to narrate their English journeys corresponding to the three research questions. The survey, in bilingual forms, was distributed to Mainland Chinese undergraduates enrolled across HK's eight publicly funded universities and elicited 83 responses. Narratives were thematically coded (inductive, Nvivo-assisted) with attention to sociocultural and ideological stance. Our findings indicated a constantly changing experiential and ideological trajectory. Pre- HK, English was remembered as moving from early enchantment and playful exposure to an exam-driven obligation, eventually becoming an internalised prerequisite for academic advancement. In HK, EMI confronted students with native-speakerist authenticity and language hierarchies, but they actively navigated the multilingual environment and reframed English as a practical communication tool. Beyond HK, English was imagined as neoliberal capital for further study, employability, and possible cross-border settlement, while still requiring ongoing self-proof in Anglocentric academic and professional contexts. The research, therefore, contributes a student-centred, South-South perspective on how English dominance travels as both prestige and pressure, and how related ideologies are internalised, policed and strategically repurposed.

Keywords: English ideology; Critical English medium instruction; Mainland Chinese students; Hong Kong; Educational mobility

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Belonging on Trial: Purism and Anti-Multiculturalism in Contemporary France

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This study examines how linguistic purism and anti-multicultural discourse reproduce social inequality in contemporary France. More specifically, it investigates how dominant discourses in the French society shape belonging, legitimacy, and discrimination for multilingual and multicultural individuals in France. To achieve this goal, I trace how a monolingual and monocultural model of Frenchness, articulated through republican universalism, defines legitimate citizenship as linguistically and culturally homogeneous. Within this model, other languages, cultural practices, and even first names are framed as signs of illegitimacy and weak national loyalty.

Two forms of qualitative data were collected and analysed. First, statements by high-visibility French media and political figures, including Zemmour, Maréchal, Onfray, and Polony, were gathered and subsequently analysed based on Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013). The focus was placed upon how these statements normalise linguistic purism, portray multicultural presence as a civilisational threat, and link proper French and proper first names to worthiness. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five multilingual and multicultural participants. The interviews addressed linguistic trajectories, migration histories, experiences of discrimination, and reactions to the selected discourses, and were transcribed. Findings indicate that pressure to perform a purified and standardised French, and to mute other linguistic and cultural resources, acts as a gatekeeping mechanism. Participants described the need to align with a narrow model of Frenchness while still being treated as not fully legitimate. They identified the role of media and politics in spreading and banalising discriminatory talk. Participants also reported emotional harm and described strategic adaptation in everyday interaction. This study argues that linguistic policing sustains symbolic hierarchies, while public narratives claim neutrality and equality. Participants voiced critical awareness and active resistance, and ultimately framed their multilingual and multicultural repertoires as sources of value and belonging.

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Teaching in the diaspora: Teacher identities in Chinese community language schools in Australia

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Community language (CL) schools provide linguistic and cultural education to large numbers of learners worldwide. Research has increasingly focused on this educational sector over the past two decades, but CL teachers and their work remain under-researched. To understand language teaching and learning, it is significant to understand teachers themselves, and this requires a clearer sense of who they are, including the professional, cultural, political, and personal identities they claim or that are assigned to them (Varghese et al., 2005). Research on teaching and teacher education highlights that identity is dynamic, evolving in response to various factors, both internal, such as emotions, and external, such as professional and life experiences within specific contexts (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Guided by Bourdieu's theoretical concepts, this study adopts an ethnographic case study methodology, involving one and a half years of immersive participant observation at three Chinese CL schools in Western Australia. Through onsite observations, casual conversations, and formal interviews with various stakeholders, the study finds that teachers' roles extend beyond language education and cultural heritage transmission. Teachers position themselves in complex roles shaped by their multifaceted identities, which emerge through interrelated dimensions including personal dispositions and beliefs, institutional and peer recognition, and social relations. Such identities inform teachers' pedagogical practices and social relations within the field, while also being continuously reshaped and challenged through ongoing participation. From a theoretical perspective, this study demonstrates that teacher identity in CL schools is not static but dynamically constructed and negotiated through teachers' positionalities, beliefs and values, and power relations operating within the field. By engaging with teachers' lived experiences, this study offers a nuanced account of how they position themselves, navigate institutional and parental expectations, and respond to specific challenges they encounter. It contributes to a deeper understanding of teachers' educational practices and the construction of social relations in Chinese CL schools, with implications for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of participation in this educational sector.

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