INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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INTRODUCTION: GAZING FROM THE SOUTH

This book looks at applied linguistics from a southern perspective. This is not just a case of adding some perspectives from the South, or including various southern people who are often forgotten, or incorporating geographical areas or topics occluded from analysis in Global Northern applied linguistics. What we’re addressing here, by contrast, is a much more far-reaching set of challenges to what applied linguistics means, what it encompasses, what its central concerns are, what it regards as its antecedents and historical pedigree, and what ideas and traditions it therefore draws on. The innovations and challenges we want to bring to applied linguistics in this book extend far beyond an agenda that seeks to redress various exclusions; rather, these are deep-seated challenges to some of the core tenets of applied linguistics as well as new directions for theories and practices in the field.

Acknowledging the complicities of applied linguistics with a history of colonialism and capitalism and a range of contemporary inequalities, this book encourages us to rethink and remake applied linguistics at a global level in open-ended ways. This chapter lays out the basic concerns and background to the book, making a case for the need for alternative understandings of applied linguistics and the importance of the contribution of the Global South to Global North scholarship.

What, then, is the Global South? It is not, it must be said, an idea without its own challenges and contradictions, though it is no less important as a result. Simply put, the Global South refers to the people, places, and ideas that have been left out of the grand narrative of modernity. It may at times refer quite literally to the South, to regions of South America and much of Africa, for example, that have not been part of the upward march of economic, social, and political ‘progress’ in wealthier nations. More importantly, however, the Global South refers to broader histories of exclusion and disenfranchisement, and thus might equally refer to Indigenous communities in North America, New Zealand, Australia, China, Laos, or America. Indeed, the idea of the Global South may be applied to the
urban poor in cities in the northern hemisphere rather than to wealthy elites in the southern hemisphere. The South, from Santos’ (2012) perspective, refers both to the conditions of suffering and inequality brought about by capitalism and colonialism and to the resistance to such conditions. The South therefore also exists in “the global North, in the form of excluded, silenced and marginalized populations, such as undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia and racism” (Santos, 2012, p.51).

Two of the important texts that instigated this move to think in terms of southern theories are Connell’s (2007) Southern Theory and Jean and John Comaroff’s (2011) Theory from the South. For Connell, focusing particularly on social theory, the central concern is “the erasure of the experience of the majority of human kind from the foundations of social thought” (p.46) Similarly, for the Comaroffs, the principal focus is the ways in which “Western enlightenment thought has, from the first, posited itself as the wellspring of universal learning, of Science and Philosophy” (2012 p.113). For both Connell and the Comaroffs the issue was not only a critique of the dominance of theory and knowledge from the North but also the fundamental need to reverse this relationship, to open up alternative ways of knowing from southern perspectives. On the one hand, then, is the tendency to universalize findings from WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) contexts to the rest of the world (Henrich et al., 2010) and on the other the concomitant exclusion of the majority world from social scientific theorizing. It is particularly in the work of Santos (2012, 2018) on southern epistemologies that these arguments have taken shape over the last decade, with his insistence on understanding the Global South in terms of multifaceted relations of global inequalities and on the need to develop alternative, southern epistemologies: “The epistemologies of the South concern the production and validation of knowledges anchored in the experiences of resistance of all those social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy” (2018, p1).

From the outset, then, it is clear that the Global South refers not so much to a geographical region, and to more than merely a set of geopolitical inequalities. As is also evident, it brings in a range of other concerns, including Indigeneity, race, class, sexuality, poverty, gender, and colonialism. The idea of the Global South is heir to a range of previous forms of work that have sought to address global inequalities of both material and intellectual goods, from a focus on dependency theory (how so-called developing nations are forced to be dependent on so-called developed nations for anything from the price of coffee to the ways sociology is done), Third World scholarship, postcolonial theory, and much more (see Chapter 2). This also intersects with decolonial perspectives (Mignolo, 2011a; Mignolo and Walsh, 2018), Indigenous standpoints (Nakata, 2007), and other projects to both decentralize northern or western epistemologies and to construct intellectual sovereignty in the Global South. The challenges such a project faces are many. As Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2017) points out, any project to develop intellectual sovereignty in Africa has to escape the weight of intellectual neocolonialism that always defers
to knowledge production from elsewhere, devaluing Indigenous knowledge systems in favour of received knowledge.

Such processes are compounded by institutional racism, the languages in which such knowledge is often expressed (received knowledge in received languages), and the interests of local elites in extending the life of colonial culture and knowledge derived from the metropolitan centres of culture and power in the contemporary world. For Prah (2017, p.20), the goal is to “achieve a universalism which has equal space for all voices, and not a universalism under restrictive Western hegemony”, and to this end “the centre of gravity of knowledge production about Africa and Africans must be situated in Africa, so that the ‘otherness’ of the subject of scholarship which Western hegemony has imposed on Africa and Africans is eliminated”. Such projects raise further complications, however: Should a project to include multiple voices rather than only those of a hegemonic North attempt to seek a more inclusive universalism, or should it seek to undermine calls for universalism? And if, as Santos (2018, p.3) asserts, southern epistemologies may be “ways of knowing, rather than knowledges”, the question is not merely one of adding new ideas to the archives of existing knowledge but of changing what counts as knowledge, of developing a relation between existing knowledge and “artisanal knowledges” (p.43).

The challenge of thinking about applied linguistics from a southern perspective, therefore, raises questions that run far deeper than a set of additive concerns about contexts we may have missed out in our research. It asks much more difficult questions about that research itself, and who is doing it, with what assumptions, for whom, with whom, and for what purposes. The idea of the Global South therefore encompasses far broader issues than an attempt just to redress global exclusions: It addresses contemporary and historical ways in which forms of knowledge have been developed and valued, as well as the larger colonial, economic, and political forces that lead to these epistemological imbalances. For applied linguistics, the questions raised by southern perspectives address not only its colonial past and contemporary location in neo-liberal times, but also its key tenets about language, knowledge, and education. We shall return in much more depth to this background in the next chapter, and to concerns about language, education, and research in the following chapters. First, however, we shall consider in greater depth some of the tensions around the Global South framework, before outlining both some of the useful questions these perspectives can open up (innovations) as well as some of the challenges this poses for applied linguistics.

North and South: Geographical, geopolitical, and decolonial concerns

There is an immediate concern that emerges when we talk of the Global South: Although the term is intended geopolitically, metaphorically, and epistemologically, it cannot at times escape its geographical reference. While Global South scholars are insistent that it is a geopolitical concept referring to struggles against inequality, there is often at the same time a pull towards the South. This is not
surprising both because the term ‘south’ is always likely to orient us in that direction and because, given the historical development of colonialism and capitalism, “the epistemological South and the geographical South partially overlap, particularly as regards those countries that were subjected to historical colonialism” (Santos, 2018, p1). Yet this becomes complex when regions that are clearly very far south geographically (Australia and New Zealand being obvious examples) are not considered to be in the Global South, or when regions considered north in relation to others (North Africa, for example) are considered part of the Global South, or indeed when regions that are almost defined by their geographical northerness (the lands of Indigenous people within the Arctic Circle, for example) may also be considered in political terms as part of the Global South.

In Levon’s (2017) critique of the northern bias of Coupland’s (2016) edited book on sociolinguistic debates, the problem is explained in terms of “the geopolitical positioning of the various contributions” (p.280) being almost exclusively in the North. The effects of the overwhelming majority of contributors being located in the Global North (and primarily in North America and Western Europe), he suggests, are twofold: On the one hand “it makes it seem as if sociolinguistics does not take place outside of North America and Western Europe, whereas this is clearly not the case”. It is unfortunate and limiting that sociolinguists from elsewhere - Africa, South America, or South and East Asia - are not included. On the other hand, this absence perpetuates “a particular geopolitics of knowledge that privileges Northern perspectives and prevents Southern scholars from contributing a differently positioned interpretation of events and practices that concern them” (pp.280–281). This critique, which closely aligns with many issues we will be dealing with in this book, points to two kinds of omission: First, scholars from outside Europe and North America are not included, which means generally that these contexts of research are also not included; and second, alternative epistemologies that might derive from these southern contexts (southern epistemologies) are not as a result given any space.

It is important to note that the two issues are different. Scholars in the geographical South may well do research on local contexts but may do so from what might be called northern perspectives. Trained in the major institutions of the North (or in departments in the South that have nonetheless adopted these knowledge frameworks), these academics’ intellectual capital is based on the goods they have gained through an elite education. Thus, being from the geographical South, and even looking at southern contexts, is by no means a guarantor of southern epistemologies. And in any case, if the Global South may include regions of the geographical North, then we need to consider this issue from a more complex perspective. Certainly on the one hand, there is a problem that a book such as Coupland (2016) - a book which from most other perspectives is a key text in the discipline - does not engage with southern perspectives, or include contexts from the Global South, even though it does include authors located geographically in the South. On this point Levon’s (2017) critique seems equivocal as to whether the issue is geographical or geopolitical, since it suggests Australia and Singapore (this
latter falling below the North–South line that is usually used to divide the world geopolitically) may be in the South. Yet should we not also consider, on the other hand, the focus of the texts themselves? Is perhaps a discussion of the inequality before the law of Indigenous Australians (Eades, 2016) a southern perspective, even if Australia is considered to be in the Global North and the author herself is not Indigenous Australian (we return to questions of positionality below)?

Here, then, we can see the complexity and challenges of the idea of the Global South: It is one thing to critique a sociolinguistics text for its exclusion of scholars, contexts, and frameworks from the geopolitical South, but it is a more complex question to decide what constitutes a southern context or perspective, once it is acknowledged that the South may also be in the North, and that the geographical South by no means guarantees a southern viewpoint. A book on the sociolinguistics of global cities (Smalkman and Heinrich, 2018) approaches this slightly differently: The editors divide the book into North and South perspectives. This division (Archer, 2013) locates ‘world cities’ in the global North – “affluent and increasingly post-industrial countries” – and ‘megacities’ in the global South – “relatively poor and often post-colonial countries” (Smalkman and Heinrich, 2018, p.6). From this perspective, Sydney sits firmly in the Global North – ranked 15th in the world (one behind Los Angeles) in terms of its ‘magnetism’ (its capacity to attract businesses and people from around the world) – along with London, Tokyo, Paris, the Randstad area of the Netherlands, Los Angeles, and Moscow. This makes a clear statement about the geopolitical framework of the book – the cities in the Global South are Cairo, Mexico, São Paulo, Dubai, and Kohima (India) – while also drawing attention to the point that the Global South does not mean south of the equator (Sydney is south of the equator while Cairo, Mexico, Dubai, and Kohima are to the north). Dubai, however, is a more difficult city to locate in geopolitical terms. Only São Paulo, as one of the vast, expanding, and troubled megacities of the world, is firmly in the South in all senses.

Just as the wealthy cities of the South may be positioned in the North, so southern perspectives may be brought to bear on places located in the North, nowhere more obviously than when dealing with the circumpolar North regions such as Finnmark (northern Norway) or Northern Canada within the Arctic Circle (Hayman et al., 2018; Lane and Mabhara, 2017). This is where the issues shared by many Indigenous people (Indigenous Australians, First Nations people in North America, or Sámi in the far north of Europe) can come together under a Global South perspective (Fourth World was a related term within the First/Second/Third World framework; see Chapter 2). These are people sharing similar concerns of a settler colonial history – and for many the ‘postcolonial’ label is roundly rejected. As Indigenous Australian Bobbi Sykes asked, “What? Postcolonialism? Have they left?” (cited in Smith, 2012, p.25) – of continued poverty, battles over land rights, problems of health, substance abuse and unemployment, and struggles to maintain linguistic and cultural practices in the face of entrenched discrimination. The very commonality of Indigenous struggles points to the importance of a common term to describe them. Clearly, however, the Global South or southern perspectives
terminology is straining here to refer to people whose geographical northernness, and solidarity with other Indigenous inhabitants of the circumpolar North, also seems to define them.

Relatedly, then, Indigenous Australians may be in the Global South while Sydney is in the Global North. It is a long journey from rural New South Wales to Sydney — and if this remark seems flippant, it is also very true for many people. This gets more complex if we try to allocate Indigenous Australians living in Sydney into a North/South categorization (about one third — around 70,000 — of the Indigenous population in New South Wales lives in Sydney; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). We therefore have to be careful about lumping cities or countries into these broad categories. A similar and often unacknowledged problem occurs in the World Englishes framework, where alongside the lack of clarity as to whether we were dealing with history, politics, varieties of language, or speakers (Bruthiaux, 2003), the problem of placing countries into circles overlooks considerable internal variation. Malaysia, for example, has generally been located in the Outer Circle, with its colonial history and its recognizable variety of English used internally, but for whom is English a second-language variety? For a rural Malay or an urban Chinese middle-class family? It is on these grounds that Tupas and Rubdy (2015) urge us to think in terms of ‘unequal Englishes’ rather than nation-based varieties. Who has access to what kinds of English and how are different types of English valued? A problem for both areas of work — Southern Theory and World Englishes — is therefore the continuing states-centric focus of many studies of global relations. An emphasis on national GDP, for example, suggests that when it rises above a certain point, a country may move into the Global North (various South American countries, such as Chile, are sometimes now shown as part of the Global North), overlooking the deep internal inequalities within nations.

Likewise, then, we need to be cautious about placing cities or countries into our North/South divide. This became an issue in attempts to understand the metrolinguial practices of a city such as Sydney (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2018). The argument about studying metrolinguial practices — local language practices in the city — is that we have to look at specific sites of linguistic interaction rather than demolinguistic mapping of ethnic groupings. In that paper, we focused on Chinese market gardeners and Bangladeshi-owned stores. Of course, both groups of people benefited from the advantages of working in a global city such as Sydney (in the Global North), but these were also people very much at the lower end of the economy, working very long hours, struggling at times to get by. And as we looked at the networks of food production both within the local region (local vegetables grown for local markets) and internationally (dried fish imported from Myanmar), it was clear that these complex relations of economy and work intertwined with globalization from below (Mathews and Vega, 2012), ethnicity and migration. We thus seemed to end up with elements of the Global South (struggles to overcome conditions of inequality in the periphery) within a city of the Global North (a wealthy city with high indicators of social and economic privilege) located in the geographical South.
These tensions are evident throughout much of the writing on the Global South. Even when authors more explicitly point to the Global South, there may also be a tendency to locate it in an ambivalent geographical/geopolitical sense. Ndihlovu (2017), for example, argues for the importance of "the burgeoning scholarship from the Global South (Asia, Africa and Latin America) in calling for pluralization of toolkits we use to look at development discourse" (p.92). Thus, at the same time that he argues for southern epistemologies and a focus on the "affordances and promises that African linguistic diversity and cultural resources hold for creativity and innovation — the key drivers of sustainable economic development and social progress" (p.89), he also adds a geopolitical gloss (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) that locates these epistemologies in particular regions.

To be clear, we are very much in accord with Ndihlovu's arguments here — no applied linguistics can indeed be driven precisely by African linguistic diversity and cultural resources — but we also note that the overlap between the geographical South and the Global South may also be potentially exclusionary: The 'Asia, Africa, and Latin America' gloss also overlooks Indigenous and other disenfranchised people located in other parts of the world.

The issue that emerges, then, is that in many cases the 'southern' label is doing various kinds of work: It is a label of political economy that refers to impoverished regions of the world; it is a term for geopolitical relations, with the South starting not below the equator but somewhere south of where the money is (roughly along the Tropic of Cancer, running through Egypt, North India, Bangladesh, South China, and Mexico); it is a term for political struggle, including diverse clashes against poverty, patriarchy, environmental destruction, and discrimination; and it is a term for alternative ways of knowing, of different cosmovisions. As Mignolo (2011b, 2014) reminds us, while the East/West divide was based around a Christian/colonial partition of the world, the North/South divide is a post-WWII division of the world along developed/developing lines. Depending on the locus of enunciation, the Global South may refer to underdeveloped and emerging economies (from a Global North perspective) or, from a southern perspective, to "epistemic places where global futures are being forged by delinking from the colonial matrix of power" (2011b, p.184). Ultimately, however, for Mignolo, a decolonizing project has to step outside this framework since neither East and West nor North and South are positions that a decolonial project can sustain: "decoloniality will no longer be identified with the 'Global South' but it will be in the interstices of a global order that was once divided into 'East' and 'West' and more recently 'North' and 'South'" (2014, VII).

We raise these complications not by any means to undermine the idea of southern perspectives, but rather to draw attention to some of the complexities around the southern or decolonial turn in recent scholarship. Related points, of course, have been made about many other such terms: A positive spin can be put on the 'Third World' label, for example, though it already problematically positions parts of the world in historical, geopolitical, and numerical terms; or on 'underdevelopment' (the intention may be to point to the active processes of
unequal development) though it is hard to escape the implications of relative scales of progress (for further discussion, see Chapter 2). Similarly, then, the ‘south’ part of Global South (not to mention the ‘global’ part) brings with it certain tensions. The ‘decolonial’ agenda also presents various concerns (Savransky, 2017; and see Chapter 6). So, let us try to be clear about the position we are taking. Pointing to these flaws, tensions, and contradictions around the North/South terminology does not mean that we are trying to show this is unworkable. It may perhaps be the case that in trying to address such a wide range of concerns – the struggles of precarious workers and the unemployed, of documented and undocumented migrants and refugees, of victims of sexism, homophobia, and racism, of ethnic and religious minorities (Santos, 2012, 2018) – within the idea of southern epistemologies, that the framework overreaches itself, that the concerns become too diverse to deal with. It may also be the case that the notion of the South, as some decolonial theorists argue, is one we need to escape, yet the issues of global inequality, institutional racism, and inappropriate application of inappropriate knowledge remain.

This brings to the fore important questions for applied linguistics. How can we deal with the inequalities in global knowledge production, the lack of inclusion of scholars from outside the dominant regions, the imposition of inappropriate frameworks to address language and education outside the central places and institutions? The point is that these things matter. They mattered to us when we wrote about disinventing language (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007) – northern ideas about language were doing damage to southern communities – and they matter to us now even more so in an era in which issues about globalization, truth regimes, race, and immigration have become such significant public concerns. They matter too because it may be the case that things are getting worse. Rather than becoming more inclusive, there is evidence that the field is becoming narrower (see Chapter 5). While processes of decolonization at least brought questions of southern multilingualism into the purview of language policy and planning (in nonetheless problematic and shallow terms), for many areas of applied linguistics, the rest of the world has become simply irrelevant. So we have chosen to stay with the idea of southern epistemologies or a southern view of applied linguistics, in order to open up for discussion ways in which applied linguistics needs to engage in much more profound ways with concerns about disenfranchisement, colonial histories, and global inequalities, with the exclusion of scholars and contexts from many parts of the world, with the need to reject claims to universalism and to seek instead a wider set of ideas and forms of knowledge. And this, as we argue in the next section, presents possibilities for innovation and renewal.

Innovations: Reinventing applied linguistics

When we talk of ‘gazing from the south’, there is more at stake than a shifting geographical perspective. Southern perspectives present a range of innovative possibilities and epistemological challenges for contemporary applied linguistics. In each chapter of this book, in line with the focus of this series, we will address these
in sections labelled ‘innovations’ and ‘challenges’. A southern perspective, we argue, does much more than merely challenge the North to be more inclusive: It brings “radical hope”, creates opportunities for “balanced judgement and measured insight” and creates space for “imaginative excellence” (Heller and McElhuney, 2017, p.xv; citing Hannah Arendt, 1968, and Junot Diaz, 2016). For Savransky, it is not only a question of the development of epistemologies of the South but also the cultivation of a *decolonial imagination* (p.13) that “demands of us that we risk imagining an entirely different relationship between knowledge and reality” (Savransky, 2017, p.18). More specifically, this makes room for a renewal of applied linguistics founded on ideals not only of inclusivity but also, more importantly, of secularism, tolerance, diversity, equality, and democracy, a form of “bottom-up subaltern cosmopolitanism” in Santos’ (2018, p.8) terms. The southern perspectives we discuss in this book offer fresh perspectives, new understandings, and alternative ways of doing applied linguistics.

These perspectives for renewal will become more evident throughout the book but can be sketched out briefly here. The next chapter lays out some of the background theoretical and geopolitical concerns, reviewing key ideas within southern, Indigenous, and decolonial theories, and explaining the implications of these challenges to northern, western, colonial, and modernist epistemologies. Also explored in this chapter are disparities within the Global South: There is no uniform or ideal Global South framework. Chapter 3 returns to more obviously applied linguistic themes, and in particular ways in which we understand language and multilingualism. Although some have noted a *multilingual turn* (May, 2014, Ortega, 2013) in applied linguistics — both English language education (viewing English from a multilingual rather than a monolingual perspective) and sociolinguistics (with a proliferation of studies of fluid language practices and new terminologies) — the politics of how we understand multilingualism remain complex and contested. Do new ways of talking about multilingualism, and the recognition that multilingualism is the global norm, really take us far enough in recognizing a diversity of ways of using language, or are they potentially retrogressive? Are the new translilingual terminologies so new or rather perhaps an appropriation of ideas about language that have been circulating in the South for a long time (Heugh and Stroud, 2018)? Can reappropriations of these terminologies through ideas such as *ubuntu translanguaging* (Makalela, 2018a, b, c) take us forward in our thinking about multilingualism? At the very least, such questions suggest that innovation in applied linguistics cannot rest in self-satisfied contentment at having (re)discovered multilingualism. There are far more pressing concerns about what this means and for whom.

Let us try a brief reversal of possibilities to shed light on what is at stake here. Imagine for example, that global politics and colonial history had played out differently and what we are now calling the Global South had become a dominant political and economic force. Scholars from the Global South, located in their well-funded central institutions in Mumbai, Montevideo, Maputo, Mombasa, and elsewhere would base their universalizing claims on languages with
tones, clicks, and a wide range of structures, and their assumptions about language use on complex chains of multilingualism. Indeed they might not even be so inclined to talk about separate languages as distinct entities, and they would struggle to get their heads around the strange set of ideas in the North that it is possible to look at one thing called a language separate from its surrounds, its history, geography, and politics, or that people could speak only one language, or that you needed a special term to describe people that spoke more than one. No good reason to invite these backward northerners down South to participate in any discussion of language use. Now one might immediately object to this fantasy on the grounds that, say, the development of such institutions would require a particular path of modernity which would lead to similar language outcomes to those that now pertain in the North, but if there’s one thing we’ve learned from the critiques of development discourse (see Chapter 2), there is no one pathway towards one notion of modernity, and certainly singularity, standardization, and submission are not necessary for being modern. Or one might, more interestingly, propose that such academics might not claim universalism for their ideas. There is no good reason to claim that universalizing is a necessary aspect of good scholarship. So perhaps those strange northern scholars would get off more lightly, and be able to continue their odd studies of isolated things called languages as the minority activity it really has always been.

But let us return to the world as it is. A major focus of northern scholarship in relation to southern multilingualism has centred on language endangerment, language rights, and language revitalization. Indeed, one of the problematic ways in which a southern perspective is sometimes taken up is that it is assumed that a view from the South will involve ‘diversity’ (where the singularities of the North are multiplied in the South) and language endangerment (where languages are threatened by other languages). While much of this apparently well-meaning work has sought to develop language policies in favour of local languages (alongside other work and agencies promoting European languages), it has operated from several flawed premises. In Chapter 4, we argue that this understanding of language has been based firmly in northern epistemologies, promoting concepts of language choice and ethncity that are alien to most southern contexts. By elevating languages over people, it has been unable to deal with the real issues of poverty, change, and discrimination faced by many language users in the Global South. This chapter points to the importance of rethinking the raciolinguistic frameworks (Rosa and Flores, 2017) that have informed this work for so long. It also points to ways in which recent work around the idea of language reclamation (e.g. Leonard, 2017) has started to open up some alternative ways of thinking about what is at stake when we talk about languages, revival, communities, and world views.

Rethinking language along these lines opens up a range of new possibilities for applied linguistics. One of the implications of this reorientation of northern concerns about language endangerment is that arguments about educational provision in European or local languages need to be rethought. Central to any applied linguistic endeavour are questions of language education. The issue for much of the
Global South is not just about developing multilingual and mother tongue educational solutions but also rethinking language for educational purposes. What is language and what roles can it play in the fast-changing educational domains of the Global South? The implications of a reframed understanding of multilingualism in terms of language vitality (Mufwene, 2017) make it possible to move forward from questions of choosing between one or other language of instruction or evaluation (Antia, 2018) and to consider instead the possibility of a more dynamic set of language-in-education provisions. This is part of the larger project of decolonizing the field. For Santos (2018, p.116), epistemologies of the South are “part of the vast current of decolorizing thinking”. In Chapter 5, we engage with this topic in more depth asking both how different areas of applied linguistics — language teaching, second language acquisition, discourse analysis, and so on — might be decolonized, and what it means to decolonize educational institutions. Bringing together questions of southern education, southern knowledge, and southern language, we can start to see how applied linguistics may be renewed from alternative perspectives, as well as the importance of locally grounded solutions to educational problems.

Central to any project of renewal in applied linguistics must also be the question of research. The challenges of conducting research in and around Indigenous and southern communities has attracted considerable debate in anthropological and other domains. How, as an outsider, to access and avoid doing damage to those communities and their forms of language and knowledge, and how, as an insider, to bring alternative ways of thinking into mainstream domains without their dismissal or co-option? How can applied linguistics engage with alternative ways of knowing from particular standpoints? Looking at questions of research, ethics, and knowledge, Chapter 6 raises questions for how, by whom, and with whom research is conducted and who ultimately benefits from such research. The questions have direct relevance to issues about social ownership of languages, grammars, and dictionaries, particularly of minority languages. And for applied linguistics it raises the questions of how both research processes and research outcomes would look different if on the one hand more research emerged from the Global South and on the other if applied linguists learned to listen to other perspectives, to understand how language is understood differently in other contexts, to appreciate that whatever expertise in multilingualism, language policy, and language education we may be able to claim, it is only useful knowledge if it makes sense locally, a perspective that can only be achieved by understanding time-tested and accepted practice (Prah, 2017). This raises the further question of Indigenous forms of knowledge and we dwell at some length on the significance of alternative cosmovisions for thinking about language, place, things, and the world.

A central concern for this book is that applied linguistics has rather lost its way in recent years, becoming a somewhat moribund area of work marked by internal squabbles over models of language development, and interminable debates about the relation between linguistics and applied linguistics. One of our goals, therefore, is to make applied linguistics matter again by embracing the challenges of the
South. A tired discipline may be reinvigorated through southern insights. An applied linguistics that can embrace Global South perspectives needs researchers who are culturally grounded, politically engaged, continuously self-reflexive, and capable of adopting dialectical and multiple perspectives on data. Part of the agenda here is to widen sociolinguists' and applied linguists' "epistemological repertoire" (Di Carlo, 2018, p. 140) so that research methods, interpretive tools, and interventionist and applied projects are far better attuned to social and cultural contexts that are outside the mainstream experiences of contemporary applied linguistics. Innovation in applied linguistics is not going to be achieved by yet another, even more complex model of second language acquisition, but rather by a renewal of the field by learning to think otherwise.

Challenges: On thinking twice and positionality

A project that seeks to undo many key assumptions of applied linguistics and to do so by drawing on less well-established perspectives from outside the mainstream wellsprings of intellectual work is clearly open to some challenges. While we might be critical of global knowledge hierarchies, some would argue that these exist for very good reasons: Not all knowledge is as good as any other. An argument that applied linguistics needs to be more inclusive of southern voices may be quite palatable, given the generally liberal orientation to inclusivity in the field (multilingual, multicultural, and even multimodal orientations, for example, can all be read as frameworks that seek to include people, cultures, languages, and modalities that have previously been ignored). But a more critical perspective that seeks not only inclusion but also questions many of the assumptions of northern applied linguistics on the basis that its frameworks are inappropriate for the majority world raises more difficult questions. The argument that southern voices need a greater place in the debates raises several concerns: Is this an issue merely of being more attentive to those linguists from the South who have often been overlooked because of the focus of their work (work on African languages "doesn't sell"), the places they publish (books and articles published outside the major publishing outlets do not reach the Centre), the style of their work (not always conforming to the academic norms of the Centre), or the languages they publish in (publish in a major language, and preferably English, or your work will be ignored), or is there more at stake here?

Once we start to think in terms of what Santos (2018, p.43) calls artisanal knowledges — "practical, empirical, popular knowledges, vernacular knowledges that are very diverse but have one feature in common: They were not produced separately, as knowledge practices separated from other social practices" — we are opening up a space not just for other, scientific facts, but for other ways of knowing. This means not only being attentive to those academics from the South who have been overlooked but also listening more broadly to popular understandings of language in the South. The issue is not merely of one set of academics (the North) overlooking another (the South) but also of the field more generally.
overlooking a different kind of voice: Local, everyday understandings of language and culture. This argument takes us partly in the direction of 'folk linguistics' (Preston, 1996), or what people think about language(s) themselves. From this perspective, it is important to understand how people orient towards different ways of speaking, while still contrasting such knowledge with how language varieties really operate (folk dialectologies as opposed to real dialectologies). A more political approach to global knowledge formation, however, takes the position not only that different ways of thinking about language from the South may be important, but also that we need to listen to other kinds of knowledge, other kinds of voices. Nowhere does this become more important than in questions of language reclamation, education, or research (see Chapters 4–6), where it has been strongly emphasized that unless academics from the North are able to listen, accommodate, and balance their knowledge of language with that of their southern interlocutors, their research or advice will have little hope of being either appropriate or accepted.

A strong epistemological politics challenges specialized knowledge more profoundly and makes a case for a greater role for local forms of knowledge about languages, their use, their social and cultural roles, their place in education. As Dasgupta (1997) notes, "the specialists in individual disciplines insist on thinking just once, and on ensuring only internal accountability" (p. 24). This is akin to De Souza’s (2017) discussion, drawing on Santos (2002, 2004a), of 'lazy thinking' (razão indolente) or what Dasgupta sees as an "overcodification that empowers only masters of accounting", reinforcing "the private arrogances of particular disciplines" (1997, p. 24) and disenfranchising newcomers, outsiders, and the wider public. Dasgupta goes on to argue that linguists actually need the responsibility of "thinking twice and of representing the public interest in the realm of thinking" in order to avoid the narrowness of a disciplinary focus that is only engaged in discussion with itself (1997, p. 24). In the context of applied linguistics from the South, this implies a major shift from treating southern others as research objects and informants to a more inclusive and disruptive role as knowledge creators and co-constructors.

Some may be sceptical about challenges to the "private arrogances" of disciplines since the whole point of developing a discipline, a set of theories, an academic domain, a body of knowledge, research methods, and so on is precisely to overcome ordinary people's ideas about things. People have all sorts of prejudiced, misguided, or simply ill-informed ideas about language and the point of applied linguistics is to present a much more careful account of what is going on. If this view perhaps sounds a bit elitist, we should also be careful not to dismiss it. Advising parents and teachers that bilingualism may be beneficial rather than harmful (even if done from a somewhat constrained vision of what bilingualism can mean), advising governments on the benefits of mother tongue education (even if the discussion often lacks insights into more complex language ecologies), explaining that language is always undergoing change and that alarms about deterioration are mistaken (even if such positions often fail to grasp the broader politics
of such arguments) - these and many more roles played by applied linguists who
know a lot about language and have studied it in depth are important and we'd be
foolish to want to throw them out. And yet, the assumptions behind positions on
bilingualism, mother tongue education, language change, and so forth also have to
be understood as articulated from within a particular set of understandings of language
and ideological views of society.

Orthodox applied linguistics takes a view of language as a given and thus
assumes that it is dealing with "determinate rule-based systems called 'languages'"
(Harris, 1990, p.49), rather than asking the more useful question as to how our
beliefs about language derive from communicational processes. So, a first observa-
tion is that while expertise may be really useful, we should also be very sceptical
about some of the unexamined premises on which such expertise is based and
guard against expertise being tyrannical, colonizing our visions of language. Albury's (2016)
study of folk linguistic attitudes to ō te reo Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand points to
the problem of "universal language revitalization theories that
draw on Western European perspectives on language but assume universal rele-
vance" (p.306) and shows instead how many assumptions about standardization,
literacy, and corpus planning are questioned from Māori standpoints. From this
perspective, "folk linguistic research methods can contribute to the decolonization
of sociolinguistic theory and method by understanding, voicing, legitimizing, and
ultimately applying more ontologies and epistemologies of language than those that
generally premise current scholarship" (Albury 2017, p.37) As we shall discuss in
greater depth in later chapters, this has major implications for how we think about
multilingualism, language reclamation, and research more generally.

When we return to the question of what it means to try to understand language
from a southern perspective, there are a number of issues at stake. The point here is
not to dismiss northern canons of linguistic knowledge in favour of everyday ideas
about language from the South. But neither is it to accept linguistic knowledge at
the expense of such perspectives. The aim, first, is to become far more sceptical
about canonical applied linguistic knowledge, based as it is on knowledge devel-
oped from a particular perspective, based on particular languages and contexts. A
second goal is then to become far more attentive both to scholarly and everyday
perspectives from elsewhere. This is about learning to 'think twice', to be open to
different perspectives, and to learn to listen. An applied linguist who cannot hear
other perspectives is not much of an applied linguist.

The question of positionality, as well as what has been termed the 'locus of
enunciation' (Mignolo, 2000, 2002) is an issue that has circled uncomfortably
around these discussions for many years. There are several difficult issues here:
Who can speak for whom? What gives one the position to speak on these matters?
How are academic legitimacy and credibility to be bestowed? Here we encounter
the fraught territory of whether a 'southern' background (being from India, Latin
America, or parts of Africa, for example, though as discussed above such a back-
ground is not a guarantee of perspective and southern localities may also be in the
North) endows one with a particular position to speak, write, or research from a
A Global South perspective already brings several challenges to such a proposition, since it might well be argued that academics moving from one privileged background in the southern hemisphere (an elite education in India, for example) to a position of privilege in the northern hemisphere (a generously-endowed professorship at an American university) are in fact little more than migrants within a cosmopolitan Global North. And once one has worked and studied for a number of years in these northern institutions, further challenges come from scholars who have remained in the South (Cuéllar, 2012).

Would the late Braj Kachru ever have come up with a notion of Indian English, or World Englishes, if he had remained in India (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998)? This question cuts both ways: Perhaps one has to leave to see the picture – one can only conceive of an unlikely notion such as Indian English with the aid of the external gaze from elsewhere – but perhaps if one has left, one fails to grasp the local realities – the very idea that to talk of ‘Indian English’ is to operate with a particular set of nationalistic assumptions and to speak from the position of a ‘non-resident native who talks about ‘Indian English’ in some sort of native English’ (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998, p.30). One can understand why the construct ‘Indian English’ becomes a usable idea to those “who live outside, and so elusive to those who look at it from the inside. Like Indian nationalism, ‘Indian English’ is ‘fundamentally insecure’ since the notion ‘nation-India’ is insecure” (p.63). The bigger problem, as Parakrama (1995, p.17) notes, is that linguists working within the World Englishes paradigm “cannot do justice to those Other Englishes as long as they remain within the over-arching structures that these Englishes bring to bear”. To take these new/other Englishes seriously, Parakrama continues, “would require a fundamental revaluation of linguistic paradigms, and not merely a slight accommodation or adjustment.” So, as Parakrama urges, the issue is not just of an Indian speaking about Indian English but about the need to rethink the framework from which one does so.

The idea of the locus of enunciation can be helpful here since it points not only to the literal place and body from which one speaks but also the discourses that one takes up and challenges. White South African scholars should not be excluded from being able to write about South Africa (though the fact they remain the dominant voice needs to be challenged), and Black African scholars working elsewhere should not be assumed, by dint of their background, to have the last word on African concerns (though they should clearly have more of a voice than they are given now). Nor should African Americans be given the final say on African American studies (though surely their voice should be the dominant one). Who we should listen to and why we should listen are political questions about what is being said, in whose interests, and on what grounds. What, then, of our own positions as authors? What claims can we make to write as southern scholars, of southern contexts, for southern audiences, about southern concerns? It would be tempting, of course, to suggest that this book has emerged from a North/South dialogue between the two of us, either based on our geographical locations – Pennycook in the South (Australia) and Makoni in the North (USA) – or
conversely based on our geopolitical origins – Makoni from the South (Southern Africa) and Pennycook from the North (UK or Australia). If the first proposition falls apart for obvious reasons (Sydney, as already discussed, may sit geographically in the South, but is better placed geopolitically in the North), the second is also problematic (geopolitical origins do not account adequately for current political alignment). So, let us avoid simplistic accounts of North/South dialogues and identity politics, and try to grasp a more nuanced account that also sheds light on the broader complexities of North/South relations.

As we have seen, the geographical and geopolitical locations of North and South are themselves complexly intertwined, and neither qualify nor disqualify either of us as writers about the Global South. We have both switched hemispheres for a major part of our academic careers, one, having lived and studied for many years in the northern hemisphere, now working in the South (Sydney) and the other, having moved in the opposite direction Southern Theory should not depend only on ideas from or about the South – though as we shall see, this remains a constant site of contestation – but is concerned with the role of the Global South in the global present and in contemporary thinking (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012). Sinfree Makoni sees himself as a pan-Africanist having grown up in southern Africa and studied for his junior degree in Ghana before working in southern Africa. In addition to being a pan-Africanist he regards himself as a diasporic Africanist constantly negoitiating the construction of knowledge between the Global North and Global South. Although he professionally works in a major rural university, he has over the years developed a sedimented ambivalent relationship with his site of work, an ambivalence which filters through his interpretation of the nature of applied linguistics in the Global South. Makoni works at the interface between the North and South as part of a struggle to reduce academic hierarchies and to shift what knowledge counts in applied linguistics. It is the political project to develop African sociolinguistics that matters here, though it is one that cannot be disentangled from this life trajectory.

Pennycook’s work has constantly sought to open up alternatives to the dominant paradigms of thought. This battle has emerged from an understanding of the politics of knowledge and a concern about what counts and what is dismissed in domains such as applied linguistics. Pennycook’s crtical applied linguistic project (2001) has always sought out alternative forms of knowledge: One aspect of this work that has often disconcerted readers is that it is a project of uncertainty, an endeavour to explore an open-ended politics in relation to a critique of language. He has also lived a life of (privileged) mobility, living and working in different parts of the world, and feeling, like Said (1999) always ‘out of place’ (Pennycook, 2012). In contemporary class terms and by dint of our established positions (however much we may critique that establishment and the hand that feeds us), we are doubtless many miles away from the disenfranchised of the Global South. And while that has almost always been the way of things – from Frantz Fanon to Cheikh Anta Diop, from Walter Mignolo to Gayatri Spivak, critics of racial and colonial orders have written from positions of elite educational privilege – it
remains a tension without easy resolution. But it is also important to see this as a complexly collaborative project. Not merely a northern scholar based in the South working with a southern scholar based in the North, nor only discussions and debates and writing infused with the criss-crossing trajectories of North and South, but also long histories of listening to many others over the years. We like to think of ourselves in dialogue with a polycentric world of concerned others.

Conclusion

Let us try to reiterate what is at stake here. There remains in applied linguistics a deplorable blindness towards contexts outside the Global North. In book after book, conference after conference, article after article, academics from a narrow range of contexts – mainly European and North American – discuss research on specific contexts and generalize these to the wider world. Under claims of commonality – of a shared humanity, a universal language capacity, a collective interest in the discipline – classed, raced, and locality-based understandings of language use are assumed to be applicable to the majority world elsewhere. While the ways in which these differences are framed – the major world, the Global North and South, the West and the Rest, First and Third Worlds, developed and developing societies – and the concerns that are highlighted within these frameworks – economic, political, social, epistemological, and other disparities – remain points of continuing discussion and dispute, it is nevertheless clear that an inequitable knowledge hierarchy ensures that certain assumptions about language, diversity, and education are given precedence over other possibilities elsewhere. And when this northern gaze does fall on its southern neighbours, such assumptions continue in ways of thinking about multilingualism, mother tongue education, language preservation, second language acquisition, discourse analysis, or research.

It is sometimes assumed that southern multilingualism must be about language endangerment or diversity. But this need not be the case at all. This is more about the northern rush to worry about saving languages for the good of humanity or to marvel at the complexity of language resources in southern contexts. To assume that the South is diverse or that languages are endangered is to continue to gaze from northern perspectives. This is not to say that many southern contexts aren’t places of great diversity, nor that many languages may cease to be used. Rather, it is to challenge the assumptions both that such concerns are essentially what matter in the South and that the notions of diversity or endangerment make sense in such contexts. We want to raise more important questions than mother-tongue education or language endangerment, not so much because they don’t matter, but rather because they are ill-framed. And to change this means not only listening to alternative questions, but listening to other ways of framing the world, other epistemologies and ontologies.

Our project of applied linguistics from a southern perspective seeks to address the darker side of applied linguistics (cf. Mignolo, 2011a): The deep ties of the colonial and neocolonial projects to language teaching; the exocitzation of differences that
reinforces the construction of racialized and ethnically Others; the normative assumptions about gendered and sexual relations that obscure the politics of sexuality. In order to redress these deep-seated concerns, we need not merely to encourage a more inclusive applied linguistics that opens the doors to southern voices and encourages more research on and from southern contexts; we need to open up to a much wider range of possibilities (what we later call an *Ubantu-Nepantla* way of thinking and doing). The challenge, therefore, is about more than an agenda of southern inclusion but rather of expanding epistemological repertoires, of opening up to the obligation to understand that inquiries into applied linguistic concerns elsewhere in the world must also be inquiries into other ways of thinking that offer possibilities of disciplinary renewal. Southern Theory is not a fixed body of knowledge but rather an emergent set of possibilities, and it is towards an engagement with these possibilities that we move in this book.