A SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF THE SOUTH

Edited by
Kathleen Heugh, Christopher Stroud,
Kerry Taylor-Leech, and Peter I. De Costa

A Sociolinguistics of the South

This book brings to life initiatives among scholars of the south and north to understand better the intelligences and pluralities of multilingualisms in southern communities and spaces of decoloniality.

Chapters follow a *longue durée* perspective of human coexistence with communal presents, pasts, and futures; attachments to place; and insights into how multilingualisms emerge, circulate, and alter over time. Each chapter, informed by the authors' experiences living and working among southern communities, illustrates nuances in ideas of south and southern, tracing (dis-/inter-) connected discourses in vastly different geopolitical contexts. Authors reflect on the roots, routes, and ecologies of linguistic and epistemic heterogeneity while remembering the sociolinguistic knowledge and practices of those who have gone before. The book re-examines the appropriacy of how theories, policies, and methodologies 'for multilingual contexts' are transported across different settings and underscores the ethics of research practice and reversal of centre and periphery perspectives through careful listening and conversation.

Highlighting the potential of a southern sociolinguistics to articulate a new humanity and more ethical world in registers of care, hope, and love, this volume contributes to new directions in critical and decolonial studies of multilingualism and to re-imagining sociolinguistics, cultural studies, and applied linguistics more broadly.

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To

Ayọ̀ Bámgbósé, Kenneth Hyltenstam, and Jan Blommaert

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Foreword

For quite a long time, it has been observed that the experiences, ideologies, and values of countries that have emerged from colonialism or are otherwise subjected to the dominance of powerful European countries have generally been neglected in mainstream theorizing on certain sociolinguistic phenomena. The north-south divide, as the dichotomy between the rich, powerful countries and the poor, less developed countries is generally characterized, is a major factor why the countries of the north which are socio-economically and politically highly developed also dominate countries of the south in the generation and propagation of ideas.

Multilingualism happens to be one of the notable sociolinguistic phenomena, the description and analysis of which suffers from Eurocentric or north-dominated approaches. From a northern perspective, the following notions are credible and even acceptable: Multilingualism is seen as an exception rather than a norm; the idea of a nation evolving from multilingualism to monolingualism is considered natural or even desirable (as it may serve as a step towards a viable national language); retention of an erstwhile colonial language as the medium of instruction, particularly from upper primary to tertiary level of education, is logical; and models of language planning that fit the situation in European environments can be applied to the situation and practices in non-European environments without any concern for observed differences or appropriateness.

Attempts to draw attention to the diversity in the phenomena being described, not only in terms of situation but also differences of culture and political organization, have largely remained ineffective, as pointed out by decolonial scholars in Africa, the Américas, Asia, and Australasia. For these, including Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007, 2018), and Raewyn Connell (2007), 'northern' theory is assumed to be universal, central, and superior and consequently should be able to take care of problems that arise in countries in the periphery. In any case, countries of the south are not really expected to generate ideas but rather supply data and consume theory derivable from the data. In a rebuttal of these assumptions, Connell affirms that there is a distinct 'southern theory', which accounts for the 'social thought' produced by 'colonized and peripheral societies' and that such thought is as intellectually powerful and politically relevant as that produced by countries of the north (Connell, 2007: xii).

This book with its emphasis on 'a sociolinguistics of the south', together with an earlier book on perspectives from the north and south, as well as north-south interactions and conflict (Caroline Kerfoot & Kenneth Hyltenstam, 2017), applies Connell's southern theory specifically to multilingualism. As may be expected, the contributions in the book necessarily refer to southern and related theories circulating among scholars of decoloniality and '*southern multilingualisms*', which are defined as 'practices, theories and views of multilingualism' held by communities often portrayed as on the periphery.

The book explores multilingualism in all its facets, including historical antecedents, diversity, dynamism, cross-border, and frontier interaction, attitudes, ideology, and fact and fiction in the discourses of multilingualism.

Part I of the book, which deals with historical bases and trajectories, consists of four chapters. These draw attention to the relevance of southern theory not only to Chican@ Sociolinguistics but also to the struggles, ideologies, and emancipation of multilingual peoples of North America. The section draws attention to different discourses of multilingualism along routes taken by people displaced as a result of human conflict according to period, place, and circumstance and how these discourses are circulated and modified in the process.

Part II, the longest section, is devoted to multilingualism in educational contexts. The five chapters apply the concept of 'southern multilingualisms' to diverse educational settings. These include language teaching in the context of linguistic diversity, linguistic nationalism, and multilingual education; English dominance and colonial versus postcolonial educational policies; and decolonial educational policies and practices.

The three chapters in Part III, which deal with southern approaches to research methodology and ethics, show how southern theory can be useful in first and second-language learning, as well as in ethnography and data gathering and documentary linguistics.

In terms of geographical coverage, the areas covered in this volume are diverse, including the United States (mainly Hispanic peoples), Canada, Nepal, Philippines, Timor-Leste, Mozambique, South Sudan, South Africa, and Australia. The authors are also mainly experienced sociolinguists or educationists who are familiar with the areas or communities that form the subject of their contributions.

Although multilingualism is a fascinating topic which has attracted numerous publications, this book has distinct merit in the way it has brought into focus commonalities between disadvantaged groups irrespective of their geographical location. The content is informative and the presentation lucid.

Given the areas covered in it, this book should be of interest to scholars in several fields, including sociolinguistics, language education, language policy, applied linguistics, and anthropological linguistics. Not only teachers and researchers but also graduate students pursuing related research for master's and doctoral degrees will find it valuable. It is with great pleasure that I recommend the book as a useful text not only for academic courses but also in the library.

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Our journeys in bringing together this volume began as socio-applied linguists in different parts of the world, criss-crossing 'abyssal lines' mindful of linguistic diversities and the plurality of perspectives from which they are perceived and valued by communities over time and across place. Voyaging over land and water among modern high-tech northern metropoles and the congestion of ancient cities at the crossroads of trading routes and vast distances across deserts to hamlets, we have learned from many teachers encountered along the way to recognize the pluriversalities of human existence. We bring these rich sociolinguistic experiences and our understanding of their implications for applied and educational linguistics to this volume.

This work could never have happened in the absence of those from whom we have learned the most. Children and their teachers in open-air classrooms, astute people in remote and vulnerable communities, and colleagues in our places of work – community-based and non-government organizations, schools, and universities – have all been our mentors. Scholars, of course, have taught us so much, and it is for this reason that we dedicate this volume to three role models whose life work has contributed significantly to ours, to so many of our colleagues, and to our related fields. Each, from a different perspective, has cleared a path for us to propose 'a sociolinguistics of the south'.

Ayọ̀ Bámgbósé, the doyen of African linguistics, has inspired critiques of colonial and postcolonial language policies, particularly in education, across the African continent for more than half a century. His insights contributed significantly to the attempts to unshackle colonial language policies across most of sub-Saharan Africa, particularly so in apartheid South Africa from the early 1980s. He and those he inspired have contributed an unbroken chain of southern scholarship that culminates in this volume. Kenneth Hyltenstam's generosity, humanity, and humility as a scholar and leader of considerable note has guided countless postgraduate students to undertake careful and ethical applied linguistic work with marginalized and vulnerable communities in both northern and southern contexts. Jan Blommaert, a most influential sociolinguist and linguistic anthropologist, whose work has inspired so many, will continue to provoke ongoing critical debate, in contexts across both the north and south. He has pushed the boundaries of sociolinguistics and in so doing, he has sharpened the tools of

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Kerry Taylor-Leech is a socio-applied linguist based at the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, Queensland. She has published widely on issues dealing with language policy and planning, development, identity, and language choice, particularly in Timor-Leste. She co-edits *Current Issues in Language Planning Journal*.

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1   A Sociolinguistics of the South

Kathleen Heugh, Christopher Stroud,
Kerry Taylor-Leech, and Peter I. De Costa

Introduction

From the perspective of peoples in southern settings, multilingualisms have always been *lingue franche* that shift and change along well-trodden paths of human mobility[1] with 'multilinguality' comprising an integral condition of what it means to be human (Agnihotri, 2014). Recent debates about the nature of linguistic diversity in sociolinguistics have brought to life initiatives among scholars of both the south and north to understand better the intelligences and pluralities of multilingualisms in southern communities and spaces. One of these initiatives emerged from the interweaving of several strands of decolonial thinking and conversations about linguistic heterogeneity that had been circulating through Africa, the Américas, South Asia, and Australia in the decades that followed the dismantling of imperial administrations post-World War II. Several of these conversations (e.g. those associated with Frantz Fanon, Léopold Senghor, and Nelson Mandela) intersected at times with those engaged in mapping postcolonial theory (e.g. Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Edward Said).

Others charted different routes (e.g. Mahatma Gandhi, Rodolfo Kusch, Kwame Nkrumah, Anibal Quijano) indicating a widening chasm between (neo) colonial and decolonial thinking.

An interest in multilingualism and multilinguality surfaced in the north as a response to late 20th- and early 21st-century socio-political and economic mobilities, principally in relation to educational institutions, and with a focus on deficit theories, on the one hand, and elite bilingualism (e.g. Canadian experiences of French immersion programmes), on the other. Southern contexts of multilingualisms continued as fertile sites for researchers sent for brief forays and opportunities to mine and extract linguistic resources for decontextualized northern scholarship. Yet, beyond southern communities, the centrality of multilinguality to the human condition in its conveyance and generation of knowledge and in its irrepressible creativity and communality of 'care', 'love', and 'hope', despite apocalyptic trauma and turbulence, remains largely concealed (Cusicanqui, 2019; Lempert, 2018; Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2008).

Southern Multilingualisms and Diversities

In seeking the origin of Pliny the Elder's well-known rendition of the pre-Aristotelian proverb, *'Ex Africa semper aliquid novi'* – from Africa always something new – Ronca (1992) alerts us to 2,000 years in which interpretations of the proverb have become increasingly negative. Parrinder (1992) suggests Pliny's attention to animals and breeding, and the Carthaginian naming of Africa as a place of little consequence, contributed to a distorted apocalyptic view of the continent. Over time, there has been a spillover to other southern contexts. Southern communities, however, hold plural views of their places in the world, ones that both recognize and resist dispositions of coloniality with standpoint metaphors, as in Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) enjoins a rejection of such distortions with ongoing watchful praxis to resist dispositions which hold them in place.

Recognizing the plurality and multidimensionality of the south reveals how expressions of southern epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies are embedded in *southern multilingualisms* worthy of study and contemplation in a *sociolinguistics of the south*.[2] The first seeds of conversations and collaboration to rethink sociolinguistics from a southern perspective drew upon the work of southern and northern scholars whose conceptual and methodological work in Africa, the Américas, and Asia–Pacific had inspired fresh perspectives on contemporary debates on the plurality of knowledges, and linguistic and cultural diversity (e.g. Agnihotri, 1995; Anzaldúa, 1987; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Connell, 2007, 2014; Dua, 2008; Escobar, 2018; Kusch, [1970] 2010; Menezes de Souza, 2017, 2019; Mignolo, 2011a, b; Santos, 2012, 2018; Smith, 1999). Sociolinguists living and working in postcolonial, border, and frontier communities have for decades recognized multilingualism as a critical site of concern for communities living in precarity. Yet northern discussions of diversity and multilingualism in the first decade of the 21st century, deaf or unresponsive to southern experiences, expertise, and systems of knowledge, tended once more towards assumptions of the universal relevance and practices of northern coloniality. In response, vanguard discussion among a number of southern scholars led to the formation of a collective, the Southern Multilingualisms and Diversities, Consortium, in 2014. This consortium includes researchers, research collectives, and not-for-profit bodies working at the interface between the plurality of multilingualisms and diversities, and their relationality within a humanity in which epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies are held in balance.[3] The purpose of the collective was to seek ways to circulate southern expertise and knowledge of pluriversal views of humanity in communalities of being, knowing, and believing both among southern and northern scholars. A second purpose was to prompt rethinking of how southern experiences of diversities might contribute to pressing global challenges, particularly in education, a high-stakes domain with life-changing and intergenerational consequences for opportunity or risk of poverty, ill-health, and exclusion (e.g., Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012;

Stroud & Kerfoot, 2013). These challenges further relate to shifting balances of power and increasing human displacement, migration, and mobilities that arise from the calamities of global (neocolonial) extraction, localized, and regional conflict, plague, and natural disaster.

Together, these intentions seemed then, as now, to have purchase in times of unsettledness and socio-political upheavals and turbulence of global magnitude. Since the first meeting, conversations initiated by the consortium have travelled along material and virtual routes, criss-crossing Africa, the Américas, and Asia-Pacific. These conversations have been drawn increasingly towards understanding the potential of southern multilingualisms to articulate humanity in registers of care, hope, and love. Southern perspectives of plurality and multilingualisms now find their way into spoken forums and printed works (e.g. Bock & Stroud, 2021; Heugh, 2017; Heugh & Stroud, 2014, 2019, 2020; Kerfoot & Hyltenstam, 2017; Lim et al., 2018; Pennycook & Makoni, 2019). These run at times in parallel and at others conjoin or intersect with several tributaries and narratives of decolonialism and analyses of decoloniality (e.g. Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Medina, 2014; Mignolo 2010, 2011a; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Santos, 2012, 2016, 2018). This volume brings together snippets of those conversations that have travelled continents and percolated since 2014. It follows a *longue durée* perspective of human coexistence with communal presents, pasts, and futures; attachments and responsibilities to place; and insights into how multilingualisms emerge, circulate, and alter over time (e.g. Heugh & Stroud, 2019, 2020). Authors in this volume bring their understanding, wrought through decades of living, learning, and working in and among southern communities, of how deeply rooted and routed are ecologies of linguistic and epistemic heterogeneity. They bring their sensitivities of these ecologies to pluralities of historical, (post)colonial and spatial contexts, and what these might offer futures in the present. They recall and remember sociolinguistic expertise, knowledge, and practices of those who have gone before and particularly those whose life experiences lie within the most heterogeneous parts of the world. Each chapter illustrates nuances and complementarities in the idea of south and southern, tracing (dis-/inter-) connected discourses among communities in vastly different geopolitical contexts. Authors re-examine the ethics and appropriacy of how theories, policies, plans, and methodologies 'for multilingual' contexts, often in regard to education, are transported from one context to another through close examination of these phenomena as they appear in 'frontier' contexts of 'fragility' and 'futurity' (Ginsburg, 2018; Lempert, 2018) in the Américas, Southern Africa, South and South-East Asia, and Australia. Together, the chapters in this volume illustrate how community stakeholders recontextualize, remember, resist, or appropriate these discourses through decolonial practices. On a methodological level, the authors underscore the ethics of research practice and a reversal of centre and periphery perspectives through careful hearing and listening in conversation, including with Anangu (remote Australia), Cree and Michif (Canada) elders, speakers of minority languages in Mozambique and Nepal, women relocated to South Australia after displacement from South Sudan, and educational agents in Timor- Leste and the Philippines. The desire to hear and listen in this way entailed

an attempt to navigate with care the tension between editorial control and the authors' own agencies and voices, as well as the voices of those they bring forth. In this we draw attention to the value of learning to hear and comprehend southern knowledge and agency (see also Cusicanqui, 2019; Deumert & Mabandla, 2017; Lorente, 2019; Wyman et al., 2013). Ultimately, pluriversal rather than universal epistemologies contribute to an epistemic justice informed by the social experience of everyone rather than a privileged few (Heugh, 2017; Kusch, [1970] 2010; Santos, 2016; Stroud & Kerfoot, 2021).

Before we begin, the key questions are, 'Where is the south of sociolinguistics?' 'What are its coordinates?' Only to the extent that we find the south does it make sense to ask: 'What, then, might a sociolinguistics of the south comprise?'

The South in Sociolinguistics?

In much literature, 'south/southern' is a multivalent notion, deployed variously, and often ambiguously, across and sometimes within one and the same text. There are conflicts and historical continuities among the terms that carry implications for a southern sociolinguistics so that developing a lens on southern multilingualisms and 'southern sociolinguistics' requires grasping these manifold meanings of 'south' and its derivatives, such as 'southern', 'geopolitical south', 'metaphorical south'/'subaltern south', and 'utopian south'.

South as Geopolitical Artifice

The most common sense of the 'south' – especially in literature since the 1970s, and particularly since political changes after 1990 – is to its geographical/topological meaning captured best in the idea of the 'geopolitical south', which references to geographies roughly isomorphic to Africa, the Asia–Pacific and Central and South America, and roughly coterminous with what was earlier captured by terms such as third world, non-industrialized, under-developed, etc. It is based on a nation-state model of global relationship, and offers a Westphalian lens on a changing political and economic global landscape, reflecting temporally specific conceptions of the meaning of modernity and the moral significance of development (Cutler, 2001). Although the term 'third world' was in use during and after the Bandung Conference of African and Asian states in 1955, the notion of the 'south' can be traced through its associations with the Non-Aligned Movement and G-77 (mostly postcolonial) countries, including China. Currently, the term is considered a counterweight to third world and to express a deliberate stance on poverty, power, and decolonialism (see Acharya, 2016). A geopolitical notion of the south is continually reinvented in northern discourses. The timeless rediscovery of diversity as a southern problem defines the south as a disordered Other-space that encroaches upon the 'homogenies' of the north.

South as of Margins and Despair

A second and increasingly common lens on the south makes reference to *marginality*; to social, political, and economic disempowerment; and to the fact of misery, suffering, dispossession, and hardship of people in historical contexts of coloniality/modernity produced and contemporary processes of neo-capitalist exploitation. Santos (2012:51) invokes the term, 'global South', to capture this sense of marginality whereby:

> The global South is…not a geographical concept, even though the great majority…live in countries of the Southern hemisphere. The South is here rather a metaphor of the human suffering caused by capitalism and colonialism at the global level, and a metaphor as well of the resistance to overcome or minimise such suffering…. It is a South that also exists in the global North in the form of excluded, silenced and marginalised populations, such as undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia and racism.

As noted by Santos, this global/marginal south finds fertile roots in both the geopolitical or topographical north and south, although its locations are forever shifting. It is an ambivalent, 'patchy, amorphous and unstable space' (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Sarkar, 2019: 219) – that is actively and continuously produced through the shifting of uneven and layered development, and the bordered workings of idiosyncratic flows of transnational capital.

This 'south' or 'southern' is also metaphorically discussed by many scholars in terms of decolonial resistance to lingering colonial injustices articulated as specific contrary relationalities and associated moral stances between rich and poor, between oppressor and oppressed (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Connell, 2007; Santos, 2012). Santos (2018) and Santos and Meneses (2019) focus on the centrality of resistance in discussions of *struggle* as a form of alternative knowledge building, or as a form of ontological refashioning of self and the world.

South as Potential – Semper Aliquid Novi

Closely related to the metaphor of south as struggle and resistance is a *utopian* sense of south and southern. Beyond tropes of misery, dispossession, and the exploitation of marginalized communities, similarly invoked by several scholars of decoloniality, we find alternative subaltern discourses and practices in which people find agency and move beyond the cusp of despair (e.g. Anzaldúa, 1987; Sarkar, 2019) towards 'a principle of hope' or 'anticipatory consciousness' (Cusicanqui, 2019: 96). In this sense, the south sustains lives pregnant with possibilities of living otherwise, beyond the strictures of exploitative social systems and the environmentally destructive economics of human deprivation. Papastergiadis (2012: 26) sees 'the South is a space where people meet to imagine the possibility of other ways of being in the world', 'a state of mind'. Much of the writings in southern theory (Connell, 2007) and work in southern epistemologies (e.g. Santos, 2016) are located in this sense of the south.