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Diversities, affinities and diasporas: a southern lens and methodology for understanding multilingualisms

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Abstract

We frame multilingualisms through a growing interest in a linguistics and sociology of the 'south' and acknowledge earlier contributions of linguists in Africa, the Américas and Asia who have engaged with human mobility, linguistic contact and consequential ecologies that alter over time and space. Recently, conversations of multilingualism have drifted in two directions. Southern conversations have become intertwined with 'decolonial theory', and with 'southern' theory, thinking and epistemologies. In these, 'southern' is regarded as a metaphor for marginality, coloniality and entanglements of the geopolitical north and south. Northern debates that receive traction appear to focus on recent 're-awakenings' in Europe and North America that mis-remember southern experiences of linguistic diversity. We provide a contextual backdrop for articles in this issue that illustrate intelligences of multilingualisms and the linguistic citizenship of southern people. In these, southern multilingualisms are revealed as phenomena, rather than as a phenomenon defined usually in English. The intention is to suggest a third direction of mutual advantage in rethinking the social imaginary in relation to communality, entanglements and interconnectivities of both South and North.

Introduction

Globally relevant concerns with multilingualism have a long history, with narratives that appear to differ from one context to another. These differences relate to histories of voluntary and involuntary movements of people and communities back and forth from the east to Europe and Africa, from Africa to Europe, from Europe to the New World. They relate also to what is termed 'internal mobility' and 'displacement of people within contemporary geopolitical states'. Our first purpose in this article is to draw attention to a heterogeneity of multilingualisms and of understanding them, as they occur in different parts of the world that at one historical juncture or another have been colonised. We do so in the context of a growing interest in southern perspectives on sociolinguistics and multilingualism that, although circulating in Africa and India throughout the twentieth century (e.g. Agnihotri, 1992; 1995; Bamgbose, 1987; Djité, 1993; Heugh, 1999; Makoni, 2003; Stroud, 2001; wa Thiong'o, 1986),¹ have in recent years entered wider arenas of debates, including the discourses of decoloniality in the Américas² (e.g. Kusch, [1970] 2010; Quijano, 1970; Dussel, 1995, 2002; Mignolo, 1996, 2010) and Australasia (Nakata,

2002, 2007; Smith, 1999; Watson, 2014).

Discourses of decoloniality have been amplified in recent years by Raewyn Connell, who has proposed the term ‘southern theory’ (Connell, 2007, 2014). They have been expanded further by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, who refers to ‘southern epistemologies’ (Santos, 2012), in which there are interconnectivities of southern and northern thinking that, while recognised by southern scholars, are not necessarily recognised by northern scholars; and Comaroff and Comaroff (2012), who suggest that the north is becoming more southern-like and the south is becoming more northern-like.

Our second purpose is to provide a contextual and theoretical background for the six articles that follow. Our concern is to contribute towards balancing a perspective that for the past decade appears to have turned towards powerful narratives initiated in English in North America and the UK and which lay claim to an uncovering or (re-) discovering of multilingualism as more than the sum of languages understood as monolingual entities (e.g. Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009; Heller, 1999, 2007). Whether intentional or not, a northern or ‘North Atlantic’ (Connell, 2007) perspective such as this appears ahistorical and dislocated from the experiences and scholarship of marginalised and minoritised people who live in both the geopolitical north and south.³ In definitions of multilingualism that circulate mainly in English and published in North Atlantic settings, earlier and contemporary southern knowledge, practices and scholarship in multilingualism are often elided, thus introducing a binaried and divisive conundrum between southern and northern discourses of multilingualism. During a time in which diversities bring serious global challenges and risks, particularly when the experiences of southern people continue to be elided, this is neither helpful nor productive. The so-called ‘multilingual turn’ (May, 2013) is surprising to many linguists in both northern and southern contexts who live and work in minority communities with multilingual expertise. It is even more perplexing for linguists and multilingual citizens, who are by far the majority in many ‘southern’ or post-colonial societies. These are settings in which multilingualism is regarded as neither a new phenomenon nor one that is constrained to an understanding of ‘multiple monolingualisms’ (Heugh, 2003) or ‘parallel monolingualism’ (e.g. Heller, 1999, 2007; Makoni, 2003). Rather, multilingualism and multilingualisms are and have been recognised in an ongoing confluence of ecological changes, functions, resources and sometimes risks that coexist in both horizontal arrangements that secure affinity and conviviality and vertical arrangements that index unequal power functions and relations. The lineage of these wider perspectives of multilingualism stretch from Africa (e.g. Bamgbose, 1987; Mufwene & Vigouroux, 2008; Nhlapo, 1944, 1945; Shoba & Chimbutane, 2013; Stroud, 2001), to South and Central America (e.g. Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 1996), to Australia (e.g. Lo Bianco, 1987), to India (e.g. Srivastava, 1986, 1990; Agnihotri, 1995; Dua, 2008) and to Indonesia (Sugiharto, 2015).

Our interest here is to turn attention towards southern ecologies of multilingualism and multilingualisms as consequences of millennia of human mobility, conquest and hegemonies, and to shift the lens towards the relationships among people and their employment of multilingual resources in southern diasporas. We hope to illustrate resistance towards essentialist and binary thinking. Instead, we point towards (a) the heterogeneity of experiences of multilingualisms and (b) the interconnectivities among people and communities in mobility and the reconfiguring of affinities in diasporas. Together, the authors in the following six articles draw on a wide span of data, including ethnographic data gathered over the past two or more decades, to illustrate the *longue durée* of intelligences of multilingualisms within ecologies of ongoing rather than recent change (e.g. Franceschini, 2013). Below, we introduce each of the six articles with a brief discussion of how in each the authors offer a particularly southern or decolonial lens towards the practices of multilingual people who, as a consequence of mobility or displacement, navigate vulnerability and loss and yet also engage in acts of linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2001, 2018) in reconfiguring new linguistic affinities in the diaspora. We suggest that there are several ways in which we might understand the nature of interconnectivities among diasporic communities in southern and northern settings, particularly at times in which there what appear to be unusual ‘state[s] of exception’ (Agamben, 2005).

From multilingualism to monolingualism and back: (Dis)connected discourses

Understanding how a multilingual consciousness appears to have been lost or replaced by monolingualism in the national or civil society psyche in some parts of the world and yet retained in others has been a matter of conjecture. Several authors, including Gogolin (2002) and Gramling (2016), attribute this to the rise of the European nation state from the seventeenth century onwards. However, we suggest that there has been a longer history in which societal multilingualism has been under pressure from monolingual ideologies. As far as we know from conventional understandings of Western northern history, debates about monolingualism and multilingualism can be traced to ideologies of segregation and vertically indexed monolingualism in Greek within the ancient Hellenic empire. This was accompanied by pejorative positioning of non-Greek persons and their languages as ‘barbarian’. South African Oxford-educated scholar of classics, Haarhoff (1938), ascribes the fatal flaw of the Greek Empire to its linguistic and cultural hegemony based on monocultural and monolingual administrative and military control. According to Haarhoff, a significant reason for the success of Roman generals and military in defeating the Greek armies had to do with a political and military ideology in which generals and soldiers were expected to integrate with and learn languages of the local communities in conquered territories. This was followed by a two-track advance of Latin as the indexically vertical language of the Roman Empire, shored up by multilingualism and multilingual communicative practices to facilitate integration on the ground.⁴

Invading Huns from the Caucasus and Central Asia brought an end to the Roman Empire (approximately 400–700 CE), at which point Arabic-speaking North Africans

(the Moors) invaded Southern Europe, where they remained until the mid-twelfth century. Meanwhile, between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, Arab traders carried Arabic from the east, across North Africa and into West Africa, and Arabic script was used to transcribe multiple African languages used for scholarship in the university mosques of the Malian and Sudanic Empires. Multilingualism thus continued through the Middle Ages, certainly in Africa, and there is evidence that this was also the case across Asia, the Américas, Australia and Europe. Early writing systems were in evidence in Africa, Asia and the Middle East well ahead of Europe. A return towards monolingualism only took hold once again within emerging European nation state ideologies of the seventeenth century, with accompanying pressure exerted towards homogeneity, including linguistic homogeneity (e.g. Heugh, 2017a).

The reality of multilingualism, however, could not be ignored elsewhere, even with fifteenth century Spanish and Portuguese conquests in Central and South America and later European conquests in Africa and Asia. Whereas attempts by European powers towards reducing or eliminating societal multilingualism had considerably negative consequences in South and Central America and Australia, such attempts were far less successful in Africa and in South and South-East Asia, where the people practising multilingualism far outnumbered their monolingual colonial administrators. Conversations and debates about the problematic of monolingual vs multilingual views of the world were present in the late-19th contexts of Africa, Asia and Australia, for example in a lament over the loss of Indigenous Australian languages in the first 100 years of British colonisation (Curr, 1886). Engagement with multilingualism became the subject of considerable concern, particularly to the implications for education throughout the twentieth century in Africa, for example in the Phelps-Stokes commissions on education in East and West Africa in the 1920s (Jones, 1922) and UNESCO reports from the 1950s to the present time. It has certainly resurfaced in postcolonial developments and debates across Africa and in South and South-East Asia from the mid-twentieth century, and is clearly evidenced in the establishment of the Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysore in 1969.

These interests have travelled in many conversations along intersecting lines of historical, political and societal differences or heterogeneity. Some are rooted more in local experiences of linguistic ecologies, some as colonial and neocolonial responses in which such diversity has been positioned within monolingual ideologies as problematic. Some appear in ambiguous spaces between neocolonial and postcolonial responses, in which linguistic diversity is positioned either within rights-based ideologies and or even as a resource, and yet they are seldom explicated beyond their value as a desirable resource (cf. Coleman, 2011). Finally, in decolonial literature conversations of multilingualism are difficult to define and pin down for several reasons. These include that although the phenomenon of multilingualism or 'multilinguality' (as introduced by Agnihotri, 1995, 2007, 2014) is viewed as a constitutive capacity of human beings, the nature and characteristics differ from one physical, temporal, ideological and political setting to another (illustrated, e.g. in Sachdev, Giles, & Pauwels, 2013). Multilingualism therefore refers not only to a multiplicity of

languages in the world and to multiple or uncountable ways in which people engage in communicative exchanges of conviviality and dispute, but also to the internal metalinguistic exchanges of information within the cognitive faculties of each person (Agnihotri, 2014). In such contexts, multilingualism defies the binary characteristic of definitions that tend to emerge from contexts in which monolingualism continues to frame the linguistic habitus. For example, Srivastava, in a public discussion at the Central Institute of Indian Languages in the 1980s (and subsequently published in 1986), contrasts Indian perspectives of multilingualism with how he then understood 'western' perceptions of bi-/multilingualism, including code-switching, as related to multiple discretely separated languages. He regards such 'western' perspectives as irrelevant in the Indian context, where:

People not only freely switch over from one code to another but mix them as well for better communication and establishment of *rapport* in discourse. Dominantly monolingual countries on the other hand, present a picture in contrast where people generally have one or two codes at their disposal. (Srivastava, 1990, p. 41; our emphasis)

He continues, citing his earlier clarifications:

... this capacity of switching codes provides an individual with a remarkable capacity and skill to adjust to different conditions she is exposed to. It makes her attitudes *flexible*, which leads to an awareness of the presence of diversity in and around her environment, and not only that, she has skills to deal with such situations. (Srivastava, 1986; p. 47 cited in Srivastava, 1990, p. 41; our emphasis)

While the vocabulary that Srivastava uses might today be criticised as not espousing contemporary fashionable neologisms, this should not occlude the relevance of his recognition of the metacognitive and social implications of multilingual people more than 20 years ahead of recent discourses in the UK and USA. Agnihotri takes this further during a long association of South–South discussions of multilingualism between colleagues in India and South Africa in the 1990s, during which he elucidates an understanding of multilingualism that predates most northern understandings:

What we need to understand is that a multilingual is not an addition of monolinguals. It is not that if you know English, Afrikaans and Hindi, then you are a combination or an addition of three languages packed into one. This is not the case. The case is that you have multiple competence and that it is quite possible that linguistically, cognitively and in terms of metalinguistic awareness – what you know about the nature of language – you have a more distinct multiple competence than a monolingual. One should never use the norms established for monolinguals as yardsticks for measuring the proficiency levels of multilinguals and this is the crux of the matter. (Agnihotri 1994 , cited in De Klerk, 1995, p. 56⁵)

Two decades later, the following excerpt in relation to research conducted in the UK illustrates the temporal and geographic disconnect between southern and northern thinking, in which northern scholars inadvertently come to the view that they have uncovered something hitherto unknown:

... we conclude that the eight complementary schools in which we conducted detailed linguistic investigations sit at the very crux of *a new and developing thinking* about how linguistic resources are deployed in our late modern world. (Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p. 24; our emphasis)

Heterogeneity from within or without a habitus of diversity?

The recent ‘unveiling’ of heterogeneity, have reanimated earlier challenges to notions of homogeneity captured in Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ and ‘nationalities’ (Anderson, 2006). Many of the earlier challenges come from scholars who have engaged in transnational mobility and who bring perspectives from postcolonial contexts of Central and South America, South Asia and Africa, and who critique perceptions and constructions of sameness or homogeneity. Mignolo (2010), for example, acknowledges Kusch ([1970] 2010) writing from Argentina and Quijano (1970) from Peru, as having been among the first scholars to reject what they and others have perceived as the pressure towards homogenous views of Indigenous and ‘black’ peoples of the Américas reflected in apparently critical northern literature. Writing from Mexico, Anzaldúa (1987) was to follow, and Stuart Hall, originally from Jamaica, rejected homogenous conceptions of ‘blackness’ in late modernity. Hall (1996) called for a ‘retheorising of difference’ and ‘a new cultural politics that engages rather than suppresses *difference*’ (p. 449). Appadurai (1996), originally from India, in discussing cultural ‘disjuncture and difference’ and acknowledging Anderson, proposes the ‘social imaginary’, in which he refers to (mis)perceptions of ethnic communities as ‘ethnoscapes’ and to ideologies that carry cultural perceptions across (inter)national boundaries as ‘ideoscapes’.

We add to the work of these scholars and deliberately engage with difference by suggesting that one explanation for the more northern and the more southern understandings of multilingualism can be ascribed to the locus of discussions of heterogeneity and the tension that pulls these towards homogenous views. The residual habitus of nation state monolingualism is difficult to resist and may contribute to a view that an alternative to monolingualism must be a singular view of multilingualism that results in an either/or binary. Either one takes what has become a populist view that language/s are porous and the focus of ‘new’ sociolinguistics is to engage in the fluidity of linguistic exchange (e.g. in educational contexts), or one views multilingualism as the sum of separate languages. In the former, one is positioned as supporting social justice; in the second, one is positioned as denying social justice (see also critiques of Edwards, 2012; Pavlenko, 2018, forthcoming). We suggest that such binaried positions risk methodological and theoretical problems associated with both ethnoscapes and ideoscapes, which are also fundamentally at odds with principles of communality that lie at the heart of the ontologies and epistemologies of many southern communities (e.g. Smith, 1999; Watson, 2014). Perhaps we need to be rethinking

the social imaginary in relation to communality, entanglements and interconnectivities that seem to have been lost in discourses of multilingualism that themselves have become hegemonic, inwardly looking, northern-focused debates over the past 15 years.

To this end we hope to emphasise a departure here from binaried discourses through discussions of multilingualism in contexts where heterogeneity has not been invisibilised to the extent that it has in anglophone Europe and North America. For people in postcolonial southern contexts, multilingualism is a construct of language that can be both porous (in civil society) and hermetically sealed (within the coercive structures of power) (cf. Foucault, 1982). Rather than appearing in spoken and written texts of linguistic fluidity, evidence of the latter appears in monolingually separated texts in government legislation, public services, administrative officialdom and academic publications. From this vantage point, multilingualism is horizontally convivial and inclusive, while also being vertically indexed for exclusion. Social justice, therefore, requires access to functional use of both horizontally fluid and vertically sealed linguistic resources.

The residual habitus of homogeneity and monolingualism in the northern context has contributed to divergence between northern and southern perspectives. Thus, in several influential publications emerging from Europe and North America, attempts to offer singular or universal explanations or definitions in effect portray linguistic diversity or multilingualism as *a* (singular) *phenomenon* with characteristics restricted to parallel and separate languages (e.g. Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009; Heller, 2007).

Alternatively, a dichotomous perspective of multilingualism is understood in relation to 'languages as mobile resources rather than immobile languages' (Blommaert, 2010, p. 197). In contrast, heterogeneity, understood from within southern contexts conventionally positioned as diverse, is foregrounded on the premise of pluralities or *phenomena* (cf. Mignolo, 2010, 2011; Kusch, [1970] 2010). Thus, we argue that there is recognition of *the phenomena of diversities* and hence the *plurality of multilingualisms* in perspectives associated with Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Australia and the Pacific. At the same time, neither the universal nor the plural view is exclusive, and despite risk of a gulf or abyss (Santos, 2012) between northern and southern thinking, there remain interdependencies and entanglements between more 'southern' heterogeneous and more 'northern' homogeneous perspectives (cf. Kerfoot & Hyltenstam, 2017).

Nevertheless, owing partly to the predominance of prestigious academic publishing houses in Europe and North America, and authors who now write in English, there is, in our view, a disproportionate spread of texts framed from within northern contexts or within northern theories and understandings of multilingualism. Elsewhere, Liddicoat (2016) points towards a disproportionate body of texts about multilingualism written, or citing studies that are written, only in English (see also Medina, 2014). This means therefore, that there is an underrepresentation of literature that reveals the heterogeneity of perspectives of multilingualism/s in postcolonial or southern contexts. It also means that there is limited opportunity for circulation of ideas and insights in relation to views and experiences that

increasingly have value in northern as well as southern settings, and this contributes to or risks ongoing coloniality and hegemony (Heugh, 2017a).⁶

Turning towards southern literature of multilingualisms, diversities and affinities in diasporas

Despite receiving less attention in academic texts published in the ‘English-speaking world’, southern experiences are evident in a wide body of literature that includes the work of Kusch ([1970] 2010), Anzaldúa (1987) and Mignolo (1996, 2011) in the Américas; Pattanayak (1990), Dua (2008), Agnihotri (2014) and Mohanty (2010) in South Asia; wa Thiong’o (1986) and Ayo Bamgbose (e.g. 2000) in Africa; and Smith (1999) in New Zealand, along with numerous of their colleagues in each of these parts of the world. In contrast with much northern literature, southern or postcolonial literature is characterised by an articulation of both southern and northern theories and literature. Whereas northern literature frequently elides experiences of multilingualisms, including the consequences of South–South mobilities (Heugh, 2017b), southern literature references and acknowledges the northern discourses and debates. It also engages with the entanglements of northern and southern thinking (e.g. Kusch, [1970] 2010; Santos, 2012; Kerfoot & Hyltenstam, 2017). At this historical juncture of changing balances of power from North to South and in which socioeconomic, political and faith-based conflict results in large-scale South–South and South–North displacement of people, there is reason to lift the veil and to bring southern literature into northern arenas. This is to draw attention to the implications of both South–South and South–North entanglements for policy and planning (evident, e.g. in Kerfoot & Hyltenstam, 2017; Lo Bianco, 1987; Ruiz, 1984; Wiley, 2014), and particularly to offer possible thoughts, approaches and models for harmonious coexistence mediated through multilingualisms (see also Agnihotri, 2014; Leung & Scarino, 2016; Lim, Stroud, & Wee, 2018). These may offer new directions for language policy and planning developments for the next quarter of the twenty-first century.

It is in the context of refocusing on the entanglement and intersection of two sets of perspectives of multilingualism discourses, rather than the apparent contradiction between them, that we bring together the following six articles.

Each of the articles arising from southern experiences offers a contribution to South–South and South–North dialogues on the implications of linguistic diversity. The authors highlight the complexities of multilingualism for the field of language policy and planning, and the contribution that consideration of southern perspectives brings to a more global understanding of the role of language in situations of diversity, conviviality, and indeed ‘*buen vivir*’ (collective wellbeing) (Walsh, 2010). Such understanding does not necessarily provide conventional solutions to contemporary challenges associated with linguistic diversity, nevertheless, each contributes towards considerations that may inform contemporary language policy and planning that is useful for the next few decades. At very least, it may contribute towards ameliorating the need for northern scholars to ‘reinvent’ or

‘recast as new’ knowledges that have a long history in postcolonial and decolonial settings (cf. Agnihotri, 1995; Srivastava, 1986; among others above).

Each of the geopolitical states included in the discussion these papers – Singapore, East Timor, Brazil, Australia, Italy and South Africa – has a particular history of colonial experience with consequences for multilingualism of lingering coloniality. In each context the authors disclose how the linguistic habitus of coloniality, with its reified conceptions of ethnicity, lingers through various agents and administrative regimes despite different trajectories from neocolonial and postcolonial practices and perspectives to decolonial ones. In each article, the authors bring discussion of linguistic diversity (multilingualism) through the particular contextual lens of how colonial history has impacted upon the mobility of people within or to other nineteenth and twentieth century geopolitically configured territories. They shed light on the nature of multilingualism and multilingual language practices in diasporic communities. They also shed light on how new affinities afforded by language, in spaces in which different agents exhibit neocolonial, postcolonial and decolonial positions, are forged or silenced. In each case the authors situate these discussions in contemporary debates of language policy and planning, while drawing attention to the changing nature of linguistic diversity. In doing so, with differing emphases, they draw attention to the ways in which marginalised people voice linguistic agency and exercise their linguistic citizenship within ‘southern’ diasporic communities. In the last paper we find examples of the relationship between linguistic resources (multilingualism), human mobility and economic activities that at times can enhance the ‘legitimate’ inclusive fabric of society, but when in scarce supply, can serve agendas that carry danger, risk of illegitimacy and exclusion.

In ‘Diversity management and the presumptive universality of categories: The case of the Indians in Singapore’, Jain and Wee offer an analysis of contemporary linguistic diversity in Singapore. With specific reference to the diversities among speakers of languages from South Asia in the Singaporean diaspora, Jain and Wee discuss how contemporary migrants from India to Singapore resist being ethnolinguistically positioned or ‘categorised’ as speakers of Tamil with Tamil identity. Instead, through carefully curated data, the authors reveal how, despite the neo- or postcolonial architecture of policy, communities exercise decolonial agency in the diaspora to claim their own linguistic citizenship, identifying with and claiming Hindi for particular purposes.

In the next article, ‘*As linguas têm de estar no seu devido lugar*’: Language ideologies, languagised worlds of schooling and multilingual classroom practices in Timor-Leste’, Cabral presents the historical complexities and layers of neo- and postcolonial language policy debates in linguistically diverse East Timor. Here, the layered colonial history, Portuguese followed by Indonesian, has left behind a postcolonial resentment of Indonesian but not necessarily of Portuguese. Since ‘independence’ for East Timor, in 2002, arrived much later than in the other southern contexts, it is not surprising that discussions of multilingual policies and planning do not yet include significant space for

minority languages. Instead, in the (post-) revolutionary imaginary, Tetum and Portuguese have come to symbolise a postcolonial – and for some a decolonial – identity. From the perspective of other southern contexts where postcolonial habitus continues to dominate, this is a familiar postcolonial context. From the perspectives of revolutionaries in the country, and through South–South connections with decolonial debates in South America, the dismantling of Indonesian here is more than a neo- or postcolonial stance. It is a decolonial act, even if the voice and agency of speakers of minority languages may not be heard or recognised until a second phase of the decolonial project.

In ‘Unseen and unheard: Cultural identities and the communicative repertoires of *Índios* in Brazilian cities’, Maher and Cavalcanti focus on mobile Indigenous people of Amazonia. Despite achieving independence from Portugal in 1822, some 180 years earlier than East Timor’s independence from colonial rule, marginalised *Índios* continue to be invisibilised (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and ‘not heard’, even as mobile citizens of urban spaces. They continue to suffer pervasive neocolonial and postcolonial habitus of racism and linguicism (Phillipson, 1992). It is through the cracks of the neo- and postcolonial architecture of state apparatus that we find southern voices asserting and reconfiguring linguistic identities and citizenship, in other words, their own decolonial stances in the diaspora of Brazilian cities.

The next two articles draw attention to the linguistic diversities of Australian Indigenous communities. In ‘Language diversity in Indigenous Australia in the twenty-first century’, Simpson and Wigglesworth trace the history of traditional Indigenous languages since the invasion (colonisation) of Australia. They draw attention to the mobility of communities (‘orbiting diasporas’ in which people move between urban and remote contexts), the affordances of digital technologies, and contact varieties of languages. It is these contact varieties that offer linkages and affinities among marginalised people. Through the notions of orbiting diasporas and contact varieties, the authors bring into focus an expanded recognition of the nature and affordances of multilingualism among marginalised and mobile communities. While perhaps not understood as such in the mainstream postcolonial discourses in Australia, it is through these contact varieties that Indigenous Australians exert their decolonial citizenship, a citizenship in which communities choose their moments of engagement and disengagement with mainstream society.

Amery’s ‘The homecoming of an Indigenous Australian diaspora as impetus of language revival: The Kurna of the Adelaide Plains, South Australia’ addresses issues of language loss and reimagining of lost identities of peoples whose traditional lands were taken over by colonists to become the capital city of the new colony. This involves a remarkable process and collaboration of agents involved in a re-awakening of the Kurna language, alongside shifting identity/ies and affinities of mobile people in the diaspora. The narratives involved in the re-awakening of the Kurna language offer a salient case study for language policy and planning, particularly in education, where traditional

Indigenous languages may have a role as ‘auxiliary languages’. In the case of Kurna, the language carries particular significance for naming people and places, hence it has connections with past, present and future in the ontologies and cosmologies of marginalised and mobile people, and also their wellbeing, and even what elsewhere may be understood as ‘*buen vivir*’ (Walsh, 2010).

In the final paper, ‘Spaces of exception: Southern multilingualisms as resource and risk’,

Heugh, Stroud and Scarino bring together three vignettes to illustrate the complexity of southern diversities. The vignettes illustrate the heterogeneity of historical, geographic, socioeconomic and political ecologies of multilingualism, and the mobility of people in relation to settings and experiences of diversities and loss that occur around the time of ‘state[s] of exception’ (after Agamben, 2005). The authors of this article have decades of experience in such environments. The three narratives shed light on implications of linguistic diversity at times of states, and in spaces, of exception – implications that may not have been considered in the articulation of policy and planning to deliver equity, inclusivity or prosperity in late modernity, or that could benefit from the affordances offered by multilingualism. The first vignette, brought by Scarino, offers a rich narrative of the migration of people from a town in Southern Italy to a small city in South Australia before and immediately after World War II. The migrants left one context of vulnerability to enter another. Scarino traces the experiences and practices of a particularly southern multilingualism in the articulation of the *sangiorgese* dialect alongside Italian, English and Australo-Italian in the South Australian diaspora. In the second vignette, Heugh offers a little-known perspective of unexpected multilingualisms enmeshed in illicit activities in the underbelly of Cape Town Harbour in years immediately after the political upheaval that brought an end to the apartheid regime in South Africa. During this moment and ‘state of exception’, multilingual resources held by illegal actors resulted in the need for pragmatic but unlawful complicity involving agents representing law, order, immigration and justice systems. This is followed by Stroud’s unfurling of the obfuscating opaqueness of loss and survival in the changing narratives of a displaced asylum seeker from the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is a narrative of one person who is obliged – perhaps chooses – to inhabit ambiguous, peripheral spaces of danger in post-apartheid South Africa, where he experiences ongoing cycles of loss; and of how his multilinguality and linguistic citizenship surfaces or is obscured as he reframes his search for survival.

Conclusion

We conclude the setting of a stage for further exploration of southern multilingualisms by arguing that in a world in which mobility and transnationalism feature prominently, southern perspectives and points of vantage offer insights into the interconnectivities of South and North and between South and South that contribute to both southern and northern searches for inclusive and equitable policy and planning that might support ‘*buen vivir*’. That the authors perhaps raise more questions than they bring answers is not an oversight. Neither approach – homogeneity or heterogeneity – offers ready-made answers or conventional solutions. Nevertheless, careful listening to the voices of

people of the south and close observation of their agency and indeed ownership of linguistic citizenship, indicate that attempts to define and delimit the nature, variability and scholarship of multilingualisms found in some enthusiastic northern literature are misplaced. Recognition of heterogeneity, unpredictability and untameable multilingualism that includes both voicing and silencing of linguistic citizenship is likely to remain both a challenge and opportunity for future language policy and planning and sociolinguistic research for some time. While such insights, first raised by Bamgbose (1987) in Nigeria, may be confronting to many, they nevertheless may be helpful at a time when complex entanglements of diversities and affinities in global diasporas occur with increasing regularity, and it is in their messiness and communality that, together, we might make progress.

Notes

1. Noted in Africa at the National Language Project Conference held in Cape Town in 1991 (e.g. Agnihotri, 1992; Crawhall, 1992).
2. The use of the accented 'é' in Américas, is a semiotic signifier of a de-colonial stance to the conventional spelling and claim of the term 'America' as representative of North America and invisibilisation of Central and South America and the Indigenous or First Nations peoples across all of the Américas (see Kusch, [1970] 2010; Dussel, 1995).
3. Following Santos (2012) and Connell (2007, 2014), the concepts of 'southern' and 'northern' are not restricted to geopolitical locations of the south or north. Rather, they are metaphors that represent southern experiences of coloniality, exclusion and marginality, in contrast with northern hegemonies of colonial practice that continue in the ideological habitus of the present.
4. Writing in the late 1930s, Haarhoff was particularly concerned about the hegemonic and racist discourses accompanying the rise of fascism in Europe, and how such discourses might play out in divisive discourses in the separation of people along lines of monolingualism, monoculturalism and separate ethnicities in South Africa at the time. Haarhoff cautioned that such a trajectory would suffer the fatal flaw of the Greek Empire and could have only negative consequences.
5. Excerpt from an interview with Gerda de Klerk in 1994. See also the documentary film, *Yo dude, cosa wena kyk a? The multilingual classroom* (National Language Project, 1992).
6. The irony of writing this article, and the collection of articles here, in English does not escape us.

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