

# Editorial

We are pleased to be able to offer this special issue ‘Coloniality, language ideologies, policy and classroom practice in Southern Africa: Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, brought together by co-editors Felix Banda, University of the Western Cape and David Sani Mwanza, University of Zambia. And we thank the editors for the work and dedication in bringing this collection to fruition.

We see this as a ‘companion volume’ to *Multilingual Margins 2020* (7:1) guest edited by Feliciano Chimbutane at the University of Eduardo Mondlane. That volume dealt with multilingual education in Mozambique, and each of the papers highlighted the importance of community participation and agency in bilingual programs, that is, acts of linguistic citizenship. Linguistic Citizenship is a southern concept that captures how speakers exert agency through a variety of semiotic means which go beyond those normatively considered appropriate for political or educational participation. Feliciano Chimbutane noted in his introduction the particular relevance of this notion for “post-colonial contexts such as Mozambique where local knowledges, languages and their speakers have been marginalized under the Western and North Atlantic colonial narratives of modernity and progress” (Chimbutane’s, 2020:3). Kerfoot (2020: 73) notes that it comprises “a critical strategy to interrupt coloniality and racialized patterns of power and prescriptions of value that survive colonialism” (Kerfoot, 2020:73).

The papers in this Special Issue take as their point of departure a set of

identical problematics to the Mozambican case. The authors recognize how standard language ideologies, Western civilization and modern education together with systems of knowledge and disciplinary practices were the key means to export Western cultural identities and civilizing practices, packaged as ‘modernity’ to the colonised and the rest of the world (Banda and Mwanza, p. 7).

They seek “to detect and isolate the stratagems that the marginalized deploy to contest the manifestations, signs and representations of social structures of inequality” (Banda and Mwanza) and to exploit the “breaches and cracks in hierarchized social structures and isolate strategies that can be used to overcome inequalities and marginalization”. Although what the authors describe here is a program of Linguistic Citizenship (e.g. Stroud, 2001), they choose not to use this framework. Instead, the 6 contributions here join in offering the notion of ‘translanguaging’ (and, in particular, its South African variant, ‘Ubuntu translanguaging’ (Makalela) as a way beyond coloniality.

The notion of translanguaging, originally emerged out of educational practices to ‘decolonize’ the Welsh language *vis a vis* the imperial imposition of English (Williams, 1996). Over the years, this term or concept has become increasingly incorporated into Northern, Western paradigms, and has evolved a significant pedigree within these frameworks as a tool for social justice. We invite the readers to engage

with these studies, and in particular with the question to what extent translanguaging as reconceptualised through both the lens of the more recent northern literature and as discussed here offers alternative intellectualizations and forms of modernity that go beyond “Western/Northern epistemologies and ontologies” (Banda and Mwanza, p. 8 ms).

We close this issue with a reflective piece by Moffat Sebola a young poet, called ‘Prophets without honour at home: A view from the margins’, It tells of the wily ways through which the Tshivenda language came to insert itself

into all facets of his life and become the object of his care and curatorship. It is a fascinating account of the powers of a language to mould a poet, and the reciprocal passion of the poet to serve and nurture the language.

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