

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ARTICLE

Undoing Competence: Coloniality, Homogeneity, and the Overrepresentation of Whiteness in Applied Linguistics

Nelson Flores ^a and Jonathan Rosa ^b^aUniversity of Pennsylvania ^bStanford University

Abstract: Conceptualizations of competence that permeate applied linguistics systematically fail to account for the role of racialization in language learning and assessments thereof. To interrogate the racialization of linguistic competence, we first examine its discursive emergence in conjunction with the ideological construction of linguistic homogeneity as central to the naturalization of race within the context of European colonialism. We then track how ideas about linguistic competence took shape jointly with a genre of the human that is overrepresented as white, as well as how this particular genre of the human informed foundational conceptualizations of communicative competence. After analyzing relevant examples of how communicative competence has been taken up in ways that reify this racializing ideology, we end with an alternative conceptualization of the goals of language learning that focuses on the worldviews and lifeways of racialized communities to move beyond universalizing conceptions of competence as the desired outcome.

Keywords communicative competence; coloniality; critical applied linguistics; liberal humanism; raciolinguistic ideologies; race

Introduction

Shange (2019) described an interaction that occurred in a beginner Spanish language classroom consisting primarily of African American students in San

A one-page Accessible Summary of this article in non-technical language is freely available in the Supporting Information online and at <https://oasis-database.org>

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Nelson Flores, University of Pennsylvania, Educational Linguistics, 3700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104–6243, United States. Email: nflores@upenn.edu

The handling editor for this article was Teresa Satterfield.

Francisco where one of the students asked, “Why can’t we learn African?” In response, Shange replied:

We can’t learn African because it don’t exist—the 2,500 continental languages are distinct cultural and social units... Any of those 2,500 languages could have been spoken by one or more of our ancestors, so just as we have a claim to all of them, we have a claim to none. “African” is exactly what Black people in the Americas would have to learn if we were to have “Heritage Language” class. (p. 61)

Shange’s point resonates with analysis of Black linguistic dispossession that characterizes US settler monolingualism (Dowling, 2021). Shange examined this dynamic of Black linguistic dispossession as a point of entry for critically interrogating the anti-Blackness at the core of seemingly objective depictions of language, culture, and heritage that have often informed world language classrooms. In line with Shange, we seek to critically interrogate (racio)linguistic categories rooted in anti-Black, (white settler) colonial, and imperial relations of power that have often been presented as objective descriptions of the world.

In our attempt to do so, we also take inspiration from Shange’s abolitionist anthropology, “an ethic and scholarly mode that attends to the interface between the multisited anti-Black state and those who survive it,” interrogating “a disciplinary project built on extractive logics, collusion, antiblackness, and colonialism” (Shange, 2019, p. 10). From this abolitionist perspective, Shange warned against the embrace of narrowly defined forms of progress that are ultimately rooted in the continued disposability of racialized populations. As she argued:

While the protagonist of progressivism’s political narrative has expanded from the white working class to include the Black underclass and the undocumented Brown migrant, its story is fundamentally a state romance—“social justice” means living happily ever after with the antiracist, distributive state. Abolition is a messy breakup with the state—rending, not reparation. (p. 4)

Thinking with Shange, we suggest that the apparent progressivism of linguistic competence, and, crucially, the subsequent and purportedly even more inclusive concept of communicative competence, is rooted in the same genre of the human that structures the world language classroom that she described—a genre of the human that is overrepresented as white and positions

Blackness as an abject Other (Wynter, 2003). This genre of the human co-articulates with the normative rights-bearing subject in modern liberal democratic nation-states, and as such the institutionalization of efforts toward achieving competence in mainstream educational language learning contexts has contributed to the reproduction of disparities that correspond to broader political and economic structures and hierarchies (McElhinny & Heller, 2017; Kubota & Takeda, 2020; Motha, 2014). In contrast, we seek to consider the possibilities for applied linguistics that emerge when scholars refuse competence as an aspirational outcome and instead reframe pedagogical, curricular, and broader educational goals that presume and sustain the fundamental legitimacy of the cultural and linguistic practices of racialized students and communities (Motha, 2020; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Moving Towards a Raciolinguistic Perspective on Competence

In 2015, we collaborated on a project that sought to undo appropriateness (Flores & Rosa, 2015). In that article, we called into question the basic assumption of appropriateness-based approaches to language education—that if racialized populations learn to engage in normative language practices when appropriate, they will be recognized as legitimate language users. As a strategy for undoing appropriateness we introduced the concept of the white listening subject and illustrated how this institutional and ideological positioning reproduces raciolinguistic ideologies framing racialized populations' modes of communication as inherently deficient even when they ostensibly engage in language practices deemed legitimate or skillful for their racially unmarked white counterparts. We used this framework as a point of entry for illustrating that, although students designated as long-term English learners, heritage learners, and standard English learners have often been stereotypically associated with distinctive ethnoracial categories and linguistic practices, they can be collectively positioned as institutionalized (racio)linguistic Others in need of management and remediation based on their racialized status rather than objective linguistic features and differences.

The foundation for this argument emerged from our own experiences as Latinos living and working in various US communities and schools where low-income Black and/or Latinx students predominated. We have been continually struck by systematic misalignments between what we perceive as students' vast, dexterous linguistic repertoires, and their perpetual classification as deficient language users in need of remediation. Such classifications have typically been framed as unbiased reflections of students' language abilities that can be understood in relation to their use of discrete linguistic patterns and

features that deviate from so-called standard, academic, or proficient English. However, alongside various colleagues, we have found that these students often demonstrate the very speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills that they purportedly lack (Brooks, 2020; Flores et al., 2015; Martínez, 2018; Martínez & Mejía, 2020; Rymes et al., 2016; Seltzer, 2019). This insight suggests that institutionalized classifications of particular students as linguistically lacking are less a reflection of their language use than of power dynamics that lead to the perpetual perception of their linguistic practices as deficient regardless of the extent to which they might seem to correspond to standardized norms. That is, efforts to collectively affirm these students within mainstream institutions ultimately fail because they are presumed as inherently lacking the appropriate communicative competence necessary to navigate these contexts.

We have further developed our thinking about these issues by extending our framework of raciolinguistic ideologies to a broader raciolinguistic perspective (Rosa & Flores, 2017). In this work, we have more explicitly linked our critique of appropriateness-based language education approaches to historical and contemporary colonial power structures that continually shape racialized perceptions of deficiency. A raciolinguistic perspective emphasizes:

- the colonial anchoring of racial and linguistic classifications and hierarchies;
- the modes of perception through which race and language are jointly apprehended across contexts;
- the production of naturalized typologies of racial and linguistic features, forms, and categories imagined to emanate from and correspond to always already constituted populations;
- the intersectional matrices of marginalization that dynamically (re)structure racial and linguistic hierarchies; and
- the need for radically reimagined theories of change that move beyond modifying the linguistic practices of racialized populations to challenging colonial, imperial, and capitalist power formations that continually reproduce disparity, dispossession, and disposability.

One line of work that we have undertaken with colleagues from this perspective has centered on efforts to undo academic language (Flores, 2020; Flores & Saldivar García, 2020; García et al., 2021; Rosa, 2016). Supporters of the academic and non-academic language dichotomy have argued that it is a useful tool for ensuring that linguistically minoritized students receive necessary academic support (Cummins, 2008). In response to concerns raised by critics of the dichotomy about the ways that it may, either advertently or inad-

vertently, reinforce deficit perspectives on racialized bi/multilingual students (Macswan, 2000; Petrovic, 2013; Valdés, 2004), supporters have argued that it is the coercive power relations of schools that prevent racialized bi/multilingual students from mastering academic language rather than anything intrinsic to the students themselves (Cummins, 2008). Recent work in dialogue with a raciolinguistic perspective has challenged presumptions about this purported lack of mastery by examining how hegemonic modes of perception that inform dichotomous framings of language erase the cultural and linguistic dexterity of Latinx and other racialized bi/multilingual students (Martínez & Mejía, 2020; Seltzer, 2019). From this perspective, coercive relations of power that organize mainstream schools do not prevent racialized bi/multilingual students from mastering academic language. The framing of racialized bi/multilingual students' language practices as unacademic, deficient, and in need of perpetual remediation is rooted not in empirical linguistic differences but rather in broader colonial logics that have historically co-constructed language and race as part of the domination of racialized communities. That is, the problem is not with their purported lack of academic language but rather with the perception of their language practices by the white listening subject that shapes mainstream schooling interventions rooted in longstanding histories of European colonial population management (Cushing & Snell, 2022).

Connecting our efforts to undo academic language with the contestation of these broader colonial logics, we have worked with colleagues to disrupt the abyssal thinking that has continually positioned racialized students as dwelling within the realm of home or community language—rendered as an abyss of sorts based on dominant language ideologies—that they must escape or overcome or between which they must learn to switch to master school or academic language (García et al., 2021). Building on the framework of translanguaging and its centering of the inherently heteroglossic nature of language use (García, 2009), Seltzer (2019) and Flores (2020) argued that the purportedly objective, empirical, and discrete boundary between social and academic language reflects a dichotomous orientation to language that obscures the various ways purportedly separate linguistic forms, practices, and skills are deeply interconnected such that it is misleading to designate them narrowly as one language/variety or another. Instead, Flores (2020) proposed the framework of language architecture, which begins from the presumption of these interconnections rather than framing linguistic heterogeneity as an exceptional phenomenon that must be carefully managed and remediated. This approach has dovetailed with various projects in critical language studies calling for reconceptualizations of linguistic boundaries, the proficiencies to which

they are stereotypically understood to correspond, and their educational and broader societal implications (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; García et al., 2017; Gal & Irvine, 2019). We have drawn on these frameworks in our continued collaborations with educators and learning contexts where we have thought through the practical implications of our theoretical approaches (Rosa, 2018).

Yet, as we engaged in our work to undo academic language, we began to realize that the root of the problem we were seeking to identify reached far deeper. The notion of academic language is a symptom of a much broader ontological problem that frames racialized difference as fundamental and constitutive of inherent inferiority. Here we build on Fanon (1967), who conceptualized race as a fundamentally colonial–ontological problem of being made to exist as an object in advance of one’s presence, such that colonial framings of the colonized can in turn constitute the colonized as such from the perspective of mainstream institutions. That is, to be interpellated by colonial institutions as a racialized subject is to be rendered as always already not fully human. A reconceptualization of institutions as perceiving actors and modern colonial ontologies as fundamentally racialized has served as the foundation for the framework of raciontologies (Rosa & Díaz, 2020). This framework elucidates the capacity for racial ideologies and discourses to (re)produce and (trans)form states of being, material and otherwise, in the world. The raciontologies framework has helped us to understand how ostensibly similar or even identical semiotic forms and practices are systematically perceived and constituted as fundamentally different kinds of things in institutionally consequential ways based on their racialized locus of enunciation. A raciontological account, in which racialized language practices are positioned as fundamentally inferior things, can help applied linguists to understand the various cases mentioned above and countless others in which racialized populations have perpetually been positioned as linguistically deficient (Vigorous, 2017) or altogether languageless (Rosa, 2016).

Extending this raciontological view, in this article, we seek to undo the very notion of competence—a concept that is often presupposed as a universal human capacity. Discourses of (in)competence are pervasive within applied linguistics, whether as stigmatizing classifications of students as perpetually linguistically inferior or as progressive efforts to reframe purported linguistic deficits as assets in relation to broader projects of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In mid-to-late 20th century US educational language learning discourses, an example of these perceptions of linguistic (in)competence took the form of attributions of African American verbal deprivation based on allegedly scientific rubrics. Labov famously dismissed verbal deprivation theory

as a myth with “no basis in social reality” (Labov, 1969, p. 60). Yet, Labov’s call for bidialectalism for African American students remained entrenched in this same construction of difference through its assumption that African Americans must learn how to shift their language use to accommodate whiteness when appropriate. Although applied linguistics as a field has often been considered progressive based on its celebration and affirmation of linguistic diversity, we argue that its continued reliance on competence equated with normative whiteness as a universalizing human capacity has deceptively reproduced the stigmatization of racialized language practices and populations. Therefore, applied linguists must interrogate racialized projects of linguistic inclusion within mainstream institutions, paying particular attention to how the co-naturalization of language and race shapes discursive constructions of (in)competence.

Importantly, Black scholars have always pushed back against the mainstream Labovian approach to framing language diversity as it relates to African American language practices. For example, Sledd (1969) called efforts to promote bidialectalism the linguistics of white supremacy, arguing that “the basic assumption of bi-dialectalism is that the prejudices of middle-class whites cannot be changed but must be accepted and indeed enforced on lesser breeds” (p. 1309). This critical perspective has continued into the present with scholars examining the interplay between African American language practices’ perpetual positioning as inherently inferior, on the one hand, and profoundly susceptible to dispossession, on the other hand, such that these communicative practices become alternately valuable and valueless depending on the racial position from which they are enunciated (Baker-Bell, 2020; Dowling, 2021). Scholars building on this tradition have argued forcefully for more explicitly incorporating race as an analytic tool in applied linguistics (Charity Hudley et al., 2020; Clemons & Lawrence, 2020).

In dialogue with this critical tradition, our efforts to undo competence seek to denaturalize narratives at the core of universalizing linguistic theories by identifying their specific locus of enunciation rooted in European colonial logics that have reified normative white linguistic perspectives, perceptions, and positionalities (Mignolo, 2000). Our efforts to undo competence are not a debate about whether people should use the term competence or replace it with another more seemingly positive term. Indeed, our goal is explicitly not about proposing new terms while leaving dominant ontological and epistemological frameworks intact. We are also not interested in engaging in debates about whether people who use the term competence are racist. Our efforts to undo competence are not focused on individual level intentions, motivations,

or identities, but rather on critically interrogating the colonial histories and ongoing structures that have shaped the discourses normatively available for making sense of the world and interpreting the language practices of others. Our ultimate objective is to denaturalize universalizing narratives associated with linguistic theories of competence as a point of entry for shifting the locus of enunciation in ways that provide a glimpse into alternative worlds beyond colonial logics.

These efforts to undo competence will also be frustrating for readers who may be looking for universally applicable, immediate practical implications. Indeed, we are wary of the desire to immediately jump into a discussion of universalizing practical implications. Although our contention is that colonialism was, and continues to be, a global redesign of the world, colonial logics play out differently across contexts. While we believe that our frameworks have practical implications outside of the US spaces where we are primarily situated, they will inevitably need to be adapted to account for the racialization processes at play in particular local contexts. It is crucial to attend to the particularities of different colonial contexts and structures as well as to the racial categories that have become central to their naturalization and reproduction within local contexts (Wolfe, 2016). Perhaps more importantly, our concern is that a desire for immediate practical implications recruits scholars to accept the current framing of educational debates—a framing we find to be fundamentally colonial and harmful for racialized communities. We understand and have lived through the constraints that educators and other practitioners have to navigate on a daily basis as they seek to legitimate their practice by pushing students toward meeting perpetually shifting measures of competence as defined and mandated by policy. Yet, there is a fine line between pragmatism and complicity in the reproduction of normative educational practices. In this piece, we take a step back from practice to reflect critically on the ontological and epistemological foundations of the field of applied linguistics and on the ways that these foundations have historically and contemporarily reified colonial logics through their reliance on a liberal humanist project that has been overrepresented as normatively white.

Overrepresenting European Colonial Genres of the Human in Linguistic Competence

As we have continued our collaboration with one another, we have increasingly looked to Wynter's (2003) accounts of the worldmaking consequences of colonialism and the need for radical reconceptualizations of freedom and struggles toward decolonial lifeways—socioculturally, politically, econom-

ically, ecologically, institutionally, and interpersonally. For Wynter (2003), the institutionalization of modern European colonialism overrepresented particular populations' positions, perspectives, interests, and lifeways as standing for the entirety of humanity. Importantly, Wynter's conceptualization of overrepresentation extended far beyond typical demographic deployments of the term that have commonly been used to refer to the disproportionate number of white people in a field like applied linguistics. Although we certainly support and have been active in efforts to increase diversity in the field (Charity-Hudley & Flores, 2020), we have also drawn attention to the limitations of inclusion as an end in itself (Rosa & Bonilla, 2017). Wynter's discussion of the overrepresentation of whiteness has attended to the ways that the logics that organize dominant societal institutions and value systems have been shaped by normative white perspectives and positionalities. Wynter alerts scholars to the violent colonial and imperial anchoring of universalizing liberal humanism that has in fact been historically and contemporarily rooted in the dispossession and disposability of colonized populations and practices in service of the reproduction of lifeways positioned as more normatively European. Thus, the capacity to articulate the rights of man as universal ideals while simultaneously engaging in centuries of heinous violence perpetrated against much of humanity is not a minor defect that can be repaired but rather is a fundamental component of the US settler colonial structure as well as global modern European colonial structures. Wynter framed the liberal humanist project as the governmental institutionalization of a specific genre of the human that jointly naturalizes hierarchies including race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, language, and ability in service of colonial and imperial interests. This conceptualization of the overrepresentation of whiteness has raised existential questions to consider when working on efforts to diversify applied linguistics. If racialized individuals are only allowed access to applied linguistics through efforts that adhere to the liberal humanist project and the normative whiteness that anchors it, then how does their individualized inclusion coarticulate with the continued marginalization of their knowledges and communities?

The aforementioned examples have pointed to how colonial ideas can position highly skillful communicators as lacking proficiency, dexterous language users as verbally deprived, and multilingual people as semilingual. But simply stating that stigmatized language users are, in fact, proficient, dexterous, and multilingual misses the broader colonial-ontological framing of racialization as a mechanism for denying the humanity of entire populations through the overrepresentation of whiteness as humanness. By connecting Wynter's insights to educational language learning, applied linguists can consider how

our orientations to pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, community engagement, and societal goals reflect the institutional embrace and overrepresentation of a genre of the human that does not allow for the legitimacy of children who predominate within many of our classrooms and communities. This theoretical perspective reconsiders fraught histories of ideas about linguistic competence that were then reframed as communicative competence in a liberal fix that deceptively reproduced colonial–racialized ideas under the auspices of multicultural recognition.

Further developing this framework from a raciolinguistic perspective, we argue that the overrepresentation of the human as white coarticulates with the presupposition of homogeneous codes as the norm in human communication in conjunction with the universalization of nation–state/colonial framings of language (Rajendran, 2019). As a colonially constituted phenomenon, idealized linguistic whiteness comprises the perceived ability to perpetually engage in the use of homogeneous codes, with any perceived boundary crossing framed as a legitimate move away from one homogeneous code to another. In contrast, racialization coarticulates with anxieties about possible contamination of these homogeneous codes through inappropriate heterogeneity even when racialized subjects engage in linguistic practices that seemingly correspond to those associated with homogeneous codes. This underscores the dynamic interplay between racial subjectivities and perceptions of linguistic form (Rosa & Trivedi, 2020), which in turn demands a reconsideration of the fundamental role of racialization in constituting linguistic homogeneity and heterogeneity.

Racialized liberal humanist conceptions of linguistic homogeneity and heterogeneity are the unacknowledged foundation for the Chomskyan framing of linguistic competence, with Chomsky (1965) articulating broad parameters of his intellectual project as follows:

Linguistic theory is primarily concerned with an ideal speaker–listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of language in actual performance... We thus make a fundamental distinction between *competence* (the speaker–hearer’s knowledge of his language) and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations). (pp. 3–4; original emphasis)

This perspective framed competence as a context-free, underlying universal cognitive capacity. Although Chomsky's universalist conceptualization of competence might seem to be radically egalitarian, it is crucial to note his reference to "an ideal speaker-listener, in a homogeneous speech community who knows its language perfectly." The invocation of linguistic ideals, perfection, and homogeneity stood in distinction to linguistic problems, deficiency, and diversity, which Chomsky positioned as outside of the scope of a science of language. Upon considering the populations stereotypically associated with each of these sets of characterizations—unmarked whiteness as ideal, perfect, and homogeneous and racial markedness as problematic, deficient, and diverse—it becomes clear that what was presented as a universalizing science of language was in fact a reflection of a situated raciolinguistic worldview. This worldview emerged within the context of nation-state/colonial governmentality in which nationalist notions of bounded languages corresponding to bounded geopolitical territories were co-constructed with scientific notions of languages as homogeneous categories of academic inquiry (Bauman & Briggs, 2003; Flores, 2013a). This also reflected an epistemological orientation to language that precluded the possibility of critically interrogating ideologically produced constructions and perceptions of homogeneity and heterogeneity. In short, Chomsky's liberal humanist logic purported to account for all of humankind while overrepresenting specific worldviews, lifeways, and the colonial-racial hierarchies that they mutually constitute.

Critiques of Chomsky's disavowal of the significance of studying language use in situated cultural contexts were foundational to the emergence of sociolinguistics as a subfield within the discipline of linguistics and as a scholarly project more broadly (Llurda, 2000). In response, Chomsky (1980, p. 59) clarified that he would like to sever the association of competence with ability, emphasizing the definition of competence within his framework as "the underlying knowledge of an idealized speaker of a language" (Spolsky, 1989, p. 138). Yet, this effort did not account for how the very construction of an idealized speaker universalizes whiteness and homogeneity as institutional norms in relation to which language and personhood are perceived as more or less legitimate. A prevalent linguistic category used to demarcate this legitimacy has been "native speaker"—a biologized view of language transmission co-naturalized with biologized views of race as part of the construction of national and colonial subject positions (Bonfiglio, 2013; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). Although Chomsky framed linguistic competence as a specifically cognitive human phenomenon, societal assumptions about and assessments of linguistic

competence have perpetually positioned particular populations and practices as incompetent while projecting competence as a universal human norm.

In contrast to linguistic competence defined in relation to a homogeneous reality that served as the hypothetical context for Chomsky's linguistic science, sociolinguists have long advocated for a science of language that presumes heterogeneity and multimodal language users—a presumption that characterizes human experiences globally and transhistorically. We analyze the sociolinguistic shift from a focus on ideal, perfect, and homogeneous structures associated with linguistic competence toward a more pluralistic communicative competence. We argue that this shift from linguistic competence to communicative competence has perpetuated the structural positioning of particular populations and practices as fundamentally problematic, deficient, and diverse in conjunction with the genre of the human that provides the foundation for linguistic competence. In this way, while sociolinguists proposing communicative competence positioned themselves as opposing Chomsky's abstraction of linguistic competence from everyday language use, they did not interrogate the rootedness of their own framework within a genre of the human that had been overrepresented as white, thereby reifying rather than challenging colonial logics.

Communicative Competence and the Reproduction of Racialized Linguistic Deficiency

Dell Hymes, considered by many to be one of the founders of sociolinguistics, first introduced the concept of communicative competence in a paper that he presented at the Research Planning Conference on Language Development Among Disadvantaged Children in 1966 at Yeshiva University (Hymes, 1966). He would go on to further develop this concept into a widely cited 1972 article (Hymes, 2001/1972). The two-day conference was part of a series of conferences focused on the education of so-called disadvantaged children that was shaped by the broader discourse of the culture of poverty which suggested that generations of poverty had produced cultural and linguistic pathologies within low-income racialized communities that needed to be fixed in order for them to achieve social mobility. First proposed by Lewis (1959) based on his anthropological work among impoverished Mexicans, this theory became the mainstream approach to the conceptualization of racial inequity in US social science research in the 1960s, providing the ideological architecture for the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty (Harrington, 1962). Within the context of the US Civil Rights Movement, it marked a shift away from complete exclusion of racialized communities from whiteness toward efforts to incorporate them into the existing colonial power structure while maintaining the power struc-

ture's white supremacist foundation (Harris, 1993). Placed into the ontological terms discussed above, the emergence of the culture of poverty as a discursive formation reproduced a governing genre of the human overrepresented as white, with the assumption that the only way for racialized communities to achieve social progress was through efforts to emulate whiteness—despite the fact that their racialized status ontologically prevented them from normatively inhabiting white subject positions (Fanon, 1967).

Within this broader context of the culture of poverty, Hymes proposed the concept of communicative competence as a theoretical solution to the apparent disconnect between Chomskyan linguistic conceptualizations of the innateness of the development of linguistic competence and the fact that so-called disadvantaged children did not do well on assessments of verbal ability. In opposition to Chomsky, who defined linguistic competence solely in terms of the grammatical intuitions of the ideal speaker–listener in a homogeneous speech community, Hymes (2001/1972) argued that there was an underlying communicative competence associated with language use that can “account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate” (p. 60). Hymes's basic argument was that, although all people had the innate ability to learn language, communicative competence differed among speech communities. From this perspective, sociolinguists interested in improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children should treat the analysis of “the speech habits, or competencies, of a community or population... as an empirical question” (Hymes, 2001/1972, p. 69), with the goal of documenting the communicative competence that characterizes their speech communities.

Building on the work of Gumperz, a prominent sociolinguist and collaborator, Hymes began his conceptualization of communicative competence with the assumption of the “heterogeneity of speech communities and the priority of social relationships” (Hymes, 2001/1972, p. 70). On one level, this would seem to stand in opposition to the ideological construction of linguistic homogeneity that was foundational to Chomsky's conceptualization of linguistic competence and part of the broader historical production of racial difference. Yet, a closer look at normative sociolinguistic conceptualizations of heterogeneity reveals both nation-state/colonial assumptions about homogeneity and the existence of natural hierarchies within and between bounded speech communities that coarticulate with foundational claims of the culture of poverty and the broader genre of the human from which it emerged.

The assumption of linguistic homogeneity was reflected in Gumperz's conceptualization of a speech community on which Hymes relied in his efforts

to move beyond the abstraction of an ideal speaker–listener in a homogeneous speech community that informed Chomsky’s notion of linguistic competence. Gumperz defined a speech community as “any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage” (2009/1968, p. 66). For Gumperz, this shared body of verbal signs constituted the verbal repertoire of a speech community, which he suggested was “based on finite sets of grammatical rules that underlie the production of well-formed sentences” (p. 66), and that “form a system because they are related to a shared set of social norms” (p. 67). In this view, the verbal repertoire of a speech community is homogeneous—indeed, this homogeneity is the defining feature of what demarcates one speech community from another. Thus, Gumperz located heterogeneity in the different competencies of individual members of a speech community in using a homogeneous verbal repertoire as well as in differences among the homogeneous verbal repertoires of different speech communities that come into contact with one another.

The heterogeneity of individual competence within a speech community can be found in Gumperz’s suggestion that “housewives, farmers, and laborers, who rarely meet outsiders” have less need for “verbal facility” and “often make do with only a narrow range of speech styles” (2009/1968, p. 70). Gumperz contrasted this with “actors, public speakers, and businessmen” who he argued “command the greatest range of styles” (p. 70). Hymes would take up this class-based framing of heterogeneity in his conceptualization of communicative competence through the case of White Thunder, a Native American described by American linguist Leonard Bloomfield (1927) as lacking competence in both English and Menomini. Hymes suggested that social variables had produced heterogeneity within the speech community that led to differential competence among its members. Following Bloomfield’s lead, Hymes contrasted White Thunder’s underlying competence with Red Cloud whom Bloomfield described as linguistically equivalent to “a highly educated American woman who spoke say, French and Italian in addition to the very best type of cultivated, idiomatic English” (cited in Hymes, 2001/1972, p. 57). Hymes concluded from this contrast that “there is simply a basic sense in which users of Menomini of the more versatile type have a knowledge (syntactic as well as lexical) that users of White Thunder’s type do not” (Hymes, 2001/1972, p. 59) and that “there is no way within the present view of linguistic competence to distinguish between the abilities of one of the pure speakers of Menomini noted by Bloomfield and those of whom White Thunder was typical” (Hymes, 2001/1972, p. 59). The analogy of Red Cloud’s communicative competence to

that of “a highly educated American woman” signaled a possible class difference between White Thunder and Red Cloud, while the invocation of purity indexed a racialized dimension suggesting that something about Red Cloud’s communicative competence approximated the linguistic homogeneity associated with whiteness in ways that White Thunder’s did not. This analysis also revealed that heterogeneity within a speech community as conceptualized by Hymes was not an attempt to deconstruct idealized linguistic homogeneity, but rather, in line with debates associated with the culture of poverty, to identify the social variables that may lead certain individuals to differential competence perceived as deviating significantly from this idealized linguistic homogeneity.

In addition to his class-based framing of linguistic heterogeneity, Gumperz also offered a race-based analysis that would be taken up by Hymes through his description of entire so-called underprivileged speech communities that he described as having less developed verbal repertoires, suggesting that “the failure of some self-contained groups to inculcate facility in verbal manipulation is a major factor in failures in their children’s performances in public school systems” (Gumperz, 2009/1968, p. 70). This racialized analysis suggested, in line with the culture of poverty theory, that entire communities might be lacking in their verbal repertoire in ways that impacted their educational outcomes and prevented their social mobility. This conception of disadvantage located colonial, political, and economic structures in linguistic structures and then positioned linguistic differences as explanations for educational underachievement. In turn, the proposed response focused on ameliorating the purported linguistic deficiencies of these communities rather than on challenging colonial, political, and economic structures. By framing disadvantage in terms of objective linguistic descriptions that can be pragmatically addressed by adding to racialized populations’ linguistic repertoires, this approach obscured the rootedness of conceptions of competence in a genre of the human overrepresented as white. This overrepresentation is an ontological process that perpetually positions racialized populations and practices as lacking full competence.

Although Gumperz’s original conceptualization of the so-called underprivileged speech community aligned with the culture of poverty’s deficit view of these communities, Hymes (1966) adopted a difference view, arguing:

the performance in school settings was not a direct disclosure of their abilities, but a product of interference between the system that they bring and the system that confronts them; or a setting simply largely irrelevant to the direction their abilities and competence otherwise took. (p. 12)

In particular, he proposed that the homogeneous verbal repertoires of different speech communities can lead to sociolinguistic interference. In Hymes's (2001/1972) conceptualization of sociolinguistic interference, "when a child from one developmental matrix enters a situation in which the communicative expectations are defined in terms of another, misperception and misanalysis may occur at every level" (p. 68). For Hymes, the framework of sociolinguistic interference offered an integrated theory of sociolinguistics focused on the education of disadvantaged children that would eventually become cultural and linguistic mismatch theory, which argued that incongruities between racialized communities and the expectations of schools were the primary culprit in their educational challenges and their lack of social mobility (Heath, 1983). Yet, this difference paradigm continued to accept the basic premise that there was something uniquely heterogeneous about the cultural and linguistic practices of racialized communities that led to interference and that the solution was for them to be taught how to modify their language practices to minimize this interference and to accommodate the expectations of school.

In short, although ostensibly rejecting the idea of linguistic homogeneity, the early framing of communicative competence was rooted in a conceptualization of linguistic heterogeneity that left idealized homogeneity intact as a racially reified norm of human communication. This stigmatizing interconnection was reflected in the assumption that a speech community has differential competence in a homogeneous verbal repertoire based on the social status of the speaker. It was also demonstrated by the suggestion that so-called underprivileged or disadvantaged communities experience unique forms of linguistic heterogeneity that lead to sociolinguistic interference. Both of these assumptions resonated with the conclusion reached by proponents of the culture of poverty—that the unique social variables that produced heterogeneity within racialized communities prevented some members of these communities from developing full competence in any language. This logic placed the ultimate responsibility for alleviating racial inequities on members of racialized communities, who were expected to modify their language practices by approximating the idealized linguistic homogeneity associated with whiteness.

Although its original conceptualization was informed by this broader discursive terrain of the culture of poverty, subsequent uptake of communicative competence expanded from an explicit focus on disadvantaged children to a more general theory that has come to predominate within educational language learning. However, we argue that the specter of the disadvantaged child and the culture of poverty theory that produced it have remained at the core of conceptualizations of communicative competence even as they moved away from

deficit perspectives toward a difference paradigm. In fact, the move toward a difference paradigm simultaneously doubled down on the racialized assumptions that went into the discursive construction of the disadvantaged child and obfuscated the foundational colonial logics that led to its emergence.

More specifically, language teaching that emerged directly from Hymes's conceptualization of communicative competence has often relied on assumptions about appropriateness. Appropriateness-based approaches focus on teaching language learners the rules of appropriateness stereotypically associated with the speech communities that they aspire to enter through their learning of a new language (Applegate, 1975). These approaches reify the idealized native speaker from a homogeneous speech community that the framework of communicative competence was ostensibly developed to challenge. This has served to marginalize racialized bi/multilinguals whose communicative competence has continually been questioned (Alptekin, 2005), while also precluding the possibility of incorporating marginalized linguistic forms into the classroom because of their supposed deviation from idealized native speaker norms (Aneja, 2016; Nelson, 1985). Epistemologically, language teaching has continued to privilege western white knowledges and imperialist relations of power by positioning dominant European and US pedagogical frameworks as inherently superior to locally designed educational approaches (Chowdry & Ha, 2008; Nascimiento dos Santos & Windle, 2021). Ontologically, it has presupposed the existence of a reality where competence is an empirical phenomenon separate from the particular populations that seek to develop and use these competencies in particular societal contexts, which obscures the fundamental role of racialization in shaping institutional perceptions of linguistic and communicative competence (Oostendorp, 2022; Ramjattan, 2018; Subtirelu, 2017). The result of this onto-epistemological stance has been the reproduction of a logic that frames access to global capitalism as the just desserts of those deemed to have amassed sufficient cultural and communicative competence, with those left behind framed as victims of their own lack of cultural and linguistic competence (Delpercio, 2018; Melamed, 2011; Park, 2010).

In this way, appropriateness-based approaches to language education that we were undoing in our 2015 collaboration are rooted in much deeper onto-epistemological foundations that define what it means to be normatively human and who is excluded from this genre of the human. Therefore, rather than simply pivoting from a narrow Chomskyan conception of competence defined cognitively to a broader plurilingual perspective on multiple competencies, applied linguists must reconsider the fundamental colonial logics that define linguistic homogeneity and heterogeneity (Flores, 2013b; Kubota, 2016). Such a

reconsideration demonstrates that what might seem to be a progressive move toward the recognition of multiple competencies and inclusion of diversity in fact deceptively reproduces colonial–racial hierarchies under the guise of affirmation.

Moving Beyond Competence in Applied Linguistics

In this article, we have sought to undo competence by illustrating how logics that informed the conceptualization of both linguistic competence and communicative competence are rooted in a genre of the human that overrepresents whiteness and linguistic homogeneity as idealized norms, which results in the perpetual positioning of racialized populations and practices as inherently deficient based on their purportedly unique and problematic linguistic heterogeneity. This involves a reconsideration of the Chomskyan formulation of linguistic competence, which we argue emerged from a universalizing humanism that precluded the possibility of accounting for racialized experiences in shaping language. We assert that Hymes's shift toward communicative competence dovetailed with a liberal multiculturalism that acknowledged racialized experiences but suggested that these experiences threatened to negatively impact the communicative competence of racialized communities. In Hymes's framework, preventing these negative impacts involved aligning racialized communities' communicative competence more closely with white mainstream norms even as their racialized status prevented them from institutional recognition as possessing this communicative competence.

Although our argument might seem particular to this moment, Harvey Sarles, a participant in the panel discussing Hymes's paper at the conference where he first presented it, made a similar point by suggesting:

If Professor Hymes had walked in known only by reputation and not by sight, unshaven and wearing old clothes, I would guess that the credibility of his performance would be very different. Competence in fact is not only in the performance itself, but in the mind of the audience and the person that's talking. (Office of Education, 1966, p. 21)

Similar to our raciolinguistic perspective, Sarles recognized that communicative competence was not a straightforward empirical question but rather one that was shaped by the ideological stance of the perceiver. Yet, later on at the same conference Sarles would conclude, “though everybody speaks a sophisticated language, if you want to succeed socially, which means be employable or whatever, it has to be sophisticated with respect to all these vested

interests” (Office of Education, 1966, p. 109). That is, although Sarles recognized the importance of the ideological stance of the perceiver in shaping representations of competence, he still adopted Hymes’s basic position that the goal was to support racialized students in developing the communicative competence expected in school with the expectation that they will be recognized as having successfully done so. This illustrates the importance of attending to genres of the human that form the onto-epistemological foundation of analysis as well as the knowledges and ways of being that they position as fundamentally (il)legitimate.

Shifting our focus to genres of the human has prompted reconsideration of even seemingly critical approaches within applied linguistics. In particular, what it has shown is that any intervention seeking to challenge existing frameworks without calling into question the overrepresentation of the human as white will do little to disrupt existing racial hierarchies and may, in fact, work to reinscribe these hierarchies in more insidious ways. From this perspective the goal has not been to create a new form of competence that replaces communicative competence (Alptekin, 2005; Kramsch, 2006), but rather to abandon the very notion of competence in favor of alternative conceptualizations of language. This has profound implications for frameworks to which we are sympathetic and on which we have built in our work together and separately. For example, we caution scholars focused on translanguaging to resist presupposing homogeneous codes as the norm in human communication, thereby reproducing a genre of the human that continues to otherize the language practices of racialized communities (García et al., 2021). This has been reflected in troublesome efforts that position some language practices as translanguaging and others as not based on racialized assumptions about linguistic homogeneity and heterogeneity (Flores, 2020). We also encourage scholars who position their work under the broad umbrella of raciolinguistics to take seriously the denaturalization of race and language that constitutes the foundation of a raciolinguistic perspective to avoid reifying essentialist notions of race and language that have functioned as rationalizations for the globalization of European colonialism (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Instead, we encourage critical applied linguists to develop new strategies for attending to the language practices of racialized communities in efforts to surface alternative decolonial genres of the human that have existed and continue to exist in these communities but have often been misrecognized in scholarly efforts to identify competence. It is important to do this through an intersectional lens that brings attention to the co-naturalization of race and language with linked forms of social differentiation and marginalization, including disability, gender, and sexuality as part

of the maintenance of European colonial logics (Cioé-Peña, 2022; Henner & Robinson, 2021; Kubota, 2020; Milani, 2019). Our fear is that a failure to do so will result in scholars a decade from now hypothesizing and seeking to assess a translanguaging competence based on normative white and ableist evaluation systems or seeking to close a raciolinguistic gap suggesting that racialized communities are linguistically lacking and in need of interventions that include the imposition of racially, socioeconomically, and sexually normative familial arrangements to sustain legitimate language learning. Shifting terminology is not sufficient if the colonial logics that shape the debate remain unchallenged.

Rather than shifting terminology, we call for a shift in the locus of enunciation away from the hegemonic genre of the human that currently shapes the foundation of applied linguistics and adjacent fields. Such a shift calls into question the assumption that the goal of language teaching and learning should be the development of communicative competence and points to the fundamentally colonial logics that have shaped the conceptualization of this goal. In particular, embedded in the framework of communicative competence is the ideology that certain individuals may have less fully developed communicative competence than more privileged members of their speech communities and that certain racialized communities lack a fully developed homogeneous code to facilitate their development of communicative competence. These ideologies undermine efforts to valorize racialized communities' linguistic practices through the framework of communicative competence. Instead, applied linguists need new frameworks that begin from the locus of enunciation of racialized communities themselves.

One example of shifting the locus of enunciation can be found in Leonard's (2011) depiction of the contemporary cultural and linguistic practices of users of Miami, an Indigenous US language. Leonard noted how the language has typically been described as extinct by mainstream linguists because of a supposed lack of competent speakers. For Leonard, such a conclusion "reflects the ongoing problem of outside scholars and others making predictions about the 'success' of Miami language reclamation without ever having asked the Miami people what our goals are" (p. 138). Leonard argued that such predictions involved mainstream linguists imposing their own notions of successful revival of the language that match "patterns for languages of personal familiarity" (p. 139) from scholarly perspectives produced within a genre of the human overrepresented as white. Leonard contrasted these universalized white framings of Miami language reclamation efforts with the locus of enunciation of Miami people themselves who did not have the goal of developing a supposed full linguistic competence in the white/western conception of competence but

rather a positive connection to their community through a cultural understanding of the language and its comprehensive ecological incorporation into their daily lives. From this locus of enunciation, Miami is not extinct but rather sleeping and the community is not experiencing language attrition but rather language change (Perley, 2012).

Although Leonard was describing the experiences of one particular community with a specific colonial history and contemporary reality, the locally created approach that he advocated has implications far beyond this context. For example, one can imagine the different representations that such a locus of enunciation would offer for White Thunder. The question would no longer be whether White Thunder possessed or lacked communicative competence but rather the personal significance that White Thunder's language practices had for him and his community in the face of white settler colonialism. This same framework could also be applied to different contexts of colonialism such as the multiple colonialisms that have characterized the experiences of US Latinxs, including white settler colonialisms that created Latin America, US colonialism that created the American Southwest, and US imperialism that has shaped international relations with Latin America (Chávez Moreno, 2022). Raciolinguistic ideologies produced by these multiple colonialisms have informed Spanish language instruction of US Latinxs often centered around a "Spanish-elsewhere" that "is meant to index a specific 'unmarked' institutionally legitimized language practice" (Mena & García, 2021), thereby reifying the racialization of their community language practices. This in turn has connected with continued representations of US Latinxs as purportedly lacking full competence in so-called academic language in Spanish and English, rendering them languageless within the modern genre of the human (Rosa, 2016). In contrast, a locally crafted approach would begin with, build on, and extend the linguistic aspirations, goals, and practices of US Latinxs (de los Rios, 2019). Shifting the locus of enunciation in this way also involves solidarities among racialized communities working in conjunction with one another to resist their racial oppression and engage in communicative practices that do not defer to white listening subjects' hegemonic modes of perception (Khan & Gallego-Balsà, 2021).

We conclude by revisiting Shange's example of the student asking, "Why can't we learn African?" Hegemonic notions of the human and its overrepresentation as white render diasporic Blackness, shaped by centuries of colonialism and enslavement, as well as their afterlives, as lacking legitimate culture, heritage, and language. Yet, shifting the locus of enunciation in ways that attend to diasporic Blackness allows a glimpse into alternative concep-

tualizations of language and worlds where perhaps it is possible to learn and speak African. Anya (2016) provided a glimpse into such an alternative world through her analysis of the experiences of African American learners of Portuguese participating in study abroad programs in Brazil learning to speak Blackness. One example she provided was of Nina who struggled to adhere to the Portuguese-only rule in the classroom, which from a traditional frame would suggest that she lacked communicative competence. Yet, Anya noted the ways that Nina was able to use her existing knowledge of:

what it meant to be a black member of the African Diaspora in a society shaped by a history of human enslavement and racial hierarchy... to decipher the sociocultural codes and cultural significance to develop practices of speaking blackness specifically in the Brazilian context. (p. 72)

One way that Nina did this was through her participation in ongoing conversations with her Black peers about the implications of her identification as *negra* or *morena* as they worked to negotiate the racial dynamics of Blackness in Brazil that offered different subject positions for them to inhabit from the contexts to and through which they had been socialized as Black people in the US, where the "one-drop" logic of hypodescent treated Blackness as a binary rather than a continuum in the manner in which it was commonly conceptualized in Brazil. Although Nina came to different conclusions from some of her peers, she "learned to speak blackness and voice her ideas, desires, and multiple identities according to new understandings and practices in Portuguese" (Anya, 2016, p. 71). These diasporic Black language learning experiences illustrate the fundamentally embodied and locally contingent nature of language learning that cannot be captured by a search for universalizing competencies. They should also prompt a reconceptualization of the goals of language education by focusing on the lived experiences and knowledges of racialized communities, rather than perpetually ascribing racialized linguistic deficiencies based on universalizing whitenesses that currently permeate the field of applied linguistics.

Final revised version accepted 3 April 2022

References

- Alptekin, C. (2005). Toward intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 56(1), 57–64. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.1.57>

- Aneja, G. (2016). (Non)native speakerhood: Rethinking (non)nativeness and teacher identity in TESOL teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(3), 572–596. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.315>
- Anya, U. (2016). *Racialized identities in second language learning: Speaking blackness in Brazil*. Routledge.
- Applegate, R. (1975). The language teacher and the rules of speaking. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9(3), 271–281. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3585958>
- Baker-Bell, A. (2020). *Linguistic justice: Black language, literacy, identity, and pedagogy*. Routledge.
- Bauman, R., & Briggs, C. (2003). *Voices of modernity: Language ideologies and the politics of inequality*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bloomfield, L. (1927). Literate and illiterate speech. *American Speech*, 2(10), 432–439. <https://doi.org/10.2307/451863>
- Bonfiglio, T. (2013). Inventing the native speaker. *Critical Multilingualism Studies*, 1(2), 29–58.
- Brooks, M. (2020). *Transforming literacy education for long-term English learners: Recognizing brilliance in the undervalued*. Routledge.
- Charity Hudley, A., & Flores, N. (2020). Social justice in applied linguistics: Not a conclusion, but a way forward. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 42, 144–154. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190522000083>
- Charity Hudley, A., Mallinson, C., & Bucholtz, M. (2020). Toward racial justice in linguistics: Interdisciplinary insights into theorizing race in the discipline and diversifying the profession. *Language*, 96(4), e200–e235. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2020.0074>
- Chávez Moreno, L. (2022). The problem with Latinx as a racial construct vis-à-vis language and bilingualism: Toward recognizing multiple colonialisms and the racialization of Latinidad. In E. Murrillo, Jr., D. Delgado Bernal, S. Morales, L. Urreita, Jr., E. Ruis Bybee, J. Sánchez Muñoz, V. B. Saenz, D. Villanueva, M. Machado-Casas, & K. Espinoza (Eds.), *Handbook of Latinos and education: Theory, research, and practice*. (2nd ed., pp. 164–180). Routledge.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. The MIT Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1980). *Rules and representations*. Blackwell.
- Chowdry, R., & Ha, P. (2008). Reflecting on western TESOL training and communicative language teaching. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28, 305–316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188790802236006>
- Cioè-Peña, M. (2022). The master's tools will never dismantle the master's school: Interrogating settler colonial logics in language education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 42, 25–33. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190521000209>
- Clemons, A., & Lawrence, L. (2020). Beyond position statements on race: Fostering an ethos of antiracist scholarship in linguistic research. *Language*, 9(4), e254–e267. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2020.0077>

- Cummins, J. (2008). BICS and CALP: Empirical and theoretical status of the distinction. In B. Street & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education: Vol. 2. Literacy* (2nd ed., pp. 71–83). Springer.
- Cushing, I., & Snell, J. (2022). The (white) ears of Ofsted: A raciolinguistic perspective on the listening practices of the schools inspectorate. *Language in Society*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404522000094>
- de los Rios, C. (2019). “los Músicos”: Mexican corridos, the aural border, and the evocative musical renderings of transnational youth. *Harvard Educational Review*, 89(2), 177–200. <https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-89.2.177>
- Del Percio, A. (2018). Engineering commodifiable workers: Language, migration and the governmentality of the self. *Language Policy*, 17(2), 239–259. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-017-9436-4>
- Dowling, S. (2021). Elimination, dispossession, transcendence: Settler monolingualism and racialization in the United States. *American Quarterly*, 73(3), 439–460. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2021.0045>
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skin, white masks*. Grove Press.
- Flores, N. (2013a). Silencing the subaltern: Nation-state/colonial governmentality and bilingual education in the United States. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 10(4), 263–287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2013.846210>
- Flores, N. (2013b). The unexamined relationship between neoliberalism and plurilingualism: A cautionary tale. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(3), 500–520. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.114>
- Flores, N. (2020). From academic language to language architecture: Challenging raciolinguistic ideologies in research and practice. *Theory into Practice*, 59(1), 22–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2019.1665411>
- Flores, N., Kleyn, T., & Menken, K. (2015). Looking holistically in a climate of partiality: Identities of students labeled long term English language learners. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 14(2), 113–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2015.1019787>
- Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Education Review*, 85(2), 149–171. <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149>
- Flores, N., & Saldívar García, E. (2020). Power, language, and bilingual learners. In N. Nasir, C. Lee, R. Pea, & M. McKinney de Royston (Eds.), *Handbook of the cultural foundations of learning* (pp. 178–191). Routledge.
- Gal, S., & Irvine, J. (2019). *Signs of difference: Language and ideology in social life*. Cambridge University Press.
- García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- García, O., Johnson, S., & Seltzer, K. (2017). *The translanguaging classroom: Leveraging student bilingualism for learning*. Caslon.

- García, O., Flores, N., Seltzer, K., Wei, L., Otheguy, R., & Rosa, J. (2021). Rejecting abyssal thinking in the language and education of racialized bilinguals: A manifesto. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 18(3), 203–228.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2021.1935957>
- Gumperz, J. (2009). The speech community. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *Linguistic anthropology: A reader* (2nd ed., pp. 66–73). Wiley-Blackwell. (Original work published 1968)
- Harrington, M. (1962). *The other America: Poverty in the United States*. Macmillan.
- Harris, C. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1710–1791.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1341787>
- Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Henner, J., & Robinson, O. (2021). Signs of oppression in the academy: The case of signed languages. In G. Clements & M. Petray (Eds.), *Linguistic discrimination in US higher education* (pp. 92–109). Routledge.
- Hymes, D. (1966). On communicative competence. In Office of Education, *Research Planning Conference on Language Development in Disadvantaged Children* (pp. 1–17). Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED027346>
- Hymes, D. (2001). On communicative competence. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *Linguistic anthropology: A reader* (pp. 53–73). Blackwell. (Original work published 1972)
- Khan, K., & Gallego-Balsà, L. (2021). Racialized trajectories to Catalan higher education: Language, anti-racism and the ‘politics of listening.’ *Applied Linguistics*, 42(6), 1083–1096. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amab055>
- Kramsch, C. (2006). From communicative competence to symbolic competence. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(2), 249–252.
https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2006.00395_3.x
- Kubota, R. (2016). The multi/plural turn, postcolonial theory, and neoliberal multiculturalism: Complicities and implications for applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 37(4), 474–494. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu045>
- Kubota, R., & Takeda, Y. (2020). Language-in-education policies in Japan versus transnational workers’ voices: Two faces of neoliberal communication competence. *TESOL Quarterly*, 55(2), 458–485. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.613>
- Kubota, R. (2020). Confront epistemological racism, decolonizing scholarly knowledge: Race and gender in applied linguistics, *Applied Linguistics*, 41(5), 712–732. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz033>
- Labov, W. (1969). The logic of non-standard English. *Florida FL Reporter*, 7(1), 60–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-754850-0.50014-3>
- Leonard, W. (2011). Challenging “extinction” through modern Miami language practices. *American Indian Culture and Research Journals*, 35(2), 135–160.
<https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.35.2.f3r173r46m261844>

- Lewis, O. (1959). *Five families: Mexican case studies in the culture of poverty*. Basic Books.
- Llurda, E. (2000). On competence, proficiency, and communicative language ability. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(1), 85–96.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2000.tb00141.x>
- MacSwan, J. (2000). The threshold hypothesis, semilingualism, and other contributions to a deficit view of linguistic minorities. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 22(1), 3–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986300221001>
- Makoni, S., & Pennycook, A. (2007). *Disinventing and reconstituting languages*. Multilingual Matters.
- Martínez, R. A. (2018). Beyond the English Learner label: Recognizing the richness of bi/multilingual students' linguistic repertoires. *The Reading Teacher*, 71(5), 515–522. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1679>
- Martínez, R. A., & Mejía, A. F. (2020). Looking closely and listening carefully: A sociocultural approach to understanding the complexity of Latina/o/x students' everyday language. *Theory into Practice*, 59(1), 53–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2019.1665414>
- McElhinny, B., & Heller, M. (2017). *Language, capitalism, colonialism: Toward a critical history*. University of Toronto Press.
- Melamed, J. (2011). *Represent and destroy: Rationalizing violence in the new racial capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Mena, M., & García, O. (2021). 'Converse racialization' and 'un/marking' language: The making of a bilingual university in a neoliberal world. *Language in Society*, 50(3), 343–364. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404520000330>
- Mignolo, W. (2000). *Local histories/global designs: Coloniality, subaltern knowledges and border thinking*. Princeton University Press.
- Milani, T. (2019). Southern perspectives on race/gender/sexuality: Undisciplined applied linguistics. *Cadernos Discursivos*, 1(1), 8–28.
- Motha, S. (2014). *Race, empire, and English language teaching: Creating responsible and ethnical anti-racist practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Motha, S. (2020). Is an antiracist and decolonizing applied linguistics possible? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 40, 128–133.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190520000100>
- Nascimento dos Santos, G., & Windle, J. (2021). The nexus of race and class in ELT: From interaction orders to orders of being. *Applied Linguistics*, 42(3), 473–491.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amaa031>
- Nelson, C. (1985). My language, your culture: Whose communicative competence? *World Englishes*, 4(2), 243–250.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.1985.tb00412.x>
- Office of Education (1966). *Research Planning Conference on Language Development in Disadvantaged Children*. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED027346>

- Oostendorp, M. (2022). Raced repertoires: The linguistic repertoire as multi-semiotic and racialized. *Applied Linguistics*, 43(1), 65–87.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amab018>
- Park, J. (2010). Naturalization of competence and the neoliberal subject: Success stories of English language learning in the Korean conservative press. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 20(1), 22–38.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1395.2010.01046.x>
- Paris, D., & Alim, A. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 85–100. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.9821873k2ht16m77>
- Perley, B. (2012). Zombie linguistics: Experts, endangered languages, and the curse of undead voices. *Anthropological Forum*, 22(2), 133–149.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2012.694170>
- Petrovic, J. (2013). (Post)structural analyses of deficit notions of academic language: Discourse and dialect. In B. J. Irby, G. Brown, R. Lara-Alecio, & S. Jackson (Eds.), *The handbook of educational theories* (pp. 419–428). Information Age Publishing.
- Rajendran, S. (2019). Undoing “the vernacular”: Dismantling structures of raciolinguistic supremacy. *Literature Compass*, 16(9–10), 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12544>
- Ramjattan, V. (2018). Raciolinguistics and the aesthetic labourer. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 61(5), 726–738. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185618792990>
- Rosa, J. (2016). Standardization, racialization, languagelessness: Raciolinguistic ideologies across communicative contexts. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 26(2), 162–183. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jola.12116>
- Rosa, J. (2018). Community as a campus: From “problems” to possibilities in Latinx communities. In M. Castañeda & J. Krupczynski (Eds.), *Civic engagement in diverse Latinx communities: Learning from social justice partnerships in action* (pp. 111–123). Peter Lang.
- Rosa, J., & Bonilla, Y. (2017). Deprovincializing Trump, decolonizing diversity, and unsettling anthropology. *American Ethnologist*, 44(2), 201–208.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12468>
- Rosa, J., & Flores, N. (2017). Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective. *Language in Society*, 46(5), 621–647.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404517000562>
- Rosa, J., & Díaz, V. (2020). Raciontologies: Rethinking institutional racism and enactments of white supremacy in the United States. *American Anthropologist*, 122(1), 120–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13353>
- Rosa, J., & Trivedi, S. (2020). Language and race/ethnicity. In J. Stanlaw (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of linguistic anthropology* (pp. 1–10). Wiley.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118786093.iela0275>

- Rymes, B., Flores, N., Pomerantz, A. (2016). The common core state standards and English learners: Finding the silver lining. *Language*, 92(4), e257–e273. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2016.0080>
- Seltzer, K. (2019). Reconceptualizing “home” and “school” language: Taking a critical translanguaging approach in the English Classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 53(4), 986–1007. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.530>
- Shange, S. (2019). *Progressive dystopia: Abolition, antiblackness, and schooling in San Francisco*. Duke University Press.
- Sledd, J. (1969). Bi-dialectalism: The linguistics of white supremacy. *The English Journal*, 58(9), 1307–1315. <https://doi.org/10.2307/811913>
- Spolsky, B. (1989). Communicative competence, language proficiency, and beyond. *Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 138–156. <https://doi.org/10.2138/208023>
- Subtirelu, N. (2017). Raciolinguistic ideology and Spanish–English bilingualism on the labor market: An analysis of online job advertisements. *Language in Society*, 46(4), 477–505. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404517000379>
- Valdés, G. (2004). Between support and marginalization: The development of academic language in linguistic minority children. *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 7(2–3), 102–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050408667804>
- Vigorous, C. (2017). The discursive pathway of two centuries of raciolinguistic stereotyping: ‘Africans as incapable of speaking French.’ *Language in Society*, 46(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404516000804>
- Wolfe, P. (2016). *Traces of history: Elementary structures of race*. Verso.
- Wynter, S. (2003). Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation—An argument. *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 3(3), 257–337. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015>

Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher’s website:

Accessible Summary