

# The geopolitics of knowledge production in applied English language studies: Transknowledging and a two-eyed critical southern decoloniality

Inaugural Lecture by Professor Chaka Chaka  
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# Outline

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Mapping and exploring the geopolitics of knowledge production in AELS: A Case Study of *Applied Linguistics* (AL)

### Part One

#### 2.1 *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 42, Issues 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, 2021 (pp. 1-1137)

### Part Two

#### 3. Transknowledging and a two-eyed critical southern decoloniality

# 1. Introduction

- Applied English language studies (hereafter AELS). **NB:** Also English language studies or as applied linguistics.
- Queried the title into one of the Internet search engines (**Google**)

## Two featured results:

- *Sociolinguistics of the South* (edited by Kathleen Heugh et al., 2021)
- *Shifting the geopolitics of critical knowledge: Decolonial thought and cultural studies 'others' in the Andes* (Catherine Walsh, 2007)

## Two more of the listed results:

- *The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference* (Walter D. Mignolo, 2002); and
- *Decolonizing English language teaching in Colombia: Epistemological perspectives and discursive alternatives* (*Descolonizando la enseñanza del idioma inglés en Colombia: perspectivas epistemológicas y alternativas discursivas*) (Yamith José Fandiño-Parra, 2021)

## Three contrasting observations:

- only two of the returned results have some relevance to AELS
- the results provided a limited view of the decolonial work going on in AELS
- reflected the data/information fed into the Internet and what search engine algorithms could detect from it



# 1. Introduction, Con't

- Above snippet offers a relevant background to my lecture.
- Main question: **Where are decolonial scholars in AELS?**

## Main Focus

- Mapping and exploring the geopolitics in knowledge production of AELS)
- Advocating *transknowledging* and a two-eyed critical southern decoloniality

## Units of Analysis

- nationalities and institutional affiliations of the current editor, the associate editors; the editorial board, and the international advisory board;
- nationalities and institutional affiliations of publishing or contributing authors (see R'boul, 2022);
- the foci of published articles; and
- the theoretical framings and epistemic orientations of the published articles.

**Units of Analysis** = axes or indicators of epistemic production practices and loci of knowledge circulation for AELS in this journal.



## 2. Mapping and exploring the geopolitics of knowledge production in AELS: A case study of *AL*

Chose *AL* because it is ranked no.1 by Scopus and Resurchify.

- According to Scimago, *AL* has occupied the Q1 in communication, linguistics, and language since 1999 (see Figure 1).

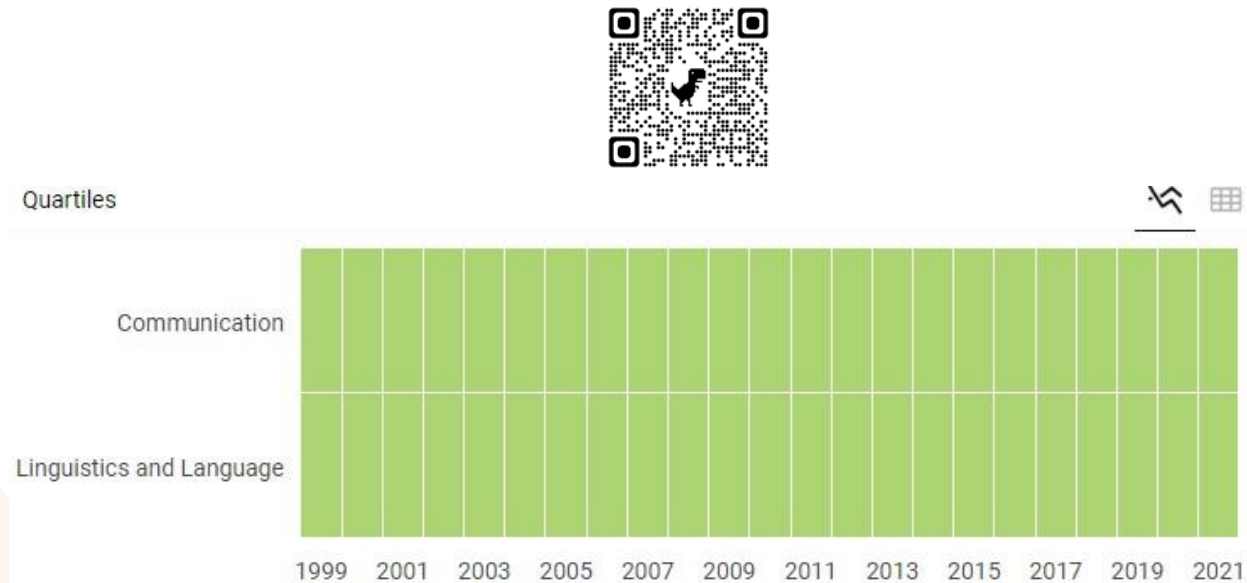


Figure 1: [AL's 1999-2021 Q1 in Communication, and in Linguistics and Language as Ranked by Scimago](#)



## Part One

### 2.1 *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 42, Issues 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, 2021 (pp. 1-1137)

Editorial panel comprised an editor, associated editors, a reviews and forum editor, an advisory board, and an international advisory board:

- the editor was an American with a US-based institutional affiliation;
- four associated editors - two were Americans with US-based institutional affiliations, the remaining two were a Brazilian and a Colombian, each with an a institutional affiliation in their respective countries;
- the reviews and forum editor was a British with a UK-based affiliation; and
- the advisory board consisted of three members, each from the UK, Wales, and the US, with their institutional affiliations based in their respective countries.



# Part One

## 2.1 *Applied Linguistics ... Con't*

International advisory board = 25 members

Nationalities:

- Seven = Americans
- Five = British
- Four = Australians
- Two = Hong Kongers
- Two = Swedes
- One each from Brazil, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, and Singapore
- **NB:** All the institutional affiliations based in members' countries of origin.



# Part One

## 2.1 Applied Linguistics ... Con't

Anglo-spheres (or English-speaking countries) and geographic regions corresponding to the Global North and to the Global South:

- Anglo-spheres such as the US, the UK, Australia, and Canada = 17 members (**68%**);
  - Europe = 4 members (**16%**);
  - Asia = 3 members (**12%**);
  - Latin America = 1 members (**4%**); and
  - Africa = 0 (**0%**).
- 
- Anglo-Europe (Global North = 21 members or an **84%** representation
  - Global South = 4 members or a **16%** representation

### My argument

- Gate-keeping mechanism
- Validation, legitimation, and arbitration mechanism
- Categories of knowers





# Part One

## 2.1 Applied Linguistics ... Con't

### AL, Six Issues and Forty-Three (43) Articles:

- 90 authors and co-authors, and 1,137 pages
- Each issue had, on average, 7.1 articles

### First Portion of Table 1: Author National Diversity

Author national diversity	Anglo-spheres (USA, UK, OZ, CA & NZ)	Global North	Global South
<b>USA (33) (37%)</b>	(55) (61%)	(82) (91%)	8 (8.8%)
<b>Europe (27) (30%)</b> Spain = 7 (8%)/ (26%)			
<b>UK (16) (18%)</b>			
<b>Australia (4) (4.4%)</b>			
<b>Latin America (3) (3.3%)</b>			
<b>Africa (3) (3.3%)</b>			
<b>Canada (2) (2.2%)</b>			
<b>Asia (2) (2.2%)</b>			



# Part One

## 2.1 Applied Linguistics ... Con't

### Second Portion of Table 1: Author Institutional Affiliations

Author affiliations (73)	Anglo-spheres	Global North	Global South
<b>USA (28)</b> (38.4%)	45 (62%)	66 (90.4%)	7 (9.53%)
<b>Europe (21)</b> (28.8%)			
<b>UK (12)</b> (16.4%)			
<b>Australia (3)</b> (4%)			
<b>Latin America (2)</b> (2.7%)			
<b>Africa (3)</b> (4%)			
<b>Canada (2)</b> (2.7%)			
<b>Asia (2)</b> (2.7%)			



# Part One

## 2.1 Applied Linguistics ... Con't

### Third Portion of Table 1: Dominant foci, dominant framings, and dominant epistemic orientations

Dominant Foci	Dominant framings	Dominant epistemic orientations
L2 learning/ acquisition (27) (63%); English language teaching (ELT) (7) (16.3%); L2 + ELT (34) (79.3%); Unspecified = 9 (21%)	L2 learning/ acquisition models or frameworks (27) (63%); Critical approaches (4) (9.3%); Translanguaging (2) (4.6%); Decolonial option (1) (2.3%); Unspecified (9) (21%)	Western/ Eurocentric orientations (30) (70%); Western/ Eurocentric critical orientations (6) (14%); Modified Western/ Eurocentric orientations (2) (4.6%); Chinese/ Sino-centric epistemic orientation (1) (2.3%); Fusion of European/ African orientations (1) (2.3%); Decolonial option (1) (2.3%); Unspecified (2) (4.6%)

### Author National Demographics (First Portion of Table1)

- US = 33 (37%); Europe = 27 (30%); UK = 16 (18%). **NB:** The Global North = 82 (91%)
- Global South = 8 (8.8%)



# Part One

## 2.1 *Applied Linguistics* ... Con't

### Author Institutional Affiliations (Second Part of Table 1)

- A similar pattern: a mirror image of author nationalities, and of the journal's *editorialmetrics*.

### My Contention

- A pervasive epistemic asymmetry between the Global North and the Global South in terms of the geopolitics of knowledge production and circulation in the six issues of *AL*.
- Continued *invisibilisation* of the Global South authors as the *peripheral others* in these issues of *AL* .
- Who legitimate and credible knowers or knowledge producers are



# Part One

## 2.1 Applied Linguistics ... Con't

### Dominant Foci (Areas of Focus), Dominant Framings, and Dominant Epistemic Orientations (Third Portion of Table 1)

- Dominant Foci: L2 learning or acquisition and ELT = **79.3%** (n = 34).
- Dominant Framings: L2 learning/acquisition frameworks = **63%** (n = 27)
- Dominant Epistemic Orientations: Western/Eurocentric epistemic orientations = **70%** (n = 30)

### My Contention

- SLA relies on a normative language, underpinned by Western, ethnocentric monolingualism (e.g., error analysis, native speakerism, and learner language deviancy (cf. Loveday, 1983).
- The dominance of L2 learning/acquisition frameworks and of the Western/Eurocentric epistemic orientations in these *AL's* issues reflective of an ontological and epistemological practice in which Eurocentric epistemic frameworks and worldviews are valorised and privileged over less-regarded, subaltern, peripheral epistemic frames and cosmologies in the geopolitics of knowledge production and reproduction.



# Part One

## 2.1 *Applied Linguistics ... Con't*

### My Contention (con't)

- Legitimizing Western or Global North knowledges and knowers, while delegitimizing Southern or Global South knowledges and knowers
- The Global South tends to serve as depositories of data to be mined and extracted for knowledge production and accumulation by the Global North (cf. Takayama et al. (2016)).
- Consistent exclusion of the scholars and the people of the Global South from the knowledge economy and from the knowledge system in which they are both the subjects of scholarly investigations and the purveyors of data for such investigations
- The axis of evil, comprising race, racism, racialisation, patriarchy, coloniality, Anglo-normativity, Eurocentrism, and globalism
- Multiple modalities in which AL has operated as a convenient conduit for colonialism and White supremacy or Whiteness as its disciplinary roots are implanted in racial hierarchies and racial ideologies that often conceal racial hegemony (see, especially, Motha, 2020, for this last point).



## Part Two

### 3. Transknowledging and a Two-Eyed Critical Southern Decoloniality

My proposal: **Transknowledging and a two-eyed critical southern decoloniality (approach and framework)**

- Epistemic decolonisation, especially concerning African scholarship: since the time of W. E. B Du Bois and Frantz Fanon, and of many other African scholars
- Western colonialism, scientism, and historicism in Africa (cf. Grosz-Ngaté, 2020; Weiner, 2018)

#### Transknowledging

- Transknowledging = tapping into multiple knowledges
- A two-way, symmetrical knowledge exchange: an ecology of epistemologies, of ontologies, and of cosmologies (cf. Heugh, 2021; Lapaige, 2010)
- For me: no knowledge is more privileged and hegemonic than the other (Western, Oriental, African, or Indigenous)



## Part Two

### 3. Transknowledging and a Two-Eyed Critical Southern Decoloniality (Con't)

#### AEELS (Applied English Language Studies)

- Need to *transknowledge* with local Indigenous languages (epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies)
- The practices of: orality, praise poetry (*izinkondlo zokudumisa / dithothokiso tsa hororisa*), and African story-telling for English L2 reading recalls
- Twin language ideology of native speakerism and monolingualism in English L2 and ELT grounded on a deficit perspective, which has given rise to:
  - “native speakerism = Standard English speakerism = Whiteness versus nonnative speakerism = non-Standard English speakerism = non-Whiteness” (Chaka, 2021, p. 24; cf. Kubota & Lin, 2006, p. 481)
  - **Transknowledging?** Noting that: the European-/Western-style native speaker, linguistic competence, and bi-/multilingualism are not the sole and accurate benchmark for judging multilingual speakers, who have multilingual repertoires and multi-competences (diverse multilingualisms)
  - Complex language dynamics and nuances





## Part Two

### 3. Transknowledging and a Two-Eyed Critical Southern Decoloniality (Con't)

#### A *Two-Eyed Critical Southern Decoloniality*

- The concept of a *two-eyed* perspective: a *Mi'kmaw* word, *Etuaptmumk* = *two-eyed seeing* (Roher et al., 2021; also see Martin, 2012; Rowett, 2018)
- *Mi'kmawisimk* is the Indigenous language of the *Mi'kmaq* or the *Mi'kmaw* people (Canada and parts of the US) (ALTA Language Services, 2022)
- The notion of a *two-eyed seeing* variously refers to:
  - humans as a part of ecosystems
  - guide for life
  - co-learning journey
  - spirit
  - responsibility for the greater good and future generations
  - decolonisation and self-determination; and
  - diverse or multiple perspectives (Roher et al., 2021).

I employ it here in the first, sixth and last senses to argue that:

- the ways and the geopolitics of producing knowledge in AELS need to embrace multiple epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies
- Need to be decolonised within a broader knowledge ecosystem.

## Part Two

### 3. Transknowledging and a Two-Eyed Critical Southern Decoloniality (Con't)

#### Critical Southern Decoloniality (CSD)

- Critical southern decoloniality (CSD) builds on the work of:
  - **Decolonial scholars:** wa Thiong'o (1986), Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Mignolo (2007), Nakata (2007), Kumaravadivelu (2016), Takaki (2020), De Figueiredo and Martinez (2021), Fandiño-Parra (2021), and Song (2022); and
  - **Southern scholars:** Connell (2007), De Sousa Santos (2014), Takayama et al. (2016), Falola, 2018; Lazar (2020), Heugh (2021), Osborne, 2021, and Severo and Makoni (2021). Importantly, it builds on:
    - **Chaka's own work** (see Chaka, 2020; 2021a, 2021b; Chaka, unpublished); and
    - **His work with his colleagues** (see Chaka, Shange, Ndlangamandla, & Mkhize, unpublished; Ndlangamandla & Chaka, unpublished).
- CSD adds southernism or southern perspectives, and criticality and self-criticality to decoloniality (see Chaka, 2020, 2021a; Ndlangamandla & Chaka, unpublished).
- Challenges and critiques all instances of essentialised, hegemonic, Western-centric epistemologies in the Global North and in the Global South.
- Recognises that there are pockets of the **Norths** in the Global South and that there are pockets of the **Souths** in the Global North.

## Part Two

### 3. Transknowledging and a Two-Eyed Critical Southern Decoloniality (Con't)

#### A *Two-Eyed* Critical Southern Decoloniality (Con't)

Pertaining to AELS

- CSD is aware of those Global South scholars who still perpetuate Western-style native speakerism and monolingualism, and of those Global North scholars who challenge Western-style native speakerism and monolingualism.
- CSD's criticality and self-criticality as part of its two-eyed seeing.
- The Global South and the different theoretic-linguistic epistemes as crucial pivots of reference.
- Decolonisation and de-hegemonisation of epistemic practices and knowledge production practices in AELS.
- No universal or monolithic southern decoloniality, but an ecology of southern decolonialities.
- Such southern decolonialities to be underpinned by their respective two-eyed criticalities.

**Wela'lioq! (Mi'kmaw)**

***Te mihi me te maioha! (Māori)***

**Ke ya leboha!**

**Thank you**