

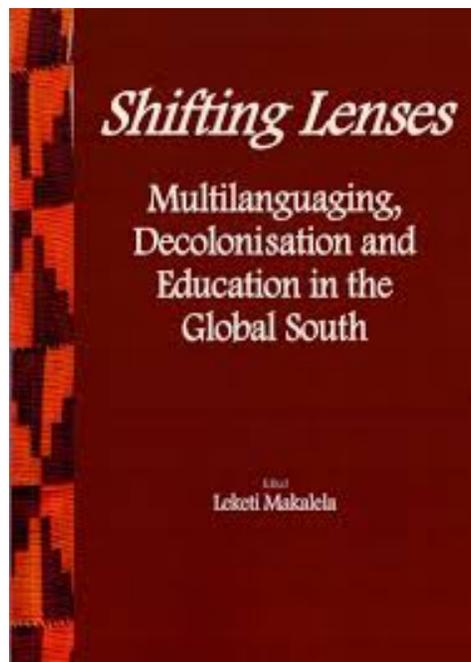
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## Shifting Lenses: Multilanguaging, Decolonisation and Education in the Global South

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What is the historical origin of monolingualism and how far back can it be traced? Why is it pervasively and persistently polluting educational practices in many postcolonial nations? What is the role of monolingualism in materially and symbolically shaping postcolonial states? How is it possible to sustain the contradiction between the actual multilingual practices of speakers and the monolingual policies in place? Why is there a connection between the notions of stability and one-language use? *Shifting Lenses: Multilingualing, Decolonisation and Education in the Global South* (2018) tries to provide readers with answers to these questions and bring an awareness to the notions of multilingual competence and multilingualing practices.

The volume is divided into seven chapters, each one written by a different author. The unifying thread of this books calls for a much-needed change in perceptions and practices regarding monolingualism, multilingualism, and its influence in schooling practices. Through the notions of postcolonialism, the editor weaves together seven chapters in which the concept is explained in different contexts, offering not only diverse perspectives but also various ways in which the raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015) can be addressed and deconstructed. Starting with an unapologetic introduction, Makalela makes sure that several contexts of enactment are presented from a critical perspective taking into consideration the voices of minoritized communities. In the first chapter, *Discourse on language and literacy for African development*, Prah makes a case for the connection among societal, scientific, and technological development and the literacy practices lived and enacted by African communities. Prah warns readers about the dangers of maintaining not only the languages of the colonizers but also the cultural practices embedded in them. To explain this point, the author warns readers that “located at the

heart of the notion of culture, is the supreme arbiter and carrier of culture: language” (p. 9).

The second chapter, *Language and literacy education in complexly multilingual contexts: Reflections for theory and practice*, expands on this notion by inviting the reader to take a look at what occurs before any conversations about sustainability and development in African societies can take place: early schooling experiences and the design of language and literacy programs. In other words: How can societal change occur if local linguistic practices have been replaced by those of the colonizers? Mwaniki argues that until developing countries can break free from Eurocentric notions and practices about multilingualism, little change can occur, as there is a deep contradiction between societal traditions and education paradigms. Undoubtedly there are deep and significant differences between Eurocentric and African visions on language and linguistic practices, having serious implications for how we construe the educational matrix in which children are educated and socialized.

In Chapter three, Brock-Utne provides the reader with an even more in-depth understanding of African education, bringing its focus to higher education institutions and universities. The role of higher education is by far the most thought-provoking area, as it serves to contextualize and illustrate the reasons behind some of the practices described earlier in the book. Until decolonization of African higher education institutions occurs, that is, as long as the value assigned to African research falls under a less prestigious dominion that the one conducted in the West, minoritized scholars face one of the greatest challenges: the historical tendency to ignore the lived experiences of Africans and their cultural world-views. However, Brock-Utne remains hopeful that one day, through the

creation of a third space, an understanding of cultural intersections can take place.

Chapters four and five consist of empirical studies that explore the need of integrating diverse languages to the core curriculum across subject areas. In Chapter four, for example, Maluleke and Makalela call for both translingual and transtextual texts to be included in schools. Their addition may allow young children to avoid the negative effects of sudden linguistic transition from learning and thinking in their home-language to learning and thinking in English. Moreover, the authors call for a “more thoughtful and well-planned approach to text selection in terms of language, genre and structures [that] can serve as the starting point towards developing the multilingual South African citizenry” (p. 79). In chapter five Makonye explores the perceptions of pre-service teachers about the role of multilingualism in mathematical learning, stating that research shows enhanced mathematical learning in children who are allowed and exposed to use multiple languages.

In Chapter six, Jez invites readers to consider how “global education is in the midst of a paradigm shift. The traditional secluded, monolingual method of learning and instruction is moving to a more inclusive and varied system through culturally responsive practices” (p. 99). The author goes one step further stating that although there is a perceived and actual shift in educational policies, it is important that this shift occurs within a culturally responsive and culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) teacher education framework. More importantly, this chapter addresses the intersectionality of gender, poverty, and human rights violations in connection to language practices that hinder multilingualism and other linguistic inclusive practices.

The last chapter of the book, written by Makalela, addresses the issue of postgraduate education and multilingualism in South Africa, and how although other languages are used in this context, English remains the prevalent language of instruction and research. The author refers to this emphasis as *monolingual bias* and states that academic literacy cannot be achieved without the fulfillment of metalinguistic awareness.

Overall, the editor and diverse voices in the book provide readers with a hopeful perspective on multilingualism and multilingualing. Furthermore, the ideas of emancipation, local context, the role of language in enhancing content knowledge learning, diversity, and the linguistic benefits of using multiple languages as a culturally responsive pedagogical stance, are present throughout the book. Each chapter invites teachers and scholars to question often-inherited visions of monolingualism as the only way to provide stability and bring prosperity to nations.

In sum, *Shifting Lenses: Multilingualing, Decolonisation and Education in the Global South*, is a book that sheds light into some crucial and timely topics in an inspiring way, engaging a vast and varied audience in the process. This book serves not only as a tool to reflect on the African context, but also to reflect on the Latinx and other minoritized contexts, which undoubtedly face persistent and pervasive issues of linguistic and cultural colonization disfavoring social equity through language access (Harman, 2017). As these conversations take place, and scholars of color are opening multiple spaces for discussions, the possibility of a new educational domain unfolds before us, as long as we are willing to question and dismantle the deeply engrained matrix through which we, minoritized scholars, have been colonized as well. *Shifting Lenses* is then not only a book about

changing perspectives but more radically about  
taking action to replace lenses.

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