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GOING BEYOND “SINGLE GRAND STORIES” IN THE LANGUAGE AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES. A TURN TOWARDS ALTERNATIVES

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Abstract

At an overarching level, and the key argument I offer in this paper is the need to go beyond the “single grand story” in order to make visible, the naturalization of Northern hegemonies in how language and identity are conceptualized, and the (continuing) marginalization of studies where social actions or practices are center-staged. Building upon a conceptual critique of the continuing hegemonies of these single stories in the Language and Educational Sciences, my aim is to raise issues from and contribute conceptually towards sociocultural perspectives and decolonial studies (also called Southern Theories).

I attend to this task by firstly, center-staging analytical engagement with people’s social actions and secondly, by engaging with alternative epistemologies and issues from the global-South (Khubchandani 1997, Maldonado-Torres 2011). I take a point of departure in a sociocultural perspective on communication and participation (Linell 2009, Säljö 2005) that builds significantly upon Wittgenstein (Rorty 2006) and others’ writings on a Linguistic-Turn, and Maldonado-Torres (2011) and others’ writings on a Decolonial-Turn. Going beyond, the mirroring/representational functions of language and drawing upon critical humanistic perspectives (Bagga-Gupta 2017a, Bagga-Gupta 2017b) allow for, I argue, asking critical (new) questions that enable the illumination of Northern hegemonies (Gramling 2016, Makoni 2012).

My vantage point for enabling this enterprise is engagements in multi-sited inter/transdisciplinary ethnographic projects in the nation-states of Sweden and India across three decades. These projects, situated at the CCD, Communication, Culture and Diversity research group (www.ju.se/ccd), have been enriched through dialogues with scholars situated in the global-South, and in particular my engagements at Aligarh Muslim University and Mumbai University in India since 2010. Key points
of departure in what I call a Second Wave of Southern Theory is paying heed to the plurality of spaces within and across the global-North/South. This calls for, amongst other things, the need to accord visibility to Southern spaces in the North and Northern spaces in the South. Furthermore, key issues relate to raising questions regarding what language and identity are, where, when, why and for whom language and identity are central in contemporary human existence, including in academic explorations (Bagga-Gupta, Hansen & Feilberg 2017, Finnegan 2015).

The continuing silencing – visual, auditory, verbal, embodied – of alternative narratives regarding “normal” human communication and “normal” diversity on the one hand, and the continuing hegemonies of boundary-marked and -marking global-North epistemologies on the other hand, constitute the tension grounds that emerge in analysis of mundane language-use or languaging in face-to-face, digital and text-based interactions from the projects at CCD. This calls for the need to break the silence of the circularity and taken-for-grantedness of single grand stories regarding the nature of language and identity, including the need to engage with alternative conceptual framings.

**Keywords:**
Language Studies, Educational Sciences, Silencing, Representations, Alternativeturn, Southern Theory

1. **Introduction**

Integration and equity constitute fundamental ideas within the framework of democracy in societies and their institutions. Notions about pluralism and equity in a society-for-all, including an education-for-all build upon a key humanistic idea regarding everyone’s likavärde (roughly, equal worth) in contemporary societies across the global-South-North (henceforth GSN). However, demographic heterogeneity has today become a concern across many GSN spaces. While this heterogeneity is itself not completely new, recent migrations – in Europe in particular – have given rise to societal and political tensions. These shifts, coupled with an increased pace of digitalization, have a bearing on explicit agendas related to the UN one-school-for-all mission that has been pushed since the 1990s.¹ However,

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¹ Such understandings also need contextualization in terms of the shifting context of education (and in extension also the shifting context of research on education more broadly) in a globalized world: this includes the dramatic change that has consequences for social life and human communities – from a possibility for-some to a possibility for-all and from a context for a specific age-group (K-12 schools, for instance) to a context where the entire life-span is included. Such new promises of equity and inclusiveness are however elusive. For instance, even decision-making institutions in “representative
issues related to inclusion/integration and learning goals for-all-students and across the life span are becoming framed in terms of recent migrations to Europe (and perhaps also elsewhere). While contemporary understandings of heterogeneity constitute a prioritized agenda within compulsory schooling, higher, tertiary education as well as research in Northern spaces, how boundaries related to representations of language and identity are drawn in societies and their institutional arenas plays an important role for inclusion. This means that naming someone or something as someone or something is highly relevant; or framed differently, the ways in which contemporary diversity is envisaged is a key issue in the Language and Educational Sciences (henceforth LES). For instance, a direct response to contemporary diversity (including digitalization), can be noted in the emergence and proliferation of specific academic neologisms—like trans-pluri-languaging/lingualism, newspeakerisms, newly-arrived, superdiversity—that have emerged from some Northern spaces. While there exist concerns regarding the hegemonic normativity and (in)appropriateness of such concepts in LES (Bagga-Gupta & Messina Dahlberg 2018a, Pavlenko 2018), these neologisms build upon the boundary-marked and -marking webs-of-understandings (Bagga-Gupta 2014, Bagga-Gupta & Messina Dahlberg 2018a) encapsulated in older concepts such as bi- and multilingualism. Such conceptualizations are anchored in what can be called “single grand stories”.  

Following on the premises of the Linguistic-Turn, the narratives that constitute single grand stories in LES are far from a simple reflection of the social practices that play out in settings where more than one language-variety is deployed; rather they are a key way of constructing them. This means that how analysts (choose to) talk about and represent their linguistic data in their writings and presentations has important consequences for the (re)creation of (hegemonic) norms. Drawing inspiration from different turn-positions that have emerged in the aftermath of the Linguistic-Turn during the last three decades,3 salient findings of performative ways-of-being-with-words i.e. languaging (Garcia 2009, 2011) democracies” across the world where members of governments are elected by all citizens has a narrow representation of differenthood in them. 

2 Chimamanda Adichie frames the hegemonic nature of her encounters with faculty and fellow students in the US and draws attention to the “danger of a single story” in an interesting TED talk (https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript). In this paper, I raise a parallel concern related to the “webs-of-understandings” (Bagga-Gupta 2014, Bagga-Gupta & Messina Dahlberg 2018a) that frame language and identity in the scholarly domains of the Language and Educational Sciences.

3 These include the Boundary-Turn, Colonial-Turn, Complexity-Turn, Mobility-Turn, Multilingual-Turn, Social-Turn, etc. All these share an understanding regarding the significance of language in representing and co-creating human realities. 

Jorgensen 2008, Linell 2009) in social practices are needed to illuminate the ways in which language is itself conceptualized in LES. This is why a turn towards alternatives is significant (see also Bagga-Gupta forthcoming).

While schools in global-North settings like Sweden are commonly understood as sites that socialise the young into (mono)lingual/(mono)cultural citizenship, there is growing recognition that research into the language spheres of children and adults is marked by dimensions of single grand stories that are perpetuated in specific ways. Firstly, research focuses on peoples’ communication in terms of “different” language categories (e.g. mother tongue, foreign languages, second language, bilingualism, etc. and named language-varieties like Swedish, Hindi, English, Spanish, etc.) rather than the multiplicity inherent in language or language-in-use or in socialisation processes (Säljö 2002, Wertsch 1998) more broadly. Secondly, issues related to diversity, culture and identity are elaborated in terms of minority ethnic groups or other essentialized groups – where the focus is often on language issues (Bagga-Gupta, Hansen & Feilberg 2017). Thirdly, research in the areas of language socialization have primarily focused on school arenas rather than children and adults’ lives more broadly – i.e. their lives in private arenas, including digital worlds. Thus, there exists a need for understanding peoples’ communicative (including literacy and medially related) lives and identity-positions across different contemporary settings. And finally, a methodological hegemony continues to exist wherein peoples’ accountings of languaging, or other dimensions of social practices are focused, rather than the social practices themselves. This points to the need for understanding the nature of normal languaging and normal diversity through alternative lenses. While this is important in Northern territories, putting the spotlight on the nature of languaging and diversity in Southern spaces (like the nation-state of India, or specific enclaves in the nation-state of Sweden) where pluralism in the areas of language and identity constitute the norm are key for going beyond single grand stories in LES.

This paper argues for the need to go beyond single grand stories in the academic domains of LES. The relevance for doing so is to make visible the naturalization of Northern hegemonies in how language and identity are conceptualized, and the (continuing) marginalization of studies where social actions or practices are center-staged. I augment my critique by putting the spotlight on representations of mundane languaging from Southern spaces, including the challenges of doing this in Section 2. Building upon a conceptual critique of the continuing hegemonies of single grand stories, my aim thus is raising issues from and contributing
conceptually towards LES. Such a conceptual gaze contributes to a post-dichotomized third position that goes beyond a fossilized binary, including how this shapes language education as both a research enterprise as well as a field of practice (see Section 3). My proposition of a turn towards alternatives can be seen as a Second Wave of Southern Theory\(^4\) (henceforth SWST). This has specific significance for contemporary human life, including the (ir)relevance of LES research in meeting global-local challenges.

My vantage point for discussing a turn towards alternatives is mainstream LES scholarship and builds upon my engagements in multidisciplinary ethnographic projects in the nation-states of Sweden and India across three decades. These projects, at the CCD, Communication, Culture and Diversity research group,\(^5\) have been enriched through dialogues with scholars situated in the global-South, and in particular from my engagements at Aligarh Muslim University and Mumbai University in India since 2010.

2. On the hegemonies of single grand stories and (mis)understanding language and diversity

A decolonial imagination (Savransky 2017) invites attention to the hegemonies of “naming” including processes of “academic branding” (Pavlenko 2018) where some neologisms like superdiversity and translanguaging, including older concepts like bilingualism (and its webs-of-understandings) have – in some spaces – become popular in the 21\(^{st}\) century (Bagga-Gupta & Messina Dahlberg 2018a, 2018b). Namism and hegemonic representations, including other “ISMs of oppression” within LES (Rivers & Zotzmann 2017), locate power differentials in terms of historically colonized places. Going beyond such stratifying framings calls attention to the here and now everywhere – virtual/physical, east/south and west/north (Bagga-Gupta 2017a, 2017b, Bagga-Gupta & Rao 2018). This requires focusing attention on the nature of analytical units-of-analysis and the seemingly innocent “imagined” boundaries – related to communities, nations, individuals or language-varieties/modalities – embedded in such units (Andersson 1994, Bagga-Gupta 2013).

\(^4\) Or a Second Wave of Southern Perspectives.

\(^5\) A number of research projects that focus on the analysis of communicative practices in which more than one named language-variety/modality are deployed are part of the CCD network-based research environment at Jönköping University, Sweden - [www.ju.se/ccd](http://www.ju.se/ccd).
Let us scrutinize some examples of mundane social behavior and how imagined boundaries shape our understandings within LES. The two utterances presented in Examples 1-2 illustrate mundane languaging by people in settings where more than one language-variety is deployed routinely. In other words, they illustrate what is normal languaging. Here participants deploy linguistic resources from two named language-varieties – oral Hindi (represented in the Devanagari script) and oral English (represented in the Latin/Roman script). While such languaging constitutes the dominating human behaviour across the world (Sridhar 1996), it has very commonly been labelled as exotic, if not as incorrect linguistic behaviour. The extra-ordinary nature of such normalacy can – in decolonial framings—be understood in terms of a “monolingual bias”. In Northern spaces like Sweden monolingualism and monoculturalism constitute the default invisible norm (see Section 3).

The representational choices that an analyst can draw upon in ze publications, builds upon the disciplinary traditions ze belongs to (what transcription systems to use in the presentation, in the translations, what scripts to write in, etc.), the status of the two named language-varieties (in Examples 1 & 2) that the intended audience has access to, the analysts own experiences with the language-varieties that the scripts are associated with, etc. These choices make (in)visible normal languaging wherein more than one language-variety, dialect, sociolect, register, genre is in play. They also potentially (re)create boundaries between named language-varieties and constitute an etic i.e. non-participants’ perspective (Pietikäinen, Kelly-Holmes, Jaffe & Coupland 2016).

Example 1: Utterance – Languaging and meaning-making in a mundane conversation

चलो अब निकलते हैं I’ll give you a call when I get more information

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6 Gender neutral second person pronouns are conventionalized as ze/zirs and hir/hirs (https://www.mypronouns.org/ze-hir). Ze/zirs thus, replaces “their”, “his” and “her” in the present paper. Similarly, in the named language-variety Swedish “han/hans” and “henne/hennes” have become conventionalized recently as hen/hens.

7 Source project EL (www.ju.se/ccd/el).

8 For readers not familiar with the Devanagari script, this segment can be transliterated as: chalo aab nikalte hai. For readers not familiar with the named language-variety Hindi, this segment can be translated as: ok now I’ll make a move.
This means that such normal languaging is commonly categorized as “code-switching”, which in turn reinforces the idea of separable systems or “codes”. Such reasoning builds on the premise that human meaning-making takes place in bounded systems that can be explicated in terms of different named language-varieties. Thus, what is Hindi is not English, what is English is not Swedish. Such thinking regarding boundary-marking spills over to the idea that what is one dialect is not another, or what is one sociolect or register or genre can be separated neatly and completely from another sociolect/register/genre. While this may well be the normal scenario for the work of scholars, analysts and language teachers, from a participants’ emic point of departure (for instance, in Examples 1 & 2), it is a meaning-making behavioural stance that is relevant.

In other words, the speakers or the language users in Examples 1 and 2 are languaging. They are involved in meaning-making beyond the separate units of named language-varieties. Building upon a “written language bias” in the Language Sciences (Linell 1982), the use of two scripts in Examples 1 and 2, furthermore, not only highlights but also reinforces the etic idea of separate language-varieties. In oral rendition what the language users do, however, is seamless meaning-making or languaging (Khubchandani 1997, 1999). In contrast, and as a number of my previous empirically pushed studies have highlighted, concepts like bi- and multilingualism, including some neologisms (like trans- and pluri-languaging or -lingualism) are not always helpful since they build upon a boundary-
marked and -marking premise wherein the meaning-making potentials of human communication take a back seat. Instead languaging, as studies from a number of projects at CCD have shown, are better conceptualized in terms of different types of “chaining”\(^\text{14}\). In addition to the normal nature of oral-languaging illustrated in Examples 1 and 2, the research conducted by members of the CCD research environment has, since the mid-1990’s, highlighted that this is the case also in written-languaging, in signed-languaging and in written-oral-languaging across analogue-digital spaces.\(^\text{15}\)

The point that is crucial is that representing normal languaging in our analysis – as is the case in Examples 1 and 2 – is far from a simple or a neutral task. Another issue that is relevant for present purposes is that such normal languaging does not necessarily mean that the languagers always share the linguistic resources that are drawn upon in the ongoing meaning-making in a social activity. The Vignette presented in Example 3 focuses upon the meaning-making work of four languagers – an elderly woman whose languaging experiences are limited to the named language-variety Marwari, a shopkeeper who is an experienced user of Marwari and Hindi and two younger women who are experienced in at least Hindi and English.

At least three named language-varieties – Marwari, Hindi and English – are deployed in the social activity represented in Example 3. The situated (pointing towards the shelf, the bottles, gaze, etc.) and distributed (across the languagers, the embodiment, the tools, etc.) use of linguistic resources and physical artifacts/tools are in close indivisible tandem and contribute to accomplishing meaning-making in the episode. The elderly woman’s trip to the utility store is, in part, triggered by the arrival of the bottles that her granddaughter has sent from the mega-city of Bengaluru. Given that none of the members of her extended family understand the English text on the bottles, necessitates identifying local expertise in the language-variety in order to be able to correctly use the contents of each bottle. Given the shopkeepers limited experiences with English, and his knowledge about the status and language repertoires of the two other younger women who happen to be inside his store when he is approached, immediately opens an opportunity for resolving the query the elderly woman has placed before him. He orchestrates the meaning-making task by turning to the two women and draws upon their linguistic expertise and thereby accomplishes


\(^{15}\) In addition to references in the previous footnote, see Bagga-Gupta, Messina Dahlberg and Lindberg (forthcoming).
his goal. It is in this manner that the situated-distributed linguistic resources across four languagers becomes relevant in the social practice.

The elderly woman explicates her query by using gestures clearly – both when she presents the query initially to the shopkeeper and then when she repeats it to the other younger women. She accompanies her distinct gestural languaging with oral Marwari on both occasions, even though she knows that the shopkeeper is an experienced user of this named language-variety, and the younger women are not. The agentic nature of the elderly woman’s languaging and the responses of her interlocutors, highlight the subtleties of the situated and distributed meaning-making where the languagers do not share one or more named language-varieties in use here.

### Example 3: Vignette – Meaning-making beyond named language-varieties

Head covered with a long dupatta, cloth bag in hand, an elderly woman steps into a utility store. आओ माजीसा calls out the younger male shopkeeper. Sliding back her dupatta and uncovering her face, the woman smiles at the shopkeeper. Two women from outside the village who don’t speak the named language-variety Marwari and who work as teachers of English in the local government school are at the far end of the shop. The elderly woman points to a shelf where blue colored Parachute oil bottles are stacked. A bottle is retrieved, the dust is wiped clean and the price is read aloud. Taking a small wallet tucked inside her blouse, the woman carefully separates currency notes passing them from her left to her right hand. The shopkeeper asks her to stop and takes the notes that have been transferred to the right hand. He returns some coins. The woman inspects these before putting them into her wallet and tucks it back into her blouse. She places her newly purchased blue oil bottle into her bag and then retrieves two large plastic bottles – one colored orange and other white. Placing the bottles on the counter, she talks with the shopkeeper in Marwari. This talk is accompanied with two distinct gestural sequences:

- Hand-rubbing on the head/hair
- Left and right hand alternatively rubbing the other arm

Pointing to the two bottles, the elderly woman appears to enquire through these gestures as to which bottle content is for rubbing on the head/hair and which

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16 Source project GTGS (www.ju.se/ccd/gtgs), phase 2 where I am collaborating with Dr. Kavita Rane (see Bagga-Gupta & Rane 2018).

17 For readers not familiar with the Devanagari script and/or with the named language-variety Marwari, this segment can be transliterated and translated as: aau majisa, and, come mother.
one on the arms. It is at this point that the shopkeeper turns to the two other women at the back of the shop and draws them into the conversation by saying in Hindi:

बुढ़िया की पोती बैंगलोर में रहती है। उसने ये दो बोतल भेजे हैं। एक बालों को साफ करने के लिए हैं और दूसरा हाथ और पैरों पर लगाने के लिए हैं। शायद मोइस्चराइज़र।

अब यह बूढ़ी और दो बोतलों के बीच का फरक नहीं समझती है और इस लिये मेरे पास आयी है। मैं भी थोड़ा उलझी में हूं क्योंकि मैं बहुत अच्छी तरह से अंग्रेजी नहीं पढ़ सकता और मुझे इन ब्रांड्स के बारे में भी नहीं पता। लेकिन मुझे लगता है कि नारंगी शैम्पू की बोतल है और सफेद मोइस्चराइज़र की है।

The shopkeeper then hands the bottles to the younger women. The elderly woman approaches the latter and starts talking to them in Marwari. Not receiving a response, she turns to the shopkeeper enquiring who these women are. He explains that they are teachers of English in the village school and that they don’t understand Marwari but can help her with her query. The elderly woman turns back to the women and continues talking in Marwari while throwing her hands high above her head and bringing them down to her chest before pointing to the bottles – perhaps explicating that the bottles have come from far away. She then repeats her earlier gestures of pointing to the bottles and rubbing her head first before rubbing her arms. One of the younger women points to the white bottle and rubs her left hand on her right arm. She then points to the orange bottle and rubs her head/hair. The elderly woman breaks into a wide smile – seemingly having received a satisfactory response to her query, places the two bottles back into her bag, and gestures to the younger women to come and drink tea with her – a sophisticated gesturing that all the participants seem to understand immediately. The women smile back and gesture “later” (another gesture that seems to be understood by the language users) and taking out their smart phones proceed to take pictures of the elderly woman. After this the latter pulls her dupatta over her head and leaves the store.

18 For readers not familiar with the Devanagari script and/or with the named language-variety Hindi, this segment can be transliterated and translated as: The older woman’s granddaughter lives in Bangalore. She has sent these two bottles to her. One is to clean hair and the other is to put on hands and legs, probably a moisturizer. Now this old lady cannot figure out the difference between the two bottles and thus she has brought them to me. Even I am bit confused as I cannot read English very well and I don’t even know these brands. But I think the orange one is a shampoo bottle and the white one is a moisturizer.

Transcript note: it can be claimed, but only in some etic manner, that the underlined lexical items in this segment are part of the named language-variety English. The proper noun बैंगलोर/मैंगलौर is the older colonial name of the mega city in South India, Bengaluru.
The representational issues raised in the discussion related to Examples 1 and 2 also apply here. In addition, it is the situated nature of face-to-face communication that is explicitly embodied, and which accompanies the use of artifacts (money, the bottles) that frame the representations in terms of a Vignette (rather than a transcript). The languaging represented in Example 3 also involves different processes of seamless chaining between linguistic resources and physical artifacts. Here symbols and colors are also important dimensions of chaining where three named language-varieties, including at least two scripts (Latin/Roman, Devanagari) are in play. In other words, language-varieties/modalities and other semiotic resources are seamlessly deployed in the meaning-making that transpires here. Such languaging blurs the boundaries between language-varieties/modalities/artifacts, highlighting the chained use of oral, pictorial, embodied, etc. communication. Such micro-level “local-chaining” – irrespective of whether one or more language-varieties/modalities are in use – represents a routine communicative order that exposes the myths of single grand stories in the LES domains, thus, enabling a contribution towards a post dichotomized third position.

3. Analytical framings towards alternatives: a third position
The idea that one language is bounded and completely distinct from other language-varieties, builds upon ideological framings. Recent scholarship (from the global-North) explicitly problematizes such monolingual and monocentric biases (for instance, Gramling 2016, May 2014). However, such recent discussions are being carried out in Northern spaces and do not include the global LES scholarly community. These discussions have – as noted in the introduction – given rise to neologisms that are problematic, given their continuing boundary-marked and -marking points of departure and their connections to recent migration, including digitalization in Northern territories (Bagga-Gupta 2017a, 2017b, Bagga-Gupta & Messina Dahlberg 2018a, Bagga-Gupta & Rao 2018).

A key point of departure in my contributions to a SWST is paying heed to the plurality of spaces across GSN. This calls for, amongst other things, the need to accord visibility to Southern spaces in the North and Northern spaces in the South. These, in part, allow me to interrogate the continuing dichotomized situation (in particular in nation-states like Sweden) wherein mono-lingualism, mono-culturalism and essentialized identity-positions are seen as constituting the norm and multilingualism, multiculturalism and diversity – including the neologism “translanguaging” – are understood as the exception (see Figure 1). It is the former that are the implicit building blocks of single grand stories within LES.
Figure 1: Hegemonic dichotomies and single grand stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norms</th>
<th>Deviance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(monolingualism)</td>
<td>Bilingualism, Multilingualism, Translanguaging/lingualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(monoculturalism)</td>
<td>Multiculturalism, Interculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(majority ethnic identity)</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, white, able-bodied, …</td>
<td>Woman, colored, differently-abled, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration/inclusion</td>
<td>Segregation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flipping around Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi’s classical case of the three money’s\(^{19}\) that symbolize his call for *not* seeing or hearing or talking evil – and instead drawing inspiration from his key concepts *Satyagraha* (roughly, the path of enlightenment) and *Ahimsa* (roughly non-violence), a central point here is that *silencing alternatives* amounts to violence enacted by mainstream Northern conceptualizations. From this it follows that single grand stories constitute acts of violence that build upon the *power of naming* or representing someone or something *as* someone or something. Articulation and conceptual framings that are based upon single grand stories, as discussed in this paper and illustrated in Figure 1, thus constitute hegemonic colonial norms that are reproduced and that circulate in terms of subjugated individuals, things and/or actions. In addition to the *norms – deviance* issues that build upon single grand stories, the annexation and (re)namoning of regions and townships across the last few centuries by European (colonial) powers,\(^{20}\) including the creation and naming of nation-states when European colonial powers were forced out of these geographical regions and the categorization and naming of the peoples of the regions that were annexed and colonized\(^{21}\) further highlight the issues at stake here.

The hegemonies invoked in the power of naming can also be illustrated through normed actions and processes themselves. For instance, women who – in many communities and regions across the world – (are expected to) take on their husbands’ family name,\(^{22}\) or when functionality, sexuality,


\(^{20}\) India instead of Bharat or Hindustan, Bombay instead of Mumbai, Bangalore instead of Bengaluru, etc.

\(^{21}\) Aboriginals, natives, tribes, etc.

\(^{22}\) In some communities a woman is given a new first name when she marries and moves to her married home.
skin color, race, etc. become upfronted through the use of different labels. In addition to constituting an act of hegemony, the power of naming the Other, also defines the perpetrators of the representations in terms of the (in)visible norm (Ajagan-Lester 2000; Figure 1). The significant issue here is that the power of naming – coining and reusing concepts – within mainstream LES itself needs to be made visible with the intent of illuminating the continuing hegemonies of single grand stories.

Drawing inspiration from two theoretical framings – a sociocultural perspective on communication and participation (Linell 2009, Säljö 2002) that builds significantly upon Wittgenstein and others’ writings on a Linguistic-Turn, and Maldonado-Torres (2011) and others’ writings on a Decolonial-Turn – the thrust of my argument, thus, is the need to center-stage analytical engagement with people’s social actions from settings where multiple language-varieties are used i.e. where such languaging is considered to be the norm. Illuminating such normal languaging – as Section 2 illustrates – is part of the work of engaging with alternative epistemologies. Herein lies the potential of rectifying the gaps regarding (i) conceptualizations of language itself and (ii) the paucity of scholarship that empirically explores the performance of language. This in itself enables engaging with concepts and issues that have relevance from across GSN. The continuing silencing – visual, auditory, verbal, embodied, use of tools – of alternative narratives regarding normal human communication and normal diversity on the one hand, and the continuing hegemonies of boundary-marked and -marking global-North epistemologies on the other hand, constitute the tension grounds that emerge in analysis of mundane languaging in and across physical, digital and textual settings. This calls for the need to make visible the circularity and taken-for-grantedness of single grand stories regarding the nature of language and identity and engaging with alternative conceptual framings.

While discussions regarding the Linguistic-Turn emerged in European spaces and highlighted the role of language in creating representations, there is (i) marginal engagement with discussions on representational issues, and (ii) little focus on how representations in themselves co-create specific ways of understanding what language is, where, when, why and for whom it exists. Going beyond, the mirroring/representational functions of language and drawing upon developments within decolonial studies, furthermore, allows for asking (new) critical questions that potentially destabilize established single grand stories. What is the nature of conceptualizations regarding language-varieties/modalities that are focused upon in settings where people (i.e. pupils and adults) deploy more than one language-variety or use one that is not the majority language-
variety? What identity nomenclature is deployed to name individuals who are focused upon? What types of epistemologies regarding language and identity can be discerned in the discourses that frame such settings (for instance, in institutional talk, political and mass-media discussions, in language course-plans for schools, including compulsory and reference literature that future and in-service teachers participate in)? In what ways do conceptualizations regarding identity-positions intersect with or shape how language gets framed in the curricula for schools and in teacher education? Where and in what ways are language-varieties located both currently and in the past in such curricula? What are the identity-positions and language histories of the teachers working in the schools and university settings where such curricula are in place? What are the identity-positions and language histories of scholars who research such settings?

Responses to such questions enable hearing, seeing and talking about mainstream conceptualizations that feed into single grand stories. American anthropologist Ruth Finnegan (2015) questions such mainstream ideas by raising a warning flag. She asks—as I do in this and previous writings—what and where is language. Such a stance is a key dimension of decoloniality which here represents a call for a new reflexivity that enables posing uncomfortable questions that have the potential to illuminate non/mainstreamed ways-of-being-with-words. Going beyond both namism and academic branding and dealing with naturalistic datasets where the analysis builds upon theoretical framings is central here.

Thus, peripherally framed sociocultural premises regarding the nature of language can enable unpacking and illuminating Northern hegemonies (Deumert 2018, Gramling 2016, Makoni 2012). Such a SWST brings some insights from decoloniality into mainstream scholarship: in the case of LES it shifts the focus from areas colored by single grand stories (including popular ideas regarding post-truths and alternative-facts) to alternative envisioning’s of what language and identity are and can be, where, when, why and for whom language and identity are central in academic explorations (Bagga-Gupta, Hansen & Feilberg 2017, Finnegan 2015).

Taking cognizance of such issues opens up possibilities for discussing epistemologies from alternative third positions (Bagga-Gupta 2017b) that go beyond dominating and dichotomizing ideas related to language (e.g. monolingualism – bi/multilingualism), language learning methods (e.g. methodologies that are based upon top-bottom – bottom-up conceptualizations), and the organization of language learning itself (e.g., inclusion/integration/mainstreaming – segregation/special
arrangements). Such third positions in particular attend to the need for going beyond single grand stories in LES.

In other words, making visible the dominating colonially framed monoglossic understandings of bounded language-varieties/modalities, including the monolingual bias in the mainstream LES scholarship calls attention to the need for engaging with scholarship from and by global-South scholars with the intent of going beyond single grand stories of languaging behavior and identity-positionings. Thus, languaging needs to be researched from points of departure where more than one language-variety are made analytically salient.

A turn towards alternatives also involves important shifts that call attention to the need for raising our gaze to see the larger picture. This includes going beyond micro and mono units of focus – from the unit of the individual, family, city, country to the unit of the planet and of humanity. This shift in the unit of focus calls attention to the boundaries we construct and naturalize – the boundaries that create different language-varieties and connects them to identities at the level of individual human beings and nation-states. A second shift relates to going beyond a focus on macro policy decisions to the nitty-gritty of everydayness of what people do and the processes through which they become a specific identity position, a member of a community, get included or excluded. A third shift that is required if we are to raise our gaze involves going beyond talking about multi/inter/pluri-disciplinary education and research and creating and doing theme-based, problem-oriented research and education. Cultivating such a humanistic scholarship also constitutes a key dimension of a turn towards alternatives.

Center-staging issues of multiple, layered marginalization’s across time and space through glossed concepts like Southern perspectives, Southern theory, the global north/south, the global east/west, post/decoloniality, and engaging insights from these fields in empirical explorations – particularly in settings where multiple language resources are deployed for meaning-making purposes are important. Such a stance exposes the myths of single grand stories by critically appraising how the hegemonies of Northern spaces continue to monopolize and thereby reduce normal languaging in both global-North territories (when it comes to language education of immigrants and minorities, for instance in Sweden) and in global-South places (for instance, in India).

23 See Figure 1.
Given that attention in the scholarship related to Southern Theory/Perspectives primarily comes from philosophical, area-related, literature-based, autobiographical studies, a SWST is particularly interested in identifying/upfronting/inviting explorations of this/these domains through empirical engagements. Furthermore, given that increasing attention to these issues is coming from scholars in hegemonic positions in Northern spaces, there exists a need to build a more sustainable basis for a broader participation and dialoguing that is truly global in nature. Thus, SWST attempts to go beyond the important, but limited foci and participation contributing to a Second Wave of Southern Scholarship. It attempts to open up for renewed understandings of the limited recognition accorded to the hegemonic complicities of Northern scholars in the scholarship emerging in the 21st century.

4. Post-script
I conclude with reflections that raise concerns regarding a discrepancy that can be noted and that have arisen in the course of my collaborations with colleagues in Aligarh and Mumbai during the last decade. This relates to my observations regarding the (i) emergence of discourses surrounding the multiple use of language-varieties, and (ii) how my scholarly colleagues as well as professionals in school’s language on the one hand, and how they appear to approach and discuss language issues in their writings, presentations and talk about language issues on the other hand. I frame these concerns through the following reflections.

While political and normative issues are a significant aspect of the agenda that scholarly colleagues and professionals in the educational sector face, there is a need to differentiate between such an agenda from an analytical research one. This means that while the task of (re)exploring the Hindi-Urdu issue, saving engendered language-varieties, taking up arms for the recognition of language-varieties is important, such endeavors need to be recognized as being dimensions of political work. Taking a cue from analytical stances related to the Linguistic-Turn, there is need to recognize that such work in itself creates boundaries and constitutes a political minefield. In other words, the discrepancy concerns what I observe as the richness of normal oral and written languaging, and the seemingly colonial internalizations in how language is being studied and discussed (see for instance, studies presented in Hasnain, Bagga-Gupta & Mohan 2013). In addition to the approaches towards the analytical explorations of human languaging across the nation-state of India, this includes the rich referencing of the research on language-varieties by global-North scholars, in particular from geographical Europe and North America.
These types of discrepancies contribute to how I currently approach SWST. Here it is, in my view, important to augment the queries I have raised in Section 3 with the following types of questions: Whose theories count as being Southern? Whose nomenclature can be included in an attempt to widen Northern discourses to become global? Who are the central figures/regions contributing to key discussions and who are the peoples and which regions are being focused upon; in other words, what are the geographies of such engagements? What types of empirical engagements are emerging or have been established within scholarship from the global-South that can contribute to making LES global? What central theoretical tenants and concepts are emerging or have been established within such scholarship?

By calling attention to a turn towards alternatives that can enable going beyond single grand stories, there is a need to – as Martin Luther King succinctly framed it – “walk in a new way” (King 1992:7) and also listen, hear and talk i.e. conceptualize languaging in the Language and Educational Sciences in a new way.

References:


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