

Book Review

McKinney, C. & Christie, P. 2021. *Decoloniality, Language and Literacy: Conversations with Teacher Educators*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

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This edited collection sets out to counter hegemonic and monolingual education and language practices, both in teacher education programmes and the schooling system where these trainee teachers will work. It developed from conversations between teacher educators at University of Cape Town during the student protest movements between 2015 and 2017, which called for both free and decolonized education (a focus of many articles in this journal; see, for example, Shay, et al., 2016; Sebidi & Morreira, 2017; Hlatshwayo, 2021). A deep sense of dialogue, reflexivity, and activism permeate the contributions, encouraging the reader to feel part of ongoing conversations for this collective and decolonial endeavour. Another real strength of the book comes in the inclusion of a variety of unconventional contributions, with interviews, reflections, visual essays, and poems alongside more traditional book chapters that include multimodal and multilingual data. This is entirely coherent with the decolonial praxis modelled throughout the book and points to new ways that we can all push at the boundaries of what is considered academic writing to enable epistemic justice.

As McKinney and Christie highlight in the introduction, while the book is firmly situated within the South African context, there are clear resonances across 'historically unequal contexts, particularly those in the Global South' (2). This can be seen most clearly in the central theme of the entanglement of language, power and coloniality, informed by McKinney's wider scholarship on 'anglonormativity'. This notion, which I have found very helpful in my own research on English medium education in Rwanda and Uganda, conceptualises 'the expectation that people will be or should be proficient in English, and are deficient, even deviant, if they are not' (McKinney, 2016: 80). There are also several other core concepts that are used throughout the book, including borderlands, contact zones, and third spaces (particularly well developed in Chapter 8 by Abdulatief). This brings a rich theoretical basis to the collection.

There are three parts. *Part 1: De/coloniality in Schooling* starts with a poem (Garuba) depicting his experience of schooling in Nigeria. It also includes chapters that focus on potentialities for decoloniality (Makoe), including in the third space of a literacy club (Guzula), and issues of identity, coloniality and schooling (Tyler). There can be a tendency for debates about language of learning and teaching in postcolonial contexts to focus on what children are able to understand and their learning outcomes (see Adamson, 2022). All four contributions remind us of the embodied and emotive elements of language and the human impact of exclusionary language policies and practices, alongside more hopeful articulations of what



learning could look like. For example, Guzula's chapter relays in vivid detail the ways that learning English through a game of 'we're going on a lion hunt' brings great joy as children's full linguistic repertoires are encouraged.

Part 2: Delinking from Coloniality in Teacher Education focuses on issues of learning and teaching in Teacher Education within the context of coloniality. Chapter 5 (Angier, McKinney and Kell) is a photo essay of the learning that the authors initiated during the student movements. This is a powerful portrayal of how teaching moments are not restricted to formal classroom spaces and pedagogies. Chapter 10 is a conversation between Catherine Kell, a literacy studies scholar for over 35 years, and Xolisa Guzulka and Carolyn McKinney, who position themselves as part of the younger generation of scholars in language and literacy studies. The intergenerational nature of the dialogue works to pull the reader in and made me feel like I was sitting in the same room. *Part 3: Conversations with Teacher Educators in Brazil, Canada and Chile* is the final section and includes reflections and discussions with scholars and practitioners in Brazil, Canada, and Chile. These contributions reflect on the resonances with the Teacher Education, and broader historical and socio-economic, contexts in these countries.

The book will be of particular interest to all who in University Education departments embody dual identities of being both teacher educators and educational researchers, particularly for those in postcolonial contexts. In different ways, the contributing authors share how they encounter and challenge coloniality in their daily research and teaching practices, particularly while preparing student teachers to do the same in their future professional lives. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this important collection, both for the variety of different contributions and the commitment to decolonial practice in research, teacher education and publishing.

Reviewed by

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