

Global English: Neither a “Hydra” nor a “Tyrannosaurus Rex” or a “Red Herring” but an Ecology of Approaches Towards Social Justice

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to reflect about the possibility of viewing Global English as an arena to use an ecology of approaches towards social justice. The discussion afforded here problematizes approaches that are purely recognition oriented, such as decolonial perspectives based on race, while also questioning the use of redistribution approaches based on class only and that do not consider critical perspectives. Drawing on the work of decolonial authors mainly from Latin America, four vignettes from the author’s experience are brought to illustrate the discussion. The argument advanced in the paper is that an ecology of approaches is needed to tackle recognition issues involved in language use but if the aim is to address redistribution, that is, social justice, language researchers have to incorporate new questions and perhaps approaches engaging to a much greater extent with the underlying causes of social injustice that correlates with the spread of English.

Keywords: Global English, ecology of approaches, social justice

1. Introduction

As the title of this paper suggests, the tone of this essay is reflective and filled with intertextual references, metaphors and voices in what could be understood as either a cacophonous or a polyphonic conversation, depending on how the reader wants to engage with me and these voices. This position statement/reflective paper is also and shamelessly autobiographical since I include my own reading of and experience with the phenomenon of Global English in this conversation, which is why I use the first person to write.

My first guest in this conversation is Bakhtin and his concept of polyphony as a textual strategy to write research narratives and as a tool to analyse discursive spaces where heterogeneous and multiple voices engage in a contest for audibility and power. The discursive space where I propose to anchor this reflection is that of Applied Linguistics/Education research on Global English. I propose a dialogue with what could be perceived as somewhat opposing views of Global English based on Critical/Decolonial perspectives and Pragmatic/Political Economy approaches.

I accept the invitation posed by decolonial authors Eduardo Diniz de Figueiredo and Juliana Martinez' (2021) to reveal my locus of enunciation as a way to confront epistemological racism through the localization of knowledges that are often taken as global and in so doing, I am humbled to acknowledge the limits of my claims and views. Unlike other academic papers where the author is not as visible behind the academic jargon, I use the first person to write and try to cite the first name of the authors with whom I engage in this text so as to bring this conversation closer to the reader. My hope is to engage with decolonial and pragmatic views of Global English brought to this conversation in a scholarly dialogue so as to advance the argument that perhaps both views could benefit from an ecology of approaches.

Having said that I introduce my next guest, from what I am calling here the *pragmatic perspective*, David Block, and his provocation that Applied Linguistics research should acknowledge the fact that social injustice is not only a cultural and language-related phenomenon but also, and perhaps more importantly, it is material. Drawing on Nancy Fraser, Block (2018) claims that most language research today is recognition oriented in that it takes on culture and identity based injustices such as racism without considering economic/class-based injustices that can only be tackled by considering redistribution issues.

As an English teacher educator, researcher and engaged applied linguist concerned with social justice and who's been 'courting' decolonial perspectives on Global English (e.g., Jordão, 2014; Jordão & Martinez, 2021; Diniz de Figueiredo & Martinez, 2021; Guilherme & de Souza, 2019) specially and more recently in relation to the area that has become known as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (e.g., Finardi, 2022; Finardi, França, & Guimarães, 2022), I was very provoked by David Block's claim that if applied linguists wish to redress social injustices, a different approach that included material/class/economic considerations would have to be used.

The Latin American decolonial perspectives with which I have been 'courting' and that I

invite to this conversation are based on the notion that coloniality is a constitutive element in the capitalist matrix of power based on the notion that ‘race’ is used to classify people (e.g., Grosfoguel, 2007; Quijano, 2015) provoking social injustice as consequence of this classification. On the other side we have the other perspective I am inviting to this conversation and that I call here the *pragmatic* one, based on the Marxist notion that ‘class’ (rather than race) should be the essential unit of analysis/concern to explain/redress social injustice reflected in issues of redistribution (Block, 2018).

Thus, the reflection brought to bear in this paper could be understood as my attempt to make sense of these two apparently opposing views (critical/decolonial/race x pragmatic/political economy/class) on Global English and its entanglements with the consequences or causes of social injustice. With that aim I invite authors from both sides/perspectives and the reader to consider whether these two approaches could be used in complementary ways to tackle social injustices reflected in or perpetrated by language practices. Having said that, I now invite the reader to revisit another text/metaphor offered by my colleagues Clarissa Jordão and Juliana Martinez (Jordão & Martinez, 2021) which inspired me to weave my considerations around my personal experience included here in the form of vignettes.

Clarissa and Juliana use the biblical metaphor of new wine in old bottles to discuss the role of academics in general and applied linguists in particular in the current world scenario aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic that exposed poverty, inequality, racism and other social injustices calling us to ask different questions to address old issues. They refer to capitalism/neoliberalism as the ‘old bottles’ where we have kept our wine and draw on Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ (2020) prediction of the three possible post pandemic outcomes humanity will chose, namely, to: 1) carry our routines as if nothing had happened, 2) promote superficial changes in lifestyles such as avoiding crowds and washing hands more frequently or 3) move away from neoliberalism towards more solidary and collaborative ways of life that care for the planet and all forms of life in it.

The third prediction and desired outcome would be closest to Boaventura’s notion of ‘ecology of knowledges’ that I have been using to promote different knowledges and languages (Finardi, 2022; Finardi, Santos, & Guimarães, 2022) in the production and dissemination of academic works. Despite my good intensions of promoting social justice through this ecology of knowledges and languages, the question remains as to whether my assumptions based on this decolonial perspective are enough to change the bottles of wine, in other words, to go from recognition to redistribution (Block, 2018).

So as to discuss these issues with real examples, I accept the invitation made by Diniz de Figueiredo and Martinez (2021) to reveal my locus of enunciation and expose critical moments of my experience as an English teacher educator and applied linguist in the form of vignettes. The aim of these vignettes is both to illustrate and discuss the possibility of asking new questions/approaches to address the old problem of social injustice reflected in or produced by the phenomenon of Global English.

Before I present the four vignettes around which I will ground this discussion, I briefly outline some views that have triggered my reflection and that are related to the animal

metaphors used in the title of this paper. I will then argue that Global English is neither a hydra, nor a tyrannosaurus rex or a red herring but instead represents a rich field where an ecology of approaches could be used by researchers in general and by applied linguists in particular, in the quest towards social justice.

2. Global English

2.1 Hydra

Voilà the first ‘animal’ of this text is presented. According to Greek mythology, a hydra is a many-headed serpent or monster that was slain by Hercules and each head of which when cut off was replaced by two others. Rapatahana and Bunce (2012) use this powerful metaphor to show their view of Global English as a monster that has many heads. In the first pages of the acknowledgements section of their book (2012) they set the tone to the rest of the book by stating that “As the English Hydra has reared its ugly heads in the great many other locations, we also acknowledge those contributions whose chapters we were unable to squeeze into the present collection...” (*ibid*, p. 14).

In the foreword of another book, Bunce, Phillipson, Rapatahana and Tupas (2016) propose to confront the English hydra by analyzing a trio of interconnected concepts, namely – stigmatization, glorification and rationalization. According to the aforementioned authors, maintenance of a linguistic hierarchy typically involves a pattern of stigmatization of dominated languages (seen as mere dialects or vernaculars), glorification of the dominant language (in this case English), and rationalization of the relationship between languages benefitting the dominant one (*ibid*, p. 17).

This view of Global English is related to the second animal referred to in the title of this text, namely, that of the tyrannosaurus rex, brought to our arena by John Swales in 1997.

2.2 Tyrannosaurus Rex

According to Swales (1997) the increasing domination of English as the world’s leading international language impacts English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs which question whether English is becoming too successful. Swales argues that resistance to the ‘triumphalism’ of English is the responsibility of EAP teachers/researchers and that this resistance could be encouraged by stimulating research on the academic registers of languages other than English supporting local-language scholarly publications.

Just like the portray of English as a hydra/monster whose many ugly heads rears many locations, the metaphor of the tyrannosaurus rex alludes to a powerful/fearsome “carnivore gobbling up the other denizens of the academic linguistic grazing grounds” (Swales, 1997, p. 374).

These two animals/views of Global English suggest that academics in general and applied linguists in particular should be more critical of English, accused of being responsible for many linguistic and social injustices perpetrated under the hydra heads of colonialism, racism and imperialism. As such, the metaphors of the hydra/tyrannosaurus rex are closer to the decolonial calls for a change in the terms of the conversation rather than just changing the

contents of the conversation (e.g., Mignolo, 2009; Borelli, Silvestre, & Pessoa, 2020). This critical/decolonial view of English is in turn questioned by another animal, that of the red herring, introduced in the next section.

2.3 Red Herring

Having very little experience with fishes in general and absolutely no experience with a herring in particular, I was somewhat puzzled by the title of Anna Kristina Hultgren's (2020) paper *Global English: From "tyrannosaurus rex" to "red herring"* and had to run a quick search in the Google oracle so as to understand the title and tone of her text. I learned in Wikipedia that a red herring is something that misleads or distracts from a relevant or important question. It may be either a logical fallacy or a literary device that leads readers or audiences toward a false conclusion. A red herring may be used intentionally, as in mystery fiction or as part of rhetorical strategies used, for example, in politics. In Portuguese, my native language, we have a similar expression: '*Cortina de Fumaça*' which translates into 'smokescreen' to refer to this phenomenon.

In what concerns Hultgren's red herring, Anna Kristina claims that the rise of English as the world's main international language has prompted a social justice agenda underpinned by an assumption that English causes or exacerbates inequality and injustice. She goes on to say that in her position statement she aims to problematize this assumption suggesting that English is neither a "Tyrannosaurus Rex", a "Cuckoo" nor a "Lingua Frankensteinia", but a "Red Herring", that is, a phenomenon that distracts attention away from the underlying causes of inequality. A necessary question then would be what are the causes of this inequality, if it cannot be accounted for by the rise of English.

At this point I invite you to return to Jordão and Martinez' (2021) claim that we have to ask new questions (to avoid putting new wine in old bottles) and to David Block's (2018) criticism that authors who claim to be critical but pay no attention to political economy do little to change injustices. As the reader can probably see by now as the smokescreen fades away, I aim to advance the argument that perhaps an important new question to ask in relation to Global English and its implications to social justice would be whether it is possible to be both critical/decolonial while also addressing aspects related to political economy and material conditions of language use and its implications.

In Block's (2018) reading of Nancy Fraser, that would mean a move from 'recognition' to 'redistribution' for the former creates group differentiation while the latter could undermine it. Considering the potential of decolonial/critical perspectives in Applied Linguistics, the question that arises, based on Block (2018), is whether recognition or affirmative action is enough if we want to get to the roots of inequalities and injustice. The way I read him, Block (2018) would claim that we have to move beyond affirmative action (recognition) to transformative action (distribution) and that cannot be made without addressing issues pertaining to the material world and political economy of languages.

So as to illustrate his discussion, Block (2018) questions the concept of Translanguaging on the grounds that it stays in the 'recognition' stage with little potential for real transformation

in society, concluding that what is missing in Applied Linguistics is an approach that has the potential to change inequalities/injustice in society, reflected in language use. Another paper which also questions the notion of Translanguaging on the grounds that it does little to promote social justice of minority language speakers is that of Bonnin and Unamuno (2021) who argue that Translanguaging is not helpful to account for Indigenous and minority languages since clear-cut distinctions between named languages, in that case, Spanish and Indigenous languages, are crucial for minority speakers' socio-political struggles for social justice. Bonnin and Unamuno (2021) adopt a view that languages are social constructs that form discrete well-bounded entities that allow us to see how power is exercised in the use (or lack of) certain languages whereas Translanguaging, by rejecting the idea of discrete entities, proposing, instead, the notion of a fluid repertoire, does not question how power is exercised in society through the use (or lack of it) of certain languages.

Having briefly outlined these views of Global English, I now turn to the 'new question' of whether it would be possible to reconcile these two approaches in what I am calling here, an ecology of approaches.

3. Ecology of Approaches

Broadly conceived, ecology is the study of organisms in their environments. Social or human ecology, by comparison, is the study of the relationships between humans and their environments and the ways in which the social structure adapts to the existence of other beings and resources. Boaventura de Sousa Santos proposes an ecology of knowledges which, in decolonial terms, could be understood as an alternative globalization (the new bottle) inspired by post-abysal thought and epistemologies of the south that assume the need for the co-presence of different agents in the construction of knowledge. This, in turn, would enable social justice through cognitive justice and the recognition of the local-global bounds that make knowledge intersubjective, trans-scale and trans-temporal.

As suggested by Piller and Cho (2013), linguistic diversity intersects with social justice whereby this intersection is conceptualized in coinages such as "raciolinguistics", "accent bias" and "linguistic racism" and evidenced in the many ways in which linguistic minorities may suffer multiple forces of oppression and discrimination not only through their race but through their language or way of speaking (and belonging). Despite or because of this caveat, Hultgren (2020) criticizes the social justice agenda underpinned by the assumption that English causes or exacerbates inequality and injustice in the world. She does so by claiming that English is a "Red Herring" distracting attention away from the underlying causes of inequality and goes on to suggest that as socially committed applied linguists, we stand a better chance of solving real-world problems if greater attention is paid to systems of inequality that are not obviously language-based. For her, a too narrow focus on linguistic injustice risks losing sight of the bigger picture, that of underlying non-linguistic conditions that produce this injustice. The idea then would be to think about language together with the political, social, economic, cultural and material conditions and implications of language use.

In her position statement, Anna Kristina Hultgren argues that branches of Applied Linguistics and sociolinguistics committed to a social justice agenda would gain from an explicit

acknowledgement that language is mostly a contingent, secondary factor and not a cause of inequality. She suggests that language needs to be decentered from our analyses and toned down since any analysis solely based on language is unlikely to promote social justice.

Some efforts in that direction have already been made by economists and linguists who have modelled the costs involved in learning languages and translating between them (e.g., Grin, 2006) or in the variables and factors that affect language value, hierarchies and use (Moreno & Otero, 2016). The questions that arises then is whether the decolonial ecology of knowledges could be reconciled with a more pragmatic approach that analyzes the political, social, economic, cultural and material conditions and implications of language use in an ecology of approaches. So as to offer some reflections in that direction, I present four vignettes of my experience with Global English leaving that question open for the reader to answer. I hope the reader will agree with me that questions are usually more interesting than answers and so as to propose ‘new bottles’ to the ‘old wine’ of Global English, I invite the reader to attempt to answer some of these questions by engaging with these vignettes.

Vignette 1 – You can have Brazilian English but I can’t! (identity and language intersect with social justice)

At the undergraduate level I am responsible for the English Teacher Practicum Course in the English Language Teaching Degree Program of the higher education institution where I work in Brazil. As part of the program for that course, we read/discuss texts related to critical aspects of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Brazil. In a particular semester we were discussing issues related to the identity of Brazilian teachers of English (Archanjo, Barahona, & Finardi, 2019) and the myth of the native speaker as being the norm and model to be followed in terms of accent (Simoneli & Finardi, 2020). I had commented with my students that it was OK to have a ‘Brazilian English’ (Finardi, 2014) to which a student, Diogo, replied: “of course it is OK for you to have a ‘Brazilian English’, teacher. You are completely fluent and have a stable job whereas we might not even get one or go too far with our ‘Brazilian Englishes’.

This vignette shows how material aspects of language use (trying to get a job as an English teacher) intersect with language ideology (valuing certain accents or varieties of English over others) and identity (for non-native speakers of English trying to make a living in ELT).

Vignette 2 – Pomeranian is the past, English is the future (save your grandparents or your children?)

As a multilingual researcher and advocate of multilingualism I supervised a study (Finardi, 2018) about language policies in the state of Espírito Santo (ES) where there is a community with some (mostly farmers and their grandparents) speakers of Pomeranian. Before 2017 it was possible for school communities to select the additional language/foreign language (L2) to be included in the school curriculum in Brazil and there was a project to make Pomeranian a co-official language in some of the cities in ES then. My advisee and I decided to interview secondary school students in Santa Maria de Jetibá, a city with many Pomeranian-speaking people, to check which language should be included in their school curricula. We asked

students which language they would like to study as L2 and expected at least some of them to answer ‘Pomeranian’ since that would allow them to communicate with their grandparents. Contrary to our expectations (and hopes), most people selected ‘English’ and no one selected ‘Pomeranian’. When we asked them why they had chosen English over Pomeranian, one student replied: “ If I learn Pomeranian I can only use it with my grandparents and other farmers around here and will never leave this village whereas if I learn English I can get other jobs that pay more than farming and maybe leave the village and speak with people outside Brazil too”.

In a more recent study (Finardi, 2022), I used the metaphor of the North-American Oscar of the film industry to refer to the status of English in Latin America. Comparing the choice between local and global language, we could understand the dilemma of that Pomeranian student – learn the ‘local’ language of his village, ancestors, and the past or learn English, the ‘global’ language of the future. We could also relate this dilemma to the one portrayed in the film ‘Sophie’s choice’ where a Jewish mother in a Concentration Camp has to decide which of her two children gets to live and which one will die.

Going back to the question of which approach to English and language policies we should take, this vignette suggests that whatever our choice is, it should be considered together with the political, social, economic, cultural and material conditions and implications of language use since it has very concrete effects on people’s lives, just as the next vignette will also illustrate.

Vignette 3 – Multilingualism? It depends on the pocket! (Diversity is expensive)

I was part of a PhD committee debating with a candidate who was presenting his work on the use of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in the Brazilian higher education context. I commented that his work could be improved or at least made more critical/inclusive by addressing implications of EMI to multilingualism in general and to the teaching of other languages (besides English) in basic education in Brazil, to which he replied: “I know you have a critical/decolonial perspective on that and I personally think that is very nice, in theory... but in practice, let’s be honest, if you have a child and can afford to pay only one language course, would you have your child study Guarani, Pomeranian or even more powerful languages such as Chinese or Spanish before English? You carry the decolonial/diversity/plurilingual flag but the languages you speak are all European (Portuguese, Spanish, English, French, Italian). Would you brag as much about being plurilingual if the languages you spoke were Guarani or Pomeranian? Or yet, if you could afford to pay only one L2 course, which language would you have your child learn first? English of course! So I rest my case!”

This vignette also shows that any discussion of multilingualism that does not acknowledge the material value and power of languages, whether considered in themselves and/or in relation to the others, does very little to promote an ecological co-existence of languages. By that I do not mean to imply that English is a predatory language but rather that it can have that effect if political, social, economic, cultural and material conditions and implications of its use are not considered.

Vignette 4 – Swiss social cohesion pact and the use of English (Linguistic Diversity as a politically correct label)

Between 2015–2016 I spent a sabbatical year in Geneva, Switzerland, to carry out a post-doctoral research project on language policies. I was particularly interested in the relationship between foreign/additional languages (L2) and the internationalization process of the University of Geneva (Unige). One of the reasons why I chose Unige was related to findings in previous studies that most of the top ranked world class universities were either in English speaking countries or in countries that adopted English as the medium of instruction (EMI) as a strategy to boost internationalization. The QS World University Rankings in 2014 showed that only 40 out of the 100 best universities were in non-English speaking countries and only 14 non-English speaking universities were within the top 50. What was even more striking was the observation that most of these non-English speaking universities had adopted English as the language of instruction, one exception being Unige, ranked in 85th position. Unige was one of the four Swiss Universities ranked within the top 100 best universities but it was the ‘only’ Swiss University in the rank which did not adopt English as the language of instruction and that had a strong francophone policy. Because of the challenges of adopting English as an academic language in Brazilian universities, I wanted to investigate the role of English in the internationalization process of Unige to see whether it was possible to apply some of the lessons learnt at Unige in Brazilian universities. The rationale was that if Unige could be well ranked and internationalized without adopting English as the academic language, perhaps there was something that Brazilian universities could learn from Unige. Part of the lessons I learned during my post-doc were published in a paper (Finardi, 2017) addressing issues related to the role of languages in multilingualism, national cohesion, social inclusion and the process of internationalization of higher education. What was not published though, was my personal experience in Geneva, trying to improve my French. Even though (or because) my proficiency in French was much worse than my proficiency in English, Spanish or Portuguese (languages that I speak fluently but that are not official languages in Switzerland), I always tried to use French (the official language in Geneva) or Italian (one of the three national/official languages in Switzerland besides German and French) so as to be respectful for the official languages of a given context and also in an attempt to improve my fluency in those languages. However, it was almost impossible for me to improve my French or Italian during the year I lived in Switzerland. Even though I always approached people in French in Geneva, as soon as they realized I spoke other languages, they switched to a language that they (or I) spoke better. At the university, everyone spoke to me in English and in the supermarket where most of the staff were Portuguese, they spoke in Portuguese (which was more difficult for me to understand than French because Brazilian Portuguese is phonetically very different from Portuguese from Portugal!). I always wondered whether my experience in Switzerland was affected by the fact Geneva is a very cosmopolitan city with people from many different countries, whether it was related to the role of English (the language that I spoke most of the time there) in the world today, or yet whether it was related to my fluency level in French. I leave that question open for the reader to answer but not before I add another question to this vignette: how would my experience be different if the languages I spoke were Pomeranian or Guarani?

4. Ecology of Approaches Towards Social Justice

Some of the issues reported in these vignettes are related to the assumptions addressed by Hultgren (2020) and that will be retaken in the remainder of this paper. The first assumption she discusses is that non-native speakers are disadvantaged by the spread of English claiming that though this assumption is intuitive, most pluri/bilingual speakers would agree that they would feel more comfortable speaking the language they know best. Perhaps that was the case in my experience with French-English in Geneva, at least for my interlocutors though not for me! We could even argue that people not only want to use the language they know best but perhaps the language that their interlocutor knows best.

Still in relation to the first assumption discussed by Hultgren (2020), she gives another example of how language intersects with ideology and economy. According to her, many applied linguists present the advantages of using a child's home language (L1) in school (including translanguaging) as an evidence-based fact rather than in terms of ideology. Yet, and as commented by Hultgren (2020), Blommaert (2017) notes that although good school attainment has often been attributed to using specific languages at home or in school, the critical role of parents' income and educational background has been overlooked in the case of the Dutch context. The same could be said, I'd argue, for the Brazilian context as pointed out by the PhD candidate in my vignette.

Other examples cited by Hultgren (2020) in relation to her first assumption are feelings of linguistic disadvantage contrasted with bibliometric studies that show that though English-dominant countries like Australia, UK, Canada and the USA are usually in the top ten most productive countries in terms of scientific output, so too are non-English-dominant countries like Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Spain and France suggesting that native-speaker status (in the case of English) may not be the only or even the most important factor determining publishing success. Yet, as we have seen in my personal experience in Geneva and in the report of the linguistic panorama of Switzerland (Finardi, 2017) and other countries like Sweden and the Netherlands whose national languages are not as 'strong' as English, and in countries with strong languages such as Portuguese and Spanish (e.g., Céspedes, 2021; Finardi, França, & Guimarães, 2022), there may be some truth in the first assumption, even if we consider only the case of academic publications by non-native speakers of English.

The second assumption discussed by Hultgren (2020) is that English threatens other languages. Though she does not challenge the fact that language loss indeed happens, she questions the assumption that English is the culprit once in her opinion, the causes of language loss are related to cultural, economic and social factors that lie outside the linguistic sphere. As an example she mentions the Nordic languages (Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish and Icelandic) that are claimed to be threatened by English causing Nordic languages to lose functionality or to be marginalised in transnational areas of life which are felt to be of key importance, such as science, higher education and business.

As we saw in the four vignettes, if we approach the phenomenon of Global English purely from a linguistic stance we may end up in a catch-22 or chicken-and-egg dilemma. Is English

threatening other languages/cultures or are other languages/cultures threatened by the economic, social and material effects that correlate with the spread and hegemony of English? In quantitative studies we usually warn junior scholars to be careful not to talk about causation in correlational studies. Are we perhaps doing that with English? In statistical terms, of course we will find a positive and statistically significant correlation if we compare the use of some forms of English with economic wealth, for example. But we must remember that correlation is not causation and most studies that discuss the role of English in the world adopt a correlational orientation, even the qualitative ones! This is an important caveat in terms of the methods and approaches we are using to study the phenomenon of Global English and social (in)equality. To return to Jordão and Martinez' (2021) provocation, we must ask new questions and I would add new approaches too!

The third assumption discussed by Hultgren (2020) is that language policy will curb the spread of English which is the same as saying that we, applied linguists should concern ourselves with proposing language policies as a solution to the Hydra to address the perceived injustice and encroachment posed by English. She claims that despite some calls to incorporate nonlinguistic elements into the analyses and proposition of language policies, this perspective remains underdeveloped and undertheorized. Hultgren agrees that language policies have important social justice functions but she advances the idea that unless they are co-thought with more material aspects, they stand little chance of having a real effect.

5. Conclusion

As I hope became clear in the discussion and the four vignettes brought to bear and illustrate my argument in this paper, language policies and Applied Linguistics research can do a lot for recognition issues involved in language use but if the aim is to tackle redistribution, that is, social justice, language researchers have to incorporate new questions and perhaps new approaches engaging to a much greater extent with the underlying causes of social (in)justice that correlates with the spread of English. Admittedly, I recognize that language offers an important window into social structures but so as to enable change, other approaches should be used to widen our lenses allowing us to ask new questions that acknowledge that a focus on language alone is not enough, whether we seek to understand or solve a social problem. As such, I not only welcome but invite political, economic, social and cultural analyses to help us explain (and change) the current world order that correlates and intersects with the phenomenon of Global English. With that aim, I conclude with a call for more interdisciplinary efforts forming an ecology of approaches towards social justice.

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