Relocating English Studies and SoTL in the Global South:
Towards Decolonizing English and Critiquing the Coloniality of Language

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Abstract

South Africa has policies and frameworks for curriculum design, transformation, and quality assurance in each public institution of higher education (HE). These policies influence the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), particularly at the departmental and disciplinary levels of English Studies. Despite the policy narratives and rhetoric, English Studies still carries vestiges of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. Similarly, in other disciplines, scholars in the Global South have highlighted coloniality, epistemicides, epistemic errors, and epistemic injustices, but not in a dual critique of SoTL and the English language.

Hypercritical self-reflexivity by academics should be the norm in SoTL, and this should be linked to language-based curriculum reforms and module content designs. All of these self-reflexive efforts should foreground how the mission to transform and decolonize is entangled with Eurocentric paradigms of English language teaching.

This paper characterizes the nexus between SoTL and the coloniality of language within South African higher education. It also discusses and critiques the nature of an English department in a post-apartheid and postcolonial South Africa. In addition, it critiques the coloniality of language and imperial English language paradigms often embraced by higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, and delineates curriculum transformation, Africanization, and decolonizing English within this educational sector. Finally, the paper challenges Eurocentric SoTL practices and colonialist English language paradigms by framing its argument within a critical southern decolonial perspective and a post-Eurocentric SoTL.

Introduction

The history of English in South Africa is mired in both apartheid and colonialism (Kamwangamalu, 2002; Cele, 2021). Therefore, the English language and the discipline of English are entangled in coloniality mediated through projects such as English as a medium of instruction, or English as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT), and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Three conceptual frameworks that need to be problematized and critiqued are imperial English language paradigms, the coloniality of the English language, and some of the politico-educational initiatives in South Africa's higher education (HE). In the post-1994 democratic dispensation, there have been several frameworks of both language policy and restructuring of HE. For example, the revised language policy framework for public higher education institutions is based on the 1996 Constitution of the

Republic of South Africa (DHET, 2020). The policy advocates equality and parity amongst all eleven official languages. However, the recent court judgements, as highlighted in this paper, tend to contradict this legislative ambition.

In this paper, we explicate the colonial history of English, which has resulted in the ongoing coloniality of language (see Veronelli, 2015, Chaka, 2021a). We explore four historical periods and identify the commonality of coloniality of knowledge and language. We use our locus of enunciation as insiders within the academic discipline of English Studies to illustrate the connection and correlation between SoTL and LoLT, and to argue how this nexus contributes to epistemic framings, such as Eurocentrism and raciolinguistics. We employ a critical southern decoloniality to problematize and critique the coloniality of language and identify blind spots related to imperial English language paradigms, institutional cultures, and SoTL.

The main thesis of the paper is that in South Africa's higher education institutions (HEIs), SoTL is premised on the coloniality of the English language, and this seems to be the case in many other HE contexts in the Global South. Eurocentrism emerges as a central epistemic influence on both the discipline of English and SoTL. This is further illustrated by some of the HE projects and initiatives that have been branded as *transformation*, *Africanization*, and *decolonization*, all seemingly geared towards SoTL, knowledge generation, and language practices. All of this, in turn, has tended to further partition language knowledge into neoliberal components such as language skills, language proficiency, and academic writing skills, and into English language disciplinary variants like English as a second language (ESL), English as an additional language (EAL), language academic development, and several other institutional programs, such as those that are discussed on Table 1 below. All of these aspects look more like former colonial masters' designer language templates that fly in the face of transformation, Africanization, and decolonization. Alternative epistemological orientations, such as a critical southern decolonial perspective, promise to relocate and recast English studies and SoTL within the transformation, Africanization, and decolonization triumvirate. Finally, the paper argues for a post-Eurocentric SoTL as well.

SoTL, Language, and Higher Education in South Africa

Currently South Africa has 26 universities (hereafter referred to as HEIs) that are categorized as follows: traditional universities that offer theoretically-grounded academic programs (n = 11); universities of technologies that provide vocationally- and technically-oriented education (n = 9); and comprehensive universities that offer both academic and vocational programs (n = 6) (BusinessTech, 2015; cf. Pitso, 2013). Most of these HEIs offer SoTL often under standalone teaching and learning or academic development units or centers. Invariably, these HEIs provide SoTL through English as a LoLT in line with their institutional language policies (Cele, 2021). In fact, in the South African higher education context, it is unheard of and unimaginable for any HEI, including those that purport to have a dual-language medium (e.g., Afrikaans and English), to offer SoTL exclusively in any other language than in English. This practice serves to entrench English not only as the sole LoLT through which SoTL is mediated to students, but also as a dominant language in other domains of use of these HEIs. This is even more so as SoTL is mostly academic discipline-based, and it is intended to facilitate access to *difficult-to-pass* modules and to improve success rate in those modules for often *at-risk* students (cf. Cele, 2021; Pica-Smith & Veloria, 2012). The majority of such *at-risk* students are Black students, who are a demographic group for whom SoTL is intended.

South Africa's constitution has 11 official languages, and it promotes the development of the Khoi, Nama, and San languages, as well as sign language (The South African Constitution, 2012). HEIs have to develop institutional language policies that are informed by the language policy framework for public higher education institutions, as determined in terms of Section 27(2) of the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 (as amended) (DHET, 2020) and by the South African Constitution. This language policy framework encourages multilingualism and the development of African languages to become LoLTs alongside English and Afrikaans. It states that:

> Language continues to be a barrier to access and success for many students at South African higher education institutions. Despite their status as official languages, indigenous languages have in the past and at present, structurally not been afforded the official space to function as academic and scientific languages … The persistent underdevelopment and undervaluing of indigenous languages should not be allowed if public higher education institutions are to meet the diverse linguistic needs of their student population. Conditions must therefore, be created for the development and strengthening of indigenous languages as languages of meaningful academic discourse, as well as sources of knowledge in the different disciplines of higher education. (p. 9)

Interestingly, what is mentioned as a challenge in the language policy framework continues to be a challenge even to this very day, and this necessitates HEIs to deeply investigate it. A few classic cases are worth noting about recent language policy transformation challenges at some of the HEIs post-1994. For example, in 2015, at Stellenbosch University, Black students protested against the use of Afrikaans as an LoLT, and demanded its replacement by English. Similarly, in 2016, at the University of Pretoria (UP), Black students protested against Afrikaans as an LoLT and demanded that it be replaced with English as a sole LoLT (Dube, 2017; Sooliman, 2022). In terms of HEIs that opted to implement an English-only LoLT in lieu of a dual-medium that involved English and Afrikaans, two court judgments that were handed down to two HEIs, after they initiated such moves, are instructive. Firstly, in 2017, the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) judgement involving the University of the Free State (UFS) versus AfriForum (an Afrikaans lobby group in South Africa) ruled in favour of the university's move for English to be an exclusive LoLT as opposed to a previous Afrikaans-English dual-medium policy setup, which AfriForum contested should be retained. Secondly, in another case involving AfriForum versus the University of South Africa (UNISA), the SCA ruled that UNISA's decision to stop tuition in Afrikaans was unlawful and unconstitutional. However, after UNISA appealed the SCA's judgement to the Constitutional Court, the latter court issued a ruling that UNISA had failed to prove that it was reasonably impractical to continue with Afrikaans as one of the LoLTs at UNISA (Mabuza, 2021).

The foregoing instances of HEI language policy exemplify how, at a miniature scale, language policy transformation in HEIs entails entrenching the hegemony of English in these institutions as opposed to embracing a wholesale decolonization of their curricula. In particular, language transformation is tantamount to a pingpong between Afrikaans and English, two colonial languages, in which English emerges as a preferred LoLT, with no mentioning of any of the nine African languages as listed below. This is the case for HEIs and for protesting Black students themselves, as if there is a colonial line dividing Afrikaans and English in the overall coloniality of language as it pertains to South Africa. An observation made by the Mail & Guardian (2018, 12 January), in this context is telling: "the English/Afrikaans binary is, as it was in 1976, a false one" (para. 4). These language policy initiatives can be viewed as evidence of the ongoing hegemony of English, and as a

perpetuation of the coloniality of the English language at South African HEIs, which tends to spill over to their SoTL endeavors as well.

In a different but related context, Cele (2021) opines that English is implicitly positioned as a major unifying achromatic language in most of South Africa's HEIs, including the few HEIs that regard themselves as Afrikaans-speaking (also see Hurst, 2016; Manathunga, 2018; Ngoepe, 2020). This observation is not anecdotal nor is it incidental. Instead, it is part of a broader coloniality of language that started in South Africa during the colonial era and that ended up percolating into both schools and HEIs, and into HEIs' SoTL as well. This coloniality of language is traceable to four historical periods: Dutch and British colonialism; the apartheid era; and the democratic era. The history of colonialism in South Africa is very extensive and complicated. As such, a paper such as this cannot do justice to that history. Suffice it, though, to point out that Dutch colonialism, which was spearheaded by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) or the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) (Maart, 2020), preceded the British one as it dates back to 1652 (also see Hamilton et al., 2012). British colonialism started with the British settlers in the 19th century. During its duration, and especially starting from 1814, English was immensely promoted for use in different domains, of which education was one (Cele, 2021; Hurst, 2016). This, in a way, marked the beginning of the coloniality of the English language in South Africa. With the coming into existence of the Afrikaner nationalist apartheid government in 1948, Afrikaans was promoted for use in the different spheres of life in the same way as was the case with English. When the democratic government took over in 1994, eleven South African languages, which comprise nine African languages – isiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiXhosa, and isiZulu – on the one hand, and Afrikaans and English, on the other, were legislated as official languages (Cele, 2021; Ngoepe, 2020). South Africa has a unique history of both apartheid and colonialism. As such, the sociolinguistic history of South Africa has gone through various phases. Kamwangamalu (2002) aptly characterizes the historical trajectory of English in South Africa under four broad categories and stages: Dutchification (1652–1795); Anglicization (1795-1948); Afrikanerization (1948-1993); and democratization (1994-to date). The irony of the last category, democratization, is that it ought to be Africanization or indigenization as democratization is too nebulous a word.

Notwithstanding the legislatively deliberate officialization of African languages alongside Afrikaans and English by the current African-majority democratic government, English still occupies pride of place and is still the dominant language in all primary domains of use. Ironically, it is followed by Afrikaans, with the nine African languages languishing in the periphery (Cele, 2021; Hurst, 2016; Ngoepe, 2020). This is so despite the fact that, numerically, English (together with Afrikaans) has fewer speakers who use it as a mother tongue than African languages. This is one of the reasons why it is the dominant LoLT for SoTL at South Africa's HEIs. This is a factor that Hurst (2016) crisply states as follows: "Higher education institutions in South Africa are dominated by English, a result of the colonial history of the country and its education system, a legacy which is intensified by the current dominance of English in higher education worldwide" (p. 219). As the paper argued earlier, this underscores the coloniality of the English language in postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa's HEIs and its seamless percolation into SoTL. Since coloniality tends to persist in a postcolony well after colonialism has ceased to exist, in relation to English in South Africa, the dominance of English reflects what this paper contends is a colonial aspirational hangover. The latter refers to a scenario in a postcolony in which the government, institutions, and people hanker after and continue clinging to a colonial architecture or to colonial structures, values, and practices because they have a sentimental

and nostalgic connection to them. Language is one example of such a colonial architecture. In this case, English, in the South African context, and particularly for HEIs and their SoTL endeavors, as well as for the government and the ruling party, lends itself well as a language of power, prestige, and elitism (Bhattacharya, 2017; Rice, 2021) with colonial aspirational hangovers attached to it.

What is the Nature of an English Department in a Post-Apartheid and Postcolonial Era in South Africa?

SoTL has to be positioned within the curricula that are taught in English departments in South Africa. There is very little synergy across HEIs in South Africa, especially, when it comes to the curricula offered by English studies across English departments (Chaka et al., 2017). It depends on institutional identities of given HEIs (e.g., research, teaching, or comprehensive universities, as mentioned above), staffing (e.g., the composition of the academic staff complement) in terms of race, and the presence/absence of decolonial projects in given English departments at various HEIs (Chaka et al., 2017). For instance, the following table shows the differences in the Bachelor of Arts (BA) curricula for English majors at three South African HIEs, with reference to module offerings. This information is available on the websites and from the prospectuses of the HEIs in question.

Table 1: B.A. curricula for English majors at three South African HEIs in terms of module offerings

B.A. English curriculum (University of South Africa)	B.A. English curriculum (University of Johannesburg)	B.A. English curriculum (University of Limpopo)
Applied English Language Studies: Further Explorations	English 1AB: An Introduction To Literary Studies and Short Story	English Language Skill for the Professions
Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style and Poetics	An Introduction to the Novel	Introduction to English Language and African Literature in English
Foundations in English Literary Studies	An Introduction to Poetry	Introduction to Criticism of Literature and Language
The History and Spread of English	English 1CD: Language and Comprehension Skills Development	English Grammar and Literature
The English Language: Context and Purpose	Argumentative and Analytical Writing Skills Development	Stylistics and Modern Western Literature
Theoretical Approaches to English Language and Literature	Development of Research Skills; Language and Society	Poetics, Modern Literary Theory and Criticism
Shakespeare's Dramatic Art	Development of Analytical Skills	African Literature in English
Modern and Postmodern Literature in English	English 2AB:	The Twentieth Century: 1900 to the Present
Foundations in English Language Studies	Modern Drama	South African Literature
Colonial and Postcolonial African Literatures	South African Literature	English Second Language in Education
	English 3 AB	English in Society
	Eighteenth-Century Poetry. Romantic Poetry. Victorian Poetry.	Second Language Acquisition
	The Nineteenth-Century Novel	Research Methods in English Studies
		BA Contemporary English
		English in Context
		Discourse Based Sentence Analysis
		Critical Language Awareness: The Global Spread of English
		Language and Literacy Learning in a Multilingual Context
		Bilingual and Multilingual Education
		Language and Cognition

The University of Johannesburg is a former historically White university (it later merged with Technikon Witwatersrand and the Soweto and East Rand Vista university campuses), while the University of Limpopo (UL) is a former historically Black university (at one point it merged with the University of Venda and the Medical University of South Africa) (Ministry of Education, 2002). However, UL has since demerged from these two universities. For its part, UNISA is a distance-learning university that merged with Technikon South Africa and the distance education campus of Vista University (Ministry of Education, 2002). Even when

UNISA admitted Black students pre-1994, it was never transformed and continues to suffer from the legacy of apartheid and colonialism. From the three varied curricula provided on Table 1 above, each graduate who majors in English experiences a different curriculum among the three universities. For instance, there are tensions between the English literature modules as represented by the English heritage or canon mainly from England and the English language modules that are oriented towards both ESL and EAL.

The relationship between literature and language in English studies is not common among South African HEIs. The different English curriculum streams reflect institutional language policies, which continue to promote English monolingualism. Mbembe (2016) notes that "there is something profoundly wrong when, for instance, syllabuses designed to meet the needs of colonialism and apartheid should continue well into the liberation era" (p. 32). He identifies part of what is wrong is the *westernized* university that hankers after the Eurocentric epistemic canon.

The Coloniality of Language and Imperial English Language Paradigms

In line with one of the focal points of this special issue, which is a Global South SoTL that seeks to interrogate, critique, and problematize aspects of SoTL from critical southern paradigms, and as argued in one of the papers of this special issue (Chaka et al., 2022), the coloniality of language, especially of the English language, ought to occupy pride of place in SoTL debates. This is more so as in the Global South HEIs such as those in South Africa, English is the dominant language of learning and teaching (LoLT) even though it is hardly a mother tongue of the majority of students enrolled in these HEIs (Cele, 2021; Docrat et al., 2019; cf. BusinessTech, 2020). It is necessary to contextualize the notion of *coloniality*. Coloniality, in this case, is construed as dissimilar to colonialism. It is unlike colonialism, which invokes the political and economic relations and dependency a nation has within an imperial setup, as it refers to complex, deep-rooted, asymmetrical, but interwoven multiple power matrices that define and frame a postcolonial nation's racial, social, cultural, political, economic, educational, and aspirational values well after colonialism has ended (Escobar, 2007, 2020; Hsu, 2017; Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2018; Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000). This characterization applies to knowledge production and circulation practices, and the language through which knowledge is produced and circulated in a postcolonial nation. Elsewhere, other researchers even speak of the coloniality of power, of knowledge, of being (Quijano, 2000; Núñez-Pardo, 2020; Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2018; Torquato, 2020), and of thought (Knobloch, 2020). Added to this is the reference to the coloniality of language (Borges & Afonso, 2018; Torquato, 2020; Veronelli, 2015).

To this end, Grosfoguel (2007) observes that "coloniality allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system" (p. 219). Mignolo (2007) explains coloniality as a "complex structure of management and control, a colonial matrix of power (CMP)" (p. 125). Gu (2020, p. 3) further describes coloniality as the material, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual conditions shaped by the consequences of colonization.

The matrices of coloniality depicted above tend to apply to many postcolonies in the Global South, which now regard themselves as independent nation states. However, in keeping with the special issue's main focus on SoTL, this paper concentrates on two matrices of coloniality, those of knowledge and language. It does so with specific reference to South

Africa as one instance of the Global South. The main contention of the paper is that much of SoTL in South Africa's HEIs is grounded, founded on, and operates on the basis of the coloniality of the English language and on the coloniality of knowledge production and circulation as articulated in the preceding paragraph. The coloniality of language intersects with the other forms of coloniality: the coloniality of power, of knowledge, of being, and of thought. It is also intertwined with race, racism, and racialization (Torquato, 2020; Chaka, 2021a, 2022), three concepts that do not necessarily mean the same thing.

Briefly stated, the coloniality of the English language metaphorically refers to colonial vestiges of English practices that persist in a postcolony and manifest themselves in other forms of coloniality mentioned above in that postcolony well after colonialism itself is deemed to have ended. Many researchers have interrogated the coloniality of English language teaching (Chaka, 2021a, 2021b; Hsu, 2017; Macedo, 2000, 2017, 2019; Phillipson, 1992; Veronelli, 2015), while others have examined the coloniality of English as a foreign language (Macedo, 2019; Núñez-Pardo, 2020). Recently, there is a growing body of research that critiques the coloniality of the English language under the banner of raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa, 2016). However, it is worth noting that the coloniality of language is not a new phenomenon; it was encounterd in ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and Persia during ancient human civilizations. For instance, there has been the coloniality of Greek, of Latin, and of Arabic (Crowley, 2008). Moreover, in modern times, there has been the coloniality of Portuguese and of Spanish, in addition to that of English. As far back as 1838, Guest (1838) mused about languages of colonialism making inroads into different regions of the globe, including Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific islands, as part of larger European colonial projects. Concerning English, especially, it would be a gross linguistic-historical distortion to think that its coloniality applies only to its postcolonies. It has affected European countries such as Ireland as well (see Crowley, 2008). So, the coloniality of languages (Torquato, 2020) is bigger and more complex than it has been treated here.

Given what has been delineated above, this paper contends that the coloniality of the English language in relation to the SoTL within the Global South's HEIs, such as those in South Africa, has given rise colonialist English language paradigms. Also known as imperial English language paradigms, colonialist English language paradigms are organized, complex, and interlocking ontological, epistemic, pedagogical, and subjective (Bailión & De Lissovoy, 2019) practices, habits, and attitudes that inform, underpin, and permeate disciplinary knowledge curricula of HEIs. One of their perpetual features in most postcolonies such as South Africa is Eurocentrism, something that also tends to reflect the continual Northerncentrism embedded into these paradigms. Additionally, one of the salient practices of these paradigms, together with the coloniality of the English language on which they are grounded, is self-imposition: HEIs impose them on themselves and on their attendant SoTL endeavors, or opt for them in the name of language uniformity or of a common LoLT.

In South Africa, the teaching of English came through colonialism and continues to show signs of Western domination, as well as lack of relevance to or insensitivity to the local context. English came to Africa through *the scramble* for Africa and colonialism. To this end, Pennycook (2017) describes the imperial expansions in Asia and Africa. In South Afrca, English, together with Afrikaans, was used to exclude the majority of the population from economic, political, and social rights. Ironically, despite its colonial legacy, English became and still serves as the language of liberation in South Africa. According to a census conducted by Statistics South Africa (2011), the percentage of speakers for each of the home

languages in South Africa is as follows: isiZulu (22.7%), isiXhosa (16%), Afrikaans (13.5%), Sepedi (9.12%), English (9.6%), Setswana (8%), and Sesotho (7.6%). Both sociolinguistics and curriculum studies, and recently raciolinguistics, reflect some of the historical racial divisions related to language, including how English is racialized and is described in racial terms: White South African English (WSAE), Black South African English (BSAE), Coloured and Cape Flats English, South African Indian English, and Afrikaans English (Kamwangamalu, 2002).

The ruling political party, the African National Congress (the ANC), justifies the dominance of English as a medium of instruction or as an LoLT on the basis of access to higher education and, as seen in the recent UP and UFS language policies, as a means to alter the racial profile of the universities in order to make them more representative of the South African demographics as a whole. Orman (2014) maintains that such arguments, "which posit English as the language of inclusion, of course have a strong politico-ideological motivation and are essentially only valid at middle-class level" (p. 65). So, among the Black majority, it is only the Black middle class that has access to English. Kamwangamalu and Tovares (2016) contend that an "English-privileging ideology of development is deeply entrenched in everyday linguistic practices and attitudes both in public and increasingly in private domains" (p. 436). They further argue that English is limiting access to power, education, and upward mobility to fewer people and undermines democratic principles.

Some scholars in the Global South have also unwittingly encouraged the hegemony of English. Weideman (qtd. in Mgqwashu, 2009) argues that English language proficiency is the most important predictor of learner success in higher education. This view, of course, focuses only on English proficiency and not on other factors that influence success, such as academic literacy and quality of education. This belief is strongly supported by both White and Black academics who have dominated university management under the umbrella of transformation, but whose actions have contributed to ongoing coloniality. McKinney (2017) describes the belief in the supremacy of English proficiency as Anglonormativity, which assumes that those who are not proficient in English are either deficient or deviant.

The issue of English as a language in the decolonization project is complex because one cannot separate the teaching of English as a discipline from English as an LoLT. For example, the tacit beliefs and values of an English lecturer may not, at times, be dissimilar to the tacit beliefs and values of a non-English lecturer from an Anglonormative and Eurocentric standpoint. These tacit beliefs and values are often articulated through language and educational policy of a given HEI. This has been a persistent concern of certain academics in some departments of English studies (see, for example, Canagarajah 2020; Wa Ngugi, 1981; Kumaravadivelu, 2016). For instance, those who have argued for the upliftment, development, and in some cases policy implementation of African languages as languages of tuition (e.g., Wa Ngugi, 1981, Prah, 2018) have not managed to replace English as a medium of instruction.

English studies still evinces the legacy of apartheid and colonialism at both policy and curriculum levels, as illustrated in the curriculum examples above. Theories of hybridity (e.g., the third space) and postcoloniality are inadequate (Kubota, 2014). According to Kubota (2014), both hybridity and postcoloniality are complicit in neoliberal and globalization agendas and do not advance decolonization. Moreover, she argues that we should not lose sight of the persistent demand for monolingualism and linguistic purism in various locations, as well as Anglocentrism and English-only ideologies in many non-

English-dominant neoliberal societies. In addition, Shin (2006) observes that "English is constructed as *the* language of the (imagined) global elite community" (p. 155). She discusses how English language teaching (ELT) is "implicated in discourses of colonialism and how we may create a counter-hegemonic discourse in TESOL through the legitimation of Speakers of Other Languages (SOLs) [through] indigenous knowledges" (p. 155). Kumaravadivelu's (2016) argument of *organic intellectuals* is an attempt to address the illusion of nonnative English speakers (NNES*)* in Asia. His paper provides a comprehensive view of decades of the marginalization of NNESs in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) by native speakers in Asia. Such global studies are very scarce in Africa, yet TESOL scholarship has been dominant in most postcolonial and ESL-speaking countries in Africa. We argue in this paper that this lacuna is evident in the interdisciplinary fields of English studies.

Curriculum Transformation, Africanization and Decolonizing English

The national school curriculum taught in the basic education sector and curricula for ELT offered in the HE sector need to be transformed. Presently, national basic education learners can either do English as a Home Language or English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) as part of their Grade 12 (matriculation) subject curriculum. Differentiating between a home language and an additional language, which have different language goals, engenders and perpetuates language inequality within English as a school subject. Already in this differentiation lies the foundation for unequal Englishes, whose linguistic differences cannot be reversed or undone by any future education. For instance, from an ESL literature, Cook (2007) is of the view that the goals of second language (L2) education should be to help learners to be functional multilingual individuals and to acquire both cognitive ability and language awareness associated with bi/multilingualism. In the case of South Africa, there is a need for a bi/multilingual approach to teaching English to all students. Cook (2007) further questions whether the intention of ELT is to reproduce native speakers or to promote multicompetence among L2 learners. In the field of ELT, there is often a lack of understanding of what students should be taught in terms of linguistic diversity. Within South Africa's HE landscape, this has led to the construction of ELT and ESL as remedial, racialized skills, serviced in courses that are framed from a language deficit view rooted in both Anglonormativity and Eurocentrism as discussed earlier, and that have to be offered mainly to Black university students. This is one of the reasons why, in some cases, ELT and ESL are often construed as instances of academic development and/or academic literacy programs.

Furthermore, in South Africa, teaching English proficiency mostly entails drawing on and subliminally imposing racialized norms informed by and based on White South African English (WSAE) as the sole Standard English. Standard English is a language invention of which there are no real-world speakers and for which there is no real-world geolinguistic map (Chaka, 2021a; Kramsch, 2019; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). Proficiency in English or in EFAL does not serve the language needs of a multilingual and multicultural society. Although concepts like world Englishes and English as a lingua franca are important in the global spread of English, these have not been translated to the English discipline in South African universities, especially in relation to *contextualization*. We view context as an "affective, historical, cognitive, spatial, perceptual, material, [and] representational dimensions of our ontologies and epistemologies, [and] of how interlocutors understand and thus have their interactional practices constructed" (Jordao & Marques, 2018, p. 55).

Transformation is a ubiquitous term in South Africa, and it has impacted on SoTL. It has widely been used in politics, economics, and educational contexts. Before the advent of #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall in 2015, various pieces of legislation were passed to promote transformation in South Africa's higher education sector. Calls for transformation are not new (see, for instance, the 1997 Education White Paper 3). There are similarities and differences between decolonization and transformation. For example, the arguments for the decolonization of the university curriculum (Le Grange, 2016) and the decolonization of the university (Mbembe, 2016) bear resemblance to transformation. In some cases, the two terms have been used synonymously. For instance, Collins-Buthelezi (2016) asks the question: "what should be the place of English literary studies in the ongoing transformation and decolonization project in SA?" (p. 70). She decries the state of affairs by asserting that the structuring of language and literature departments in South Africa has largely continued such that Afrikaans and English departments deal with interpretative and theoretical work, while African language departments and other language departments are seen, rightly or wrongly, as departments of language teaching and learning (Collins-Buthelezi, 2016).

Fewer universities introduced initiatives to transform the study of literary studies in post-apartheid Africa. For example, the Centre for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages (CSSALL) was established at the University of Durban-Westville in 1994 "in order to contribute towards the transformation of literary studies from ethnically, culturally and institutionally segregated disciplines each with its own history, to a non-exclusionary multilingual, comparative, intertextual and hybrid discourse" (Smit & van Wyk, 2001, p. 141). Such an initiative does not seem to have been established in other universities. Historically, English departments have focused on the teaching of English literature in South Africa (Thurman, 2007). Few departments of English see their role as teaching English as a second language and English language teaching and learning. Thurman (2007) argues that:

> Properly, English departments in post-apartheid South Africa should be the home of English language instruction. At universities where English is the language of learning and teaching, such instruction should take the form of both academically rigorous courses for second – or third-language students and extracurricular support for students to whom English-medium teaching presents a barrier to learning. (p. 172)

Graduates who intend to teach ESL or EAL students are not adequately prepared to address the needs of multilingual and multicultural students. Indeed, what is common is that most White academics in English studies in South Africa perceive their role as the teaching of English literature and Black academics perceive themselves as responsible for teaching language skills and ELT. These different institutional responses and stances reflect the legacy of colonialism and exacerbate inequality and the coloniality of English. They are complicit in perpetuating the myths about the English-only option and English proficiency that are currently being reinforced by language policies from the UFS and UP, and as well as from other universities.

Some have argued that for the current HE status quo to change, there has to be Africanization (cf. Ojong et al., 2020), through local and Indigenous knowledges. However, Africanization is another concept that has proven to be contentious like both decolonization and transformation. Ngugi (1981) describes Africanization as replacing Eurocentrism with Afrocentrism and as replicating the (First World, obsolescent) contribution of the university system to the identity politics of an ethnically conceived nation state. Cornwell (2006) argues that what happened in 1971 at the University of Nairobi is not an example to be copied,

namely, "the comprehensively nationalistic and Afrocentric curriculum design and syllabus content at Nairobi" (p. 120). Mbembe (2016) states that Fanon was against Africanization. He saw it as an ideology masking racketeering or predatory projects – what we call today looting. Fanon distrusted the middle class and their calls for nationalization. The elites have been criticized for being complicit with colonialism (see Prah, 2018).

Proponents of Africanization seem to be anti-globalization. Higgs (2016) calls for an African renaissance and argues "that all critical and transformative educators in Africa [should] embrace indigenous African world views and root [for] their nation's educational paradigms in an indigenous African socio-cultural and epistemological framework" (p. 3). This view is anti-globalization, and in fact denounces globalization for corrupting African culture. Chikoko (2016) describes African scholarship as an "in-depth generation of knowledge rooted in the African context and seeking to address African issues" (p. 78). To address the tensions between Africanization and globalization, there should be political, economic, and epistemic decolonization.

Challenging Eurocentric SoTL Practices and Colonialist English Language Paradigms: Critical Southern Decolonial Perspective and Post-Eurocentric SoTL

Based on the points highlighted above, this paper intends to interrogate colonialist English language paradigms as they obtain in SoTL at South Africa's HIEs from a critical southern decolonial perspective. This perspective builds on southern decoloniality as proposed by Chaka (2021a; also see Chaka, 2020, 2021b, 2022). While southern decoloniality is a theoretical framing that advocates that theoretic-linguistic epistemes generated and distributed by Global South scholars should serve as cardinal reference points in the overall economy and geopolitics of how knowledge is produced and circulated (Chaka, 2021a, 2022; de Sousa Santos, 2014; Lazar, 2020; Takayama et al., 2016), a critical southern decolonial perspective adds criticality and self-criticality to this theoretical mix (Chaka, 2022). These two concepts entail that this theoretical framing should challenge all forms of hegemonic and essentialized epistemes produced and circulated in the Global North and in the Global South. Additionally, the paper borrows post-Eurocentrism from Baker's (2009) work on a post-Eurocentric curriculum for mathematics and science education. Post-Eurocentrism views current global knowledge conditions as interwoven into a hegemonic knowledge matrix spawned by Euro-American imperialism and colonialism (Baker, 2009, 2012). It is an antithesis of Eurocentrism as it embraces and validates local and subalternized languages and knowledges in addition to adopting other relevant epistemic systems. Eurocentrism in this case is, as Rice (2021) cogently argues, an epistemic model by means of which Western knowledge has promoted and validated the universalization of Westerncentric worldview over other (and especially subaltern) worldviews. Instances of post-Eurocentric frameworks include Afrocentric, Oriental, southern decolonial, and ubuntu frameworks.

Concerning SoTL at South Africa's HEIs, the dual theoretical framework sketched above means challenging and disrupting elements of Eurocentrism or Northerncentrism built into some of its practices, opting for a de-hegemonization and decolonization of the coloniality of English, and embracing epistemic diversity. As mentioned above, one of the dominant features of SoTL in South Africa's HEIs as it is currently conceptualized and practiced is its Eurocentric orientation. That is, it is still grounded on and informed by Boyer's (1990) classical views. As argued in one of the papers of this special issue (Chaka et al., 2022), Boyer's four variants of scholarship, of which SoTL is an offshoot, is inherently North-American-centric in its outlook. This is moreso as it was meant for American (United States)

higher education, where the undergraduate student population is radically different from that served by South African higher education, which comprises mainly Black undergraduate students for whom English is not a mother tongue. So, right from its onset in the South African context, the Eurocentrism of SoTL and its relevance and suitability to South Africa's HEIs, ought to have been challenged, critiqued, and problematized. This is crucial as by its nature, Eurocentrism, as argued earlier, promotes and valorizes hegemonic Western epistemic worldviews and practices at the expense of local epistemic worldviews and practices. The point here is that in South Africa's HEIs, the latter and not the former, inform and shape the everyday lives of the very students for whom SoTL is intended.

This paper, therefore, contends that the Eurocentric orientation of SoTL as practiced in the South African context tends to alienate students from their everyday epistemic worldviews and practices. This is in addition to the fact that these students are often constructed as having some deficiencies in their core academic modules and as being at risk of failing such modules. As a result, they are identified for support programs, whose primary purpose is to facilitate access to and success in academic modules for such students. But the alienation that these students are often subjected to through Eurocentrism and their concomitant identification as having module content deficiencies only serves to *mis-orientate* them to their academic modules. Such SoTL academic support programs also tend to have a deficit view of knowledge (see Chaka, 2021a) attached to these studenst as a demographic group within South Africa's HEIs. Macedo (2019) refers to such a *mis-orientation* as *misteaching*. In order to counter this Eurocentric bias in SoTL, the paper advocates that SoTL practices need to have an Afrocentric worldview that reflects everyday epistemic worldviews and experiences of the target students, who are, after all, Africans living in Africa. A reverse example can help contextualize the point being made here: imagine white European undergraduate students in European universities being perennially subjected to Afrocentric or Oriental epistemic worldviews in their SoTL programs from the first day to the last day of their academic programs, with no exposure at all to Eurocentric epistemic worldviews. Add to this their being framed as deficient. This is practically impossible! The same practical impossibility and the same pathological framing is what a Eurocentric SoTL imposes on Black undergraduate students at South Africa's HEIs.

Another Eurocentric feature of SoTL in South Africa's HEIs relates to colonialist English language paradigms, which are an essential part of the overall coloniality of the English language. A lot has been said about the coloniality of the English language in the preceding paragraphs. A few more points about it are worth highlighting here. Regarding SoTL in South Africa, together with the HEIs of which it is part, the coloniality of the English language functions as Anglonormativity, which tends to promote English monolingual ideology and pass off English as a neutral, deterritorialized language (see Rice, 2021). Added to this is a collective belief that English is an essential global skill (see Rice, 2021), needed not only by students, but by all and sundry as well. This neutral deterritorialization accorded to English and its rationalization as an indispensable global skill makes it easily sold as an LoLT or as a preferred medium of instruction over other South African languages. Moreover, this neutral deterritorialization also confers English with an unfair advantage compared to other languages. All of this is what this paper regards as colonialist English language paradigms. Now, to counter all of this, the framework proposed above argues that the coloniality of English, as it applies to SoTL, needs to be questioned, and that English should be de-hegemonized and decolonized. This triple effort is intended to ensure that in the South African higher education SoTL context, English is not the only language that matters; other languages, especially African languages, matter too. To this end, the paper further proposes

that African languages be used as languages of learning and teaching as well for SoTL purposes, in line with the demographics and language majority constituted by students who speak these languages in varying degrees in each HEI. Whether this is done through a multilanguaging or translanguiging approach or not, it is for each HEI to decide. However, such an approach should not be used as a convenient pretext to avoid embracing African languages as languages of learning and teaching in SoTL.

Furthermore, the paper proposes a post-Eurocentric SoTL. As outlined earlier, a post-Eurocentric SoTL embraces epistemic diversity, while it is simultaneously critical of totalizing and hegemonic epistemic systems, such as those whose only linchpin is Eurocentrism. Such a SoTL needs to expose students to diverse epistemes, multiple epistemic frameworks, and various analytic frameworks. Elsewhere, Vasconcelos and Martin (2019) talk about the plurality, the pluriversality, and the plurilogicality of knowledge, which are the concepts that epistemic diversity also espouses. Similarly, Hayes et al. (2021) opine about "a pluriverse of cosmologies, epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, cultures, languages, norms and practices" (p. 888) that subjugated groups have to contend with when dealing with plural societies. These, too, are the concepts with which a post-Eurocentric SoTL aligns itself and to which it subscribes, as it is the type of SoTL meant for the majority African students at South Africa's HEIs, all of which are located in Africa and not in Europe and North America.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to explore an intrinsic symbiosis between SoTL and the coloniality of language existing in South African higher education. To this end, it has discussed and critiqued the nature of an English department in a post-apartheid and postcolonial South Africa. Additionally, it has critiqued the coloniality of language and imperial English language paradigms often adopted by HEIs in South Africa, and has delineated curriculum transformation, Africanization, and decolonizing English in this sector of education. Finally, the paper has challenged Eurocentric SoTL practices and colonialist English language paradigms by situating its argument within a critical southern decolonial perspective and a post-Eurocentric SoTL.

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