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BELFAST**



CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION RESEARCH

ANNUAL LECTURE

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at Pennsylvania State University
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"African Languages Viewed through Southern Epistemologies: An Evolving Agenda"

All welcome. To register: <https://tinyurl.com/yckd3ny8>

What is involved in language, who constructs it, where it derives from, and how it is (re)formed have long been questions in the fields of socio- and applied linguistics. And yet, the dominant epistemologies in the framing of languages is drawn from Western and/or Northern theoretical and epistemological frameworks. This, we argue, is immensely problematic, as what is absent in this Western/Northern focus are the linguistic practices and language-centered frameworks of knowledges that have existed and continue to emerge outside Euro-America, namely the Global Souths (Makoni et al., 2022). The objective of this keynote presentation is to rectify philosophically this situation by framing African language studies through Theory of the South (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012) and Southern Theory (Connell, 2007, 2019) and to draw on Epistemologies of the South by (de Sousa Santos & Meneses, 2020), extended through L. Gordon's (2021) *Shifting the Geography of Reason* and J. Gordon's (2014) *Creolizing Political Theory*. In this keynote presentation, we address four questions that emerge in African languages research when framed through Southern epistemologies.

1. What does an interactional sociolinguistics from the Global South, predicated on the African axioms of opaqueness, obscurity, ambiguity, long windedness, and circuitousness, look like (Ameka & Terkourafi, 2019)?
2. What does sociolinguistics from the Global South look like when we take into consideration the heterogeneity and complexity of the city (Amin & Thrift, 2017), e.g., taking into account how water pipes lead us to shift our perspectives about language?
3. How do we go beyond a study of African languages, which is human centered, by challenging the human/nonhuman distinction that forms the basis of modern linguistics and is one of the devastating consequences of modernity?
4. How does water shape our conceptual images of language practices? We argue that “waterscape” or “wet” epistemology and “liquid materiality” (Peters & Steinberg, 2019) mark a dramatic shift from perceiving language practices as a single rootedness of a monolingual native speaker to a mobile multilingual migrant (Guildin, 2020).

We conclude the presentation by illustrating how living in a pandemic has had an impact on our theorization of language practices in the Global South by creating “new temporalities, blurring the boundary between normalcy and emergency” (Deumert & Makoni, 2022), and we outline what a decolonial perspective of COVID-19 looks like and how it shapes our framing of Southern epistemologies in African Language research.

Sinfree Makoni was born in Zimbabwe. He holds a BA in English (Hons) with a specialty in Linguistics from the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, and a PhD in Applied Linguistics from Edinburgh University, Scotland. He taught at several universities in southern Africa, notably the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, and University of Cape Town. He was a postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Afro-American Studies at the University of Michigan. He is currently a Professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics and the African Studies Program at Pennsylvania State University, Extraordinary Professor at University of the Western Cape and North-West University, and a Visiting Professor at Nelson Mandela University. He was a Carnegie Diaspora Fellow at Laikipia University, Kenya. He has published extensively in the areas of Language and Aging, Language and Security, Language Policy and Planning, Southern Epistemologies, and Decoloniality. He has published 120 articles and book chapters and co-edited 15 books. His most recent publications include *Innovations and Challenges to Applied Linguistics from the Global South* (co-authored with A. Pennycook; London and New York: Routledge Press, 2020); *Integrational Linguistics and Philosophy of Language in the Global South* (S. Makoni, D. Verity, & A. Kaiper-Marquez, eds.; London and New York: Routledge Press, 2021); *The Linguaging of Higher Education in the Global South: De-Colonizing the Language of Scholarship and Pedagogy* (S. Makoni, C. Severo, A. Abdelhay & A. Kapien-Marquez, eds.; London and New York: Routledge Press, 2022); *Language in the Global Souths* S. Makoni, A., Kaiper-Marquez, & L. Mokwena, eds., London and New York: Routledge Press, 2022); and *Decolonial Voices, Language and Race* (S. Makoni, M. Madany-Saa, B. Antia, & R. Gomez, eds., Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2022). He is the architect of the African Studies Global Forum, which seeks to engage scholars in both the Global North and Global South, and the co-editor of the new Multilingual Matters book series *Global Forum on Southern Epistemologies*. He currently serves as co-editor of the *Journal of Applied Linguistics*.



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