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Decolonizing Speech Language "Pathology": Critical Foundational Concepts for Research, Pedagogy and Praxis

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Abstract

This article critically interrogates how knowledge in speech and language pathology is conceptualized, constructed, and controlled by a dominant Euro-centric epistemology. There is an increasing trend in the profession to uncritically apply diversity, equity and inclusion practices in scholarship, pedagogy, and praxis without problematizing the historical and socio-political context of colonialism and the racist origins of the field. The article will first offer a critical commentary on the active erasure of White supremacy and the profession's complicity in perpetuating performative diversity. It will review the role of critical and decolonial theories in actively challenging the superficial "rituals of diversity" measures that are utilized in the profession. Anchored from critical and decolonial theories, the article will discuss five foundational concepts on decolonization that can dismantle the dominance of Euro-centrism in speech and language pathology. The article calls for scholars, educators, and practitioners in speech and language pathology to create an epistemological shift through adopting a decolonial and critical framework in theory, pedagogy, and praxis.

Positionality

The authors of this article are all trained speech-language pathologists. They have come together and integrated their diverse intersectional experiences in writing this article. The authors approach their current research and teaching with a commitment toward social and linguistic justice, strongly devoted to an understanding of the hidden and intricate linkages between multiple marginalizing forces (inclusive of colonial ideologies and capitalism) and language and disability. They conceptualize their scholarship and research as resistance (not in a narrow sense of pushing back) but as creating expansive understanding and new possibilities. This article and their work are an attempt toward such a step. They are grateful for all that was created and all that will emerge from their own space of collective imagination.

Statement on Settler Colonial Violence in Palestine

We are writing this article at a time when settler colonialism is ravaging and pillaging the people of Palestine through the most violent form of genocide. As scholars writing on decolonization within a small, allied health profession of speech-language pathology, we are horrified, distressed, and saddened by the systematic destruction of civilization and humanity reduced to mutilated bodies and dust. We are aghast at the creation of disablement that is enacted upon the people of Palestine through a war and genocide—aided, abetted, and emboldened by the colonial and settler colonial states of the US and the UK in the Global North. We recognize this is not a time to stay silent or burrow into the caves of our own personal excuses of losing an award or receiving a speaker invitation. Global agencies and human rights experts have shown how systematically genocide and scholasticide are being carried out in Gaza (United Nations, 2024). We are embarrassed by our own professional organizations' political neutrality—for a field that is focused on communication disability—deliberately choosing silence over humanity—or legalizing silence over communication. We are moved beyond and inspired by the outpouring of support from the colonized—South Africa—the rise of brave student (Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths) encampments across the US universities. We stand in solidarity with them. We join in their radical hope—stop the genocide—ceasefire—divestment—above all, respect the dignity and spirit of humans and more than human actors in Palestine. We reject the claim that the condemnation of apartheid, domination, and dehumanization is antisemitic. Social justice activist and founding member of the *Jewish Voice for Peace*, Penny Rosenwasser (2023) reminds us that Palestinian

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safety and liberation and Jewish safety and liberation go hand in hand. We invoke Palestinian scholar and poet Refaat Alareer, who was murdered in an airstrike—for his words render our hearts.

> Let it bring hope.
> Let it be a tale (Alareer & Antoon, 2023)

Free Palestine, Cease Fire Now, Resist and Dismantle Settler Colonialism.

Our hearts are with the people of Palestine.

Introduction

At the outset, we would like to clarify that no variation in communication or speech should be pathologized; the term "pathology" is highlighted in the title and in the article to indicate how the construction of normal and pathologized subjectivity is created and institutionalized to maintain the idea of a standard unitariness in communication (also see Henner & Robinson, 2023). We are a group of minoritized faculties of color working in the field of speech-language pathology. Although all of us have significant material, spiritual and embodied relationships, and kinship with three Global Southern countries (India, Dominican Republic, and Taiwan), we are institutionally located in two different colonial (UK) and settler colonial (USA) Global Northern countries. We write this article acknowledging our entangled relationship with Global South and North and the complexities this presents us in locating ourselves firmly in one space. Throughout this article, we embody our multitude connections with Global South, however, we recognize our positioning as scholars located in the UK and USA and the experiences emerging out of this as crucial to our evolution as scholars committed to decolonization. Although we believe in solidarity across different geographical locations, we do not intend to universalize our arguments. It is important that scholars within and beyond our physical locations take a critical approach towards identifying to what extent the arguments presented in this article can challenge inequities in speech and language pathology in relation to their own local context.

In the UK and the US, speech and language pathology is predominantly a White profession. For instance, in the UK, the profession has the second highest White registrants, while in the US it is recognized as the fourth Whitest profession (Nkomo et al., 2022; Thompson, 2013; Yu et al., 2022). Our existence within higher education spaces has been intertwined by various gradients of marginalization, racialization and/or oppression as central ripples of our ongoing lived realities and positionalities in the academy, as well as moments of joy, resistance, and a commitment towards a decolonial framework. The latter dispositions and actions within our scholarship, pedagogy, and praxis stem from a deep yearning for transformational social justice and liberation. The profession we serve is diverse, not in terms of its student population or faculty representation, but in the racial and linguistic make-up of the clientele. Despite its diversity, the core of research, pedagogical, and clinical practices in our profession is developed from a Euro-centric epistemology (e.g., Khoza-Shangase & Mophosho, 2018). Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) describes the word epistemology as originating from two Greek words, "episteme" and "logos". The former indicates knowledge, and the latter implies arguments or reason (SEP, 2020). A Euro-centric epistemology assumes superiority through perpetuating the ideology that knowledges evolved from Europe to be superior, rational, and modern compared to other world epistemologies (see Said, 1978).

Following the murder of George Floyd and the global protest that embodied anger and demands for social justice, our profession made commitments towards diversity and inclusion (e.g., ASHA, 2020). However, most of these commitments failed to address the historical and socio-political context vis-à-vis the colonial, racist and Euro-centric origins of the field. Failure to position the conversation within a historical and sociopolitical context results in the active erasure of racism and White supremacy, which in turn imposes constrictions on any meaningful advancement towards social justice. The purpose of this article is to offer a paradigm that is aimed at recalibrating current diversity and inclusion approaches and shift toward a new direction based on decolonizing research, pedagogy, and clinical practice. To lay out critical foundational concepts for decolonization, we examine colonial and racist ideologies that laid the foundation for Speech Language Pathology (SLP) as a disciplinary field. Next, we present criticisms of current approaches to diversity and inclusion in SLP which are based on performative diversity and cultural competence. We provide a brief overview of decolonial, and critical theories and five foundational concepts evolved from these theories that can disrupt performative diversity. We end with a call for all scholars, educators, and practitioners in SLP to create an epistemological shift through adopting a decolonizing and critical framework in theory, pedagogy, and praxis.

Why does SLP need decolonization?

Decolonization is a term that has gained widespread interest and attention in higher education and society in many countries such as Australia, UK, and South Africa. Conversations on decolonization are often complex; therefore, before we focus on decolonization in SLP, it is imperative to provide context as to why we begin with decolonization through a discussion of racial disparities. European colonization has been argued to have started somewhere around 1492 (Gopal, 2021). Colonization was not only based on conquering and invasion but hierarchically dividing populations based on their cultural, biological, and cognitive differences through constructing "race" (Quijano, 2000). Racial categories enabled the production of labor and capital (e.g., slavery, indentured labor) but also divided diverse communities on a vertical hierarchy (e.g., Asiatic vs Black) of superiority or inferiority (Quijano, 2000). Such racial categorizations were also part of controlling power through divide and rule, a pol-

icy implemented in many British colonies to control different racial groups or communities (Ray, 2018). Therefore, the construction of race and racial relations are central to conversations on decolonization. In modern times, as much as race and racial disparities are a legacy of colonialism, they are also painful social realities manifested through disparities in education, health, housing, or violence enacted through policing or incarceration of racially minoritized bodies. While a number of decolonization efforts in the context of higher education have transformed into social and political movements (e.g., the Rhodes Must Fall movement in South Africa and the UK), Gopal (2021) argued that at the very least, it prompted students at European metropoles to ask—why is my curriculum White? Similarly, as scholars working in an allied health care profession, we start with a basic question—why is SLP so White?

In the US alone, the increase in racial diversity of SLP practitioners in the last 10 years has been reported to be less than 2% (Yu et al., 2022). The reasons for this are manifold, however, the majority of SLP research, curriculum and clinical practice is based on the norms of Whiteness resulting in an epistemological framework solely rooted in colonial ideologies (Pillay & Kathard, 2015). The result is a lack of acknowledgement on the importance of race conscious scholarship within the wider profession in the face of persistent systemic health inequities that are rooted in racism. This negatively impacts racially minoritized people of color. For example, data from both the US and UK indicate that minoritized children are disproportionately represented in the special education and speech and language services with over-representation in highly stigmatizing disability categories such as emotional disturbances and under-represented in ones receiving more resources, for example, autism (Strand & Lindorff, 2018; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2009). In the UK, Black children are likely to be identified 2.8 times more with intellectual disabilities and 2.3 times higher with emotional disturbances than their White counterparts (Strand & Lindorff, 2018). In contrast, children from South Asian backgrounds (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi) were less likely to receive autism diagnosis. (Strand & Lindsay, 2009). Similarly, in the US, minoritized autistic children from Latinx and Native American backgrounds were under-identified and less likely to receive special education services (e.g., Travers et al., 2013). In contrast, White children are three times overrepresented in the autism diagnosis compared to racially minoritized children (e.g., Munk et al., 2019). It is established that children from minoritized backgrounds are not only at the receiving end of institutional racism from teachers and clinicians but also disadvantaged from psychometric tests that are developed based on standardized English monolingual norms (Harry & Klingner, 2022; Nair et al., 2023).

Although discussions of institutional racism are rare in SLP scholarship and urgently needed, institutional racism alone cannot explain why minoritized children with disability are marginalized in speech, language, and special education services (e.g., Annamma et al., 2018). It is critical to have an approach focusing on how disability is co-constructed with race to create instruments of exclusion and White conceptions of ability (e.g., Annamma et al., 2013; Ferri & Connor, 2005). In SLP, both language and disability are conceptualized from a deficit framework (e.g., disothering of disabled individuals, linguistic essentialism) that perpetuate harmful ideologies. To the best of our knowledge, Pillay & Kathard (2015) is the only article that directly discusses these ideologies through the lens of decolonization. Their article from the South African context discusses ideologies of *disothering, essentialism and reductionism* in the SLP curriculum, research, and clinical practice (see Pillay, 2001, 2003 for an earlier version of arguments on these ideologies in SLP).

Disothering refers to the invisibilization of others' experiences as lesser or non-existent. Invisibilizing local/other knowledge and experiences is the first step of colonizing modern science focused on domination and intellectual homogeneity (Shiva, 1993). A similar logic is enacted in SLP where the clinician is projected to be the expert and the disabled individual as the lesser or the other. The lived and embodied experiences of disabled people are rendered invisible; and the knowledge of the clinician is considered to be superior. *Essentialism* assumes fixed traits for specific racial, religious, or social groups (e.g., claiming all Indians and Mexicans believe that disability is a taboo).

In the context of SLP, essentialism takes many different forms such as linguistic essentialism where beliefs about a particular linguistic group (often intersected with race and class) is accepted as objective. An example of linguistic essentialism is the ideology that idealized forms of American or British English is standard and all other forms of Englishes are linguistically inferior. This ideology would perpetuate the belief that there are fixed traits entrenched in these forms of English that makes the language and its speakers superior (Baker-Bell, 2020). This type of linguistic essentialism intersects with race essentialism. The superiority of the speakers is narrowly restricted to "White bodies" – in other words, the assumed superiority of idealized versions of American and British English will only materialize in a White body. While these ideologies are racist and not objectively true, once they are instantiated into the societal beliefs, they acquire a false sense of objectivity. However, these ideologies are also reflective of the material reality i.e., there is superior status assumed for the "American and British White English" due to the historical and political reasons such as colonialism (Brea-Spahn & Bauler, 2023; Piller, 2015). These effects are neutralized and made invisible by conceptual rebranding, for example, from White American English to "standard American English" to "academic English." The construction of American or British standard English itself is not based on an objective linguistic reality because of the huge variability associated with the Englishes spoken in the USA and the UK. In SLP, this form of linguistic and race essentialism is invisibilized yet incorporated into its foundational training, research, and clin-

ical practice. The relationship between linguistic and race essentialism and SLP practice can be discerned, for example, by examining the standardized language assessments, construction of normal and disorder, language difference and disorder, conceptualization of intervention designs, or inclusion of practices such as accent modification in the scope of practice (e.g., Nair et al., 2023).

These ideologies are rooted in creating norms based on White communication and aimed at forcefully assimilating the linguistically and racially minoritized into White speaking standards. Take for example the construction of "normal" within SLP. Normal is assumed to be standard because it is based on a Gaussian distribution displayed through a Bell curve (e.g., Annamma et al., 2013). Data closer to the mean, normally collected from White heterosexual able-bodied subjects are standard. Data farther away from the mean (e.g., racially minoritized children) are labeled as having speech, language and cognitive disorders and recommended for remedial interventions (e.g., Annamma et al., 2013; Nair et al., 2023). Thus, race and linguistic essentialism assumes the form of "normal" and "standard" invisibilizing diverse ways of being and languaging and disothering the minoritized through pathologizing and remediating them. These practices are uncritically executed as objective dismissing the harm and violence perpetuated on minoritized bodies.

Reductionism operates through creating constructs and examining them utilizing a narrow epistemology. Epistemological reductionism is an ideology where a single way of examining the world (i.e., a narrow construction of knowledge) is claimed to be superior to other ways. Similar to essentalism and disothering, epistemological reductionism invisibilizes all other forms of local knowledge (Shiva, 1993). The colonization of continents of America, Australia, Asia, Africa, and the Islands surrounding the Caribbean Sea was based on an ideology that considered western knowledge systems or western epistemologies to be superior. In addition to the genocide, racism, violence, loot and plunder of land and material wealth, the languages, the cultures, and the social traditions of the colonized was considered to be inferior and in need of civilizing. This colonial logic has metamorphosed as coloniality in modern times where Euro-centric superiority in understanding and studying the material world is built into the structures of power and exerts a disproportionate influence in all spheres of life: science, education, social sciences, geo-politics, economics, law etc. While colonialism was practiced through European conquering, invasion, and exploitation of land and people, coloniality is the metamorphosis of the same domination of Western Europe. In modern times, USA exercises similar control over global economy, military, politics, and culture. Therefore, although colonialism has formally ended in most parts of the world, the structures of colonialism remain unchanged and maintained through Euro-American coloniality. Within this context, coloniality is preserved through the social hierarchical categories of race and caste where superiority of the colonizer is entrenched in power structures (e.g., state violence and repression of free speech, rising nationalism across the globe, dehumanization of Black individuals). Capitalism is central to coloniality because a profit-based economy is maintained through the race and caste-based division of labor. Thus, colonial policies are institutionalized and legitimized through coloniality. Quijano (2007) argued that coloniality is ongoing and longer than colonialism and a continuation of a Euro-centric ideology (see Quijano, 2007 for further detail on coloniality.).

Coloniality assumes that the production of Euro-centric knowledge is objective and perpetuates a strong sense of scientific rationality. In SLP, the pathologization of speech, language and communication disabilities is a good example of reductionism and coloniality. The variability in communication is reduced to a "pathology or lack" and treated as a medical problem that seeks to approximate and remediate the disabled communication to normative standards. Here "remediation" is rationalized as empowering the disabled communication. This is akin to the hidden colonial logic of civilizing the native because their ways of being and existing were treated as inferior to the colonizer. By asserting scientific rationality to a Euro-centric epistemology, reductionist knowledge asserts superiority through coloniality. Not only does it view diversity of expression and being with suspicion and contempt, but it also considers conceptualization of understanding (e.g., understanding of disability rooted in Indigenous epistemology) as parochial or folk theories with no scientific validity. Thus, reductionist science imposes itself as universalizing knowledge. We will return to this point later.

As Pillay & Kathard (2015) laid out and we expanded on, the foundations of SLP are rooted in ideologies that are oppressive towards the marginalized. Furthermore, a deeper examination in relation to the historical and socio-political context reveals power and commodification as central to the modern evolution of SLP. For example, St. Pierre and St. Pierre (2018) have critically examined the history of SLP and argued that following the second world war, "speech" was developed as a necessary commodity for the functioning of industrialized capitalist societies. Any variation associated with speech was pathologized because such variation was assumed to be passive, providing no significant contribution towards the economic productivity of the modern nation-state. Therefore, SLP was evolved as a necessary professional enterprise rooted in ableism to "correct" and "fix" variance that endangered the idea of a nation-state and its capital production (St. Pierre & St. Pierre, 2018). Ableism is a construct that presumes able-bodiedness and able-mindedness to be superior. Norms of able-bodiedness are characterized as the most desirable and natural state of being. Disability is castigated as a disorder or impairment, an inferior state of being that needs to be cured or fixed (e.g., Campbell, 2009).

Pathologizing and correcting variance evolved as a science legitimized through powerful institutions and pop-

ular discourses that controlled the agency of the pathologized identities. Post-world war, the field of SLP was evolved as a rehabilitation discipline in the UK and the rest of Europe and was imported to countries such as the USA and South Africa. In the US, for example, the earliest clinical practice was influenced by rehabilitation methods developed in Germany and Austria for child language disorders and stuttering (e.g., J. Duchan, 2002). In the UK, more legitimacy was given to British Society of Speech Therapists that aligned with medicine than Teachers of Speech and Drama who were interested in speech and language rehabilitation (e.g., Stansfield, 2020). Similarly, Duchan and Hewitt (2023) described how the founders of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association rejected more egalitarian approaches to communication differences promoted by Black orators and dialect scholars in favor of a medical model approach that was elitist, ethnocentric, racist, regionalist, and ableist. Medical model defines disability as a *"personal tragedy"* and a lack that needs be medically diagnosed, assessed, and remediated. Thus, medical model enacts tremendous power over disabled subjectivity by creating oppositional binaries of normal and disabled/disordered and considers disability to be inferior to the normal (Retief & Letšosa, 2018 for a more in-depth discussion). This history indicates that concerns associated with the validity of SLP practice were evident since its inception and there were explicit efforts to medicalize the field to improve its mainstream acceptability. The professional practice during this time was dominated by White members, a trend that has continued even now in many countries including Australia, the UK, and the USA (e.g., Aguilar, 2021). In countries like South Africa professional training was limited to White speech-language therapists, and clinical services were inaccessible to a large section of marginalized population (Abrahams et al., 2019). Thus, in addition to ableism and medicalization, racism was entrenched in the evolution of SLP as a disciplinary field.

Superficial acts: Liberal multiculturalism

SLP research and clinical practice continues to ignore the impact of racist and colonial ideologies that lie at its core. However, in recent times there is an increasing awareness of providing culturally appropriate clinical services to minoritized population (e.g., ASHA, n.d.-b.). Following Black Lives Matter movement, the profession made commitments towards anti-racism and cultural and linguistic diversity through several measures such as position statements on racism and special issue journal articles on race, cultural competency, and systemic inequities (e.g., ASHA, 2020). On the surface, this may suggest that the profession has charted a genuine action plan towards dismantling oppressive ideologies that are harmful for minoritized children. However, these position statements and special issue articles on anti-racism and systemic inequities lack criticality to interrogate the pervasive effects of colonial ideologies. These acts were devoid of any deep interrogation of ideologies and instead, represent an immediate response to the ongoing political and social movement on Black Lives Matter. Additionally, commitment towards multilingualism or cultural and linguistic diversity from the profession may suggest abandoning the ideas of a standard language to embracing and sustaining linguistic diversity. However, such acts must be viewed with caution and skepticism as they are a characteristic of a professional organization functioning within a liberal multicultural state. To advance our claim, we critically examine how professional organizations within a liberal multicultural state ignore calls to integrate socio-political context into their professional practice.

Liberal multiculturalism is defined as one of the central principles of the modern nation-state espousing ideals of inclusion, diversity, and equal citizenship (Levey, 2010). Here we particularly emphasize on liberal multiculturalism as envisioned by colonial and settler colonial states such as Australia, Canada, USA, and the UK. With increase in immigration from Global South, specifically from countries that were previously colonized (e.g., West and East Africa, Caribbean Islands, India, East Asia), the colonial and settler colonial states needed to create inclusionary discourses as these immigrants filled the labor demand and created economic growth. The timescale for the emergence of inclusive discourses in Northern countries is varied, for example, in Canada, multiculturalism was introduced officially in 1971 by prime minister Pierre Trudeau (Abu-Laban, 2002). In contrast, Australia had a White only immigration policy which was fully abolished in the 1970's (see National Museum of Australia, n.d.). This indicates that while Canada was enacting multiculturalism in their official policy in the 1970's, Australia followed a similar trend, but this was rather decelerated as they were still eliminating racist immigration policies.

Although in theory these inclusive multicultural discourses transformed the earlier idea of colonized subjects as inferior to the colonizer, to all individuals as having legitimate claims to the state and citizenship (Kymlicka, 2005), integration and assimilation of the minoritized into majority dominant culture remained as a central theme of a liberal multicultural state (Levey, 2010). Because liberal multicultural states promoted production of economic capital through expansion of markets globally, linguistic heterogeneity/multiculturalism and multilingualism of the immigrants were suddenly considered to be an asset. This is because these immigrants would be an "asset" in connecting with an international market thereby contributing to the economic productivity of the state. It commodified multiculturalism and multilingualism as it was proven to be beneficial for the economic interests of the transnational corporations. While on the one hand this resulted in the projection of the multicultural state as more liberal and accepting of diversity, it also promoted linguistic imperialism as these immigrants had to prove their language abilities for immigration and citizenship through expensive standardized testing that would further profit the state and the testing agencies (Khan, 2021). Flores (2013) argued that the promotion of multiculturalism and multilingual-

ism did not erase the nationalistic and colonial idea of a single standardized language nor restrain the role of idealized English in perpetuating linguistic imperialism. This is particularly relevant for the US where it promoted a melting pot assimilationist ideology where it was expected that the immigrants integrated within the dominant cultures rather than maintaining their separate multicultural identities (Peach, 2005).

We emphasize this context of liberal multiculturalism as it is critical to point out that the professional bodies such as the American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) which is situated within a multicultural settler colonial state. ASHA is one of the largest and one of the most influential professional bodies in Audiology and SLP. They espouse ideologies of the liberal multicultural state while simultaneously demonstrating a commitment towards liberal concepts such as promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. It follows then that the professions commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity or anti-racism is a performative act aimed at catering towards the needs of a liberal multicultural state. A good example of such a performative act is the debate that happened in 1960s in ASHA that led to the creation of a dedicated Multicultural Office (ASHA, 1997–2024) to serve an increasingly pluralistic American society. However, the events that led to the formation of this office are rarely discussed in the field. After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr and at the height of Vietnam war protests, a group of Black clinicians led by Orlando Taylor demanded ASHA to become more socially conscious (Moore, 2009; Taylor, 1986). Their demands were opposed by the dominant group of clinicians led by John Michel who were against ASHA integrating race consciousness into the profession (Moore, 2009; Pillay & Kathard, 2015). Interestingly, these debates in the 1960's coincided with the creation of an ASHA Office of Multicultural Affairs in 1969. However, the office of multicultural affairs favored the term "cultural and linguistic diversity" instead of interrogating colonial ideologies in the profession and promoting race conscious scholarship (Pillay & Kathard, 2015). The term cultural and linguistic diversity is a power neutral term that does not critically examine the factors that contribute to the oppression of disabled individuals (Ahmed, 2020). Additionally, the usage of the term itself contributes to the othering and marginalization of minoritized individuals. This is because it automatically assumes that White heteronormative abled monolingual English-speaking subject as the standard and the construction of "cultural and linguistic diversity" is predicated on the presumed differences with the White subject (see also Pillay, 1998 for similar arguments on cultural imperialism in SLP).

These issues are not limited to ASHA and are applicable to other professional organizations such as the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Speech Pathology Australia (SPA). They enact colonial ideologies throughout their policies. For example, SPA creates barriers for immigrant and minoritized clinicians to practice by imposing competency measures that are based on colonized ideologies. Their statement for certification of overseas trained clinician indicates that although they may be interested in clinicians who can speak other languages, competent use of English must be proved utilizing standardized testing.

> *"Many languages other than English are used in Australia. Speech Pathology Australia is keen to increase the number of languages in which competent clinical practice is available, but this does not replace or remove the requirement for competent professional use of English"* (see SPA, n.d, on competency assessment).

This statement is alarming considering the notion of "competent professional use of English" is mired in standard language ideologies. It also reduces "communication" to just competent use of English. This is similar to the British colonial ideology of English as the superior language and speaking English is closer to being human (e.g., Mignolo, 2009). It also indicates how coloniality is manifested through institutional policies. Ironically, these professional organizations require no mandatory competencies for more than 90% of the White working force to provide clinical services among racially minoritized individuals. Additionally, SPA along with American Speech Language Hearing Association, Speech-Language and Audiology Canada, Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists are signatories of a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). ASHA (2022) describe the MRA as

> *"The Signatory Associations hereby endorse each other's certification/full membership requirements in the field of speech-language pathology under terms and conditions set forth below as providing substantially equivalent determination for recognition, and provide procedures by which certificate holders, certified members, or full members of the Signatory Associations can apply for expedited certification (ASHA, SAC, RCSLT, and Speech Pathology Australia) or full membership (IASLT and NZSTA) from the other Signatory Associations." (ASHA, 2022)*

It is critical to interrogate the primary rationale of these organizations including only White majority countries in this agreement. The MRA is drawn between "English speaking countries" with the majority being colonial or settler colonial states. It delegitimizes and treats SLP training in Global Southern countries (including English-speaking countries such as South Africa and India) as substandard and non-eligible for MRA when the training is a colonial export to those countries (Pillay & Kathard, 2015). Thus, these organizations preserve linguistic imperialism and uphold colonial and racist power structures and maintain racism and systemic inequities through institutionalized policies. Yet the promotion of the term "cultural and linguistic diversity" devoid of critical interrogation is a necessary tool for these organizations to promote shallow inclusive ideals and create a new economic capital that profits from minoritized individuals. They are also an important tool for the liberal multicul-

tural state, enabling its enacting of a performative surface agenda of inclusivity, while simultaneously maintaining its core assimilationist ideology into the dominant language and culture. Such power neutral multiculturalism perpetuates performative diversity and cultural competence. In the following section, we argue that performative diversity fails to lead to transformative change, while cultural competence embodies harmful ideologies resulting in essentialism and marginalization of minoritized individuals.

Performative diversity and cultural competence as rituals of diversity

Performative diversity is an act that demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, however, suffers a failure at implementing policies aimed at subverting systemic racial injustice (e.g., Kennedy, 2020). These are acts performed by members or organizations with institutional power that cater to a liberal multicultural state. Performative diversity often coincides with performative allyship where members of the dominant group show support towards dismantling systemic injustice, i.e., both results in no real change beyond solidarity and expectation for social rewards for the dominant group (Kalina, 2020). Further, performative allyship can be problematic because the 'dominant group' and the 'colonized other' can mimic the colonial relationship with the 'other' assimilating into this dominant relationship often interpreting and carrying out the intellectual labor for or on behalf of the dominant. While this can make the colonized other feel valued and to escape the gaze of dehumanization (Sultana, 2022), this asymmetrical power relationship often reinforces the inferiority of the "other" and maintains the superiority of the dominant allies like the colonizer-colonized narcissistic relationship pointed out by Fanon (1967)

Performative diversity takes one step beyond a mere commitment towards equity and inclusion—specifically in its performance on what we term as "rituals of diversity". We define "rituals of diversity" as an act conducted by dominant White cultures, trying to understand the marginalized through checklists and diversity workshops. In other words, these rituals are designed to understand the culture of the "other", often, with an intention to promote "integration" and belonging to the dominant White cultural values. Such performative diversity measures derived from the values of liberal multiculturalism are performed by professional organizations to promote cultural competence (see for example, ASHA, n.d.-a., cultural competence check-ins).

Kleinman and Benson (2006) described cultural competence as a product of medical model where culture is described as static, in contrast to anthropological model that views culture as dynamic and ever evolving. Kleinman and Benson (2006), stated *"culture is reduced to a technical skill where clinicians can be trained to develop expertise"* (pp. 1673). The cultural competence approach, then, considers multiple intersecting identities (e.g., race, language, class, etc) as problems to be simplified for consumption and in doing so, centers the needs of a specific perceiver: a medical professional (largely representing a certain demographic) who may lack exposure to variability. Specifically, through homogenized lists of cultural traits and pathological labels or specialties the result is the othering of bodies, knowledges, uses of language, and experiences of any individual deemed divergent from the White, middle class, heteronormative, abled male standardized ideal. This homogenization can and does result in the erasure of minoritized insiders' (e.g., disabled Black transgendered women immigrants) views of self and own stories as relevant and complex in turn resulting in their further marginalization. Criticisms have been amplified against this model of service delivery in multiple fields, including medicine (e.g., Richards, 2008). However, the link between "rituals of diversity" performed by the liberal multicultural state leading to acts of performative diversity and promotion of cultural competence is rarely discussed or critiqued.

Decolonial and critical theories for disrupting performative diversity

In order to move beyond performative diversity and cultural competence, SLP must interrogate and excavate to the extent which colonial and racist ideologies are entrenched in its professional practice and institutional policies. It must learn from other fields that offer a strong criticism of colonial ideologies and examine how decolonial theories (and thinking) can be incorporated into its foundational ideologies. This will guide toward disrupting research and clinical practices that were built utilizing colonial and racist ideologies and allow a methodological shift in centering knowledge systems that were marginalized. In addition to decolonial theories, we emphasize the importance of critical theories in disrupting performative diversity.

The precise SLP global history on the evolution and trajectory of critical and decolonial scholarship is under researched (see Hussain et al., 2023). To the best of our knowledge, scholarship published from South Africa in the 1990's has taken a critical turn (Pillay, 1998, 2001) and later laid out a clear roadmap for decolonizing the profession (Pillay & Kathard, 2015). Similar developments can be traced in scholarship emerging from the USA, albeit within the framework of multiculturalism/cultural and linguistic diversity in response to resisting White dominant ideologies that pathologized Black children's language (Stockman, 1996, 2000, 2010; Taylor, 1986). A much more explicit turn in critical scholarship has been introduced through centering critical speech, language and hearing sciences (Hyter & Salas-Provance, 2021), presenting a critical history of SLP (Pierre & Pierre, 2018) and this has increased recently through a small group of minoritized scholars examining race through critical discourse analysis (Yu et al., 2022), highlighting critical perspectives and social justice (Horton, 2021), interrogating hidden ideologies (Brea-Spahn & Bauler, 2023), critiquing standardized testing (Nair et al., 2023), challenging oppressive clinical practices such as accent modification (Yu

et al., 2022), analyzing health disparities (Privette, 2021), delineating a liberatory praxis for the profession (Privette, 2023), and uncovering ideologies of power in aphasia therapy (Guerrero-Arias et al., 2020; 2021).

Beyond SLP, both decolonial and critical theories have different spatial and temporal origins and philosophical traditions (see Bhambra [2014] for the evolution of decolonial theories and Delgado & Stefancic [2011] for the origins of critical [race] theories) and they collectively bring minoritized voices and stories into the center through trustworthy and respectful community-based research practices (e.g., Keikelame & Swartz, 2019). These theories reject the notion of “truth” as objective claimed by a positivist colonial science (e.g., Gannon & Davis, 2012). Positivist science utilizes empirical data and requires researchers to exercise detachment from the research subject and participants, purportedly to increase the objectivity of knowledge. Research grounded in decolonial and critical theories, on the other hand, rejects the claims of objectivity and the idea of reason as universal. A central aim of research practiced from these stances is to examine power and agency of the minoritized with a final goal towards emancipation and social justice (Gannon & Davis, 2012). Sonn et al (2013) argued that decolonial and critical methodologies emphasize story telling of the marginalized, a key aspect to transformation and resistance. These theories emerging from multiple fields such as critical legal studies, feminist studies, sociology, anthropology, and post-colonial studies have advocated for dismantling of colonial methodologies and knowledge construction (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Therefore, critical and decolonial theories have a unique goal in challenging the nexus between imperialism and colonized research in creating a scholarly body of work rooted in community interests. While it is not our intention to offer an exhaustive review of theories that may inform decolonization in SLP, we provide a brief overview of theories that prioritizes minoritized voices. This will provide an essential foundation for building decolonial practices in SLP. They include a wide range of theories such as: *(1) decolonial theories; (2) critical race theory; (3) raciolinguistic ideologies; (4) disability critical race theory; (5) subaltern theory; (6) Indigenous theories and (7) critical pedagogical theories.*

Decolonial theories

Although it is difficult to credit a single author or a theory for decolonization, Gopal (2021) traces one of the earliest origins of decolonization in the writings of Frantz Fanon. Frantz Fanon was a trained doctor (a Psychiatrist) who wrote extensively on decolonization in the context of Algerian revolution against French colonialism. Fanon’s vision of decolonization was not limited to colonies gaining independence from the colonizer but to radically transforming the colonized. Fanon critiqued both the native tyrants and elites who are similarly complicit with the colonizer in an oppressive rule (Fanon, 1963/2004). For Fanon then, decolonization is not merely an independence from the colonizer or transfer of power from one group of tyrants to another, but it is the oppressed native (e.g., the rural peasantry) who is asserting their agency against colonial exploitation and dehumanization. Fanon specifically emphasized on the agency of the oppressed as colonization is a process that systematically denies the native from “personhood”. It is when the native recognizes the alleged inferiority as a colonial ideology for domination, they will rise against the colonial tyranny.

Ideas of decolonization can also be traced in the writings of Palestinian-American post-colonial scholar Edward Said in his famous 1978 book *Orientalism.* Said (1978) argued that Orient or the *other* is not an adjacent place to Europe, but as a place of civilizations, richness and languages that shaped the identity of Europe. The “West” as we see and know it today is literally the creation of colonialism, and it never existed prior to the 1400s. In other words, the West or the superiority of the Western ideals (Eurocentrism) is an ideological creation and was made possible only due to the plunder and loot of resources from the colonies. These arguments were also present in Fanon’s writing where he argued that the "*Europe or the West is literally the creation of the third world*" *(see Gopal, 2021, p. 879).*

More recently, Latin American scholars such as Walter Mignolo and Anibal Quijano have had significant impact on the scholarship on decolonization. For Mignolo (2009) epistemic disobedience is crucial for decolonization because the idea of Western knowledge as transparent itself is a questionable assumption. Epistemic disobedience is removing the illusion that Euro-centric knowledge construction in social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences is universal. Mignolo (2009) argued against Euro-centric knowledge operating from a zero-point epistemology i.e., they create the notion that knowledge is constructed without any geo-political influences; therefore, it is superior and can be applied universally.

Quijano (2000) discussed the coloniality of power where European colonization created the new “America”. In the “new world”, exploitation and slavery were key drivers in the commodity production for a world market. The idea of race emerged within this context for the first time in human history. Creation of race was central to colonial domination because it normalized the hierarchies of dominant and the dominated that was needed to produce economic capital. Central to Quijano (2000) argument is the coloniality of knowledge through the hegemony of Euro-centrism. For instance, the histories and cultures of all the diverse people of America (e.g., Aztecs, Mayas, Incas, Aymaras) were reduced to a single identity of *Indians*. Thus, colonialism erased the histories and cultures of colonized and homogenized their existence into a single racial identity who are deemed inferior but desirable to produce economic capital.

Other decolonial scholars such as Tuck and Yang (2012) argued that challenging Euro-centrism or merely focusing on social justice or emancipatory education is insufficient. Decolonization should account for the dispossession of Indigenous people from their land due to

external colonialism as well as the oppression of Black and other minoritized individuals because of internal colonialism (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Tuck et al. (2012) arguments make a powerful statement because based on this view, decolonization must aim towards uprooting modern slavery and focus on self-determination and land sovereignty of all Indigenous people around the world. These diverse viewpoints suggest that decolonization is complex and there is no singular approach or theory that can explain it fully. However, one of the common central principles of diverse decolonial views is the assertion that creation of modernity was possible only because of the material wealth from the colonized countries. Colonization has stopped the intellectual progress of the colonized nations. It has also degraded and undermined other world views other than knowledge produced from Europe and the USA. Thus, both material decolonization and intellectual decolonization are critical in subverting a Eurocentric/Colonial/Capitalist/reductionist worldview (also see Meighan, 2023).

Recall our discussion of how reductionist science assumes superiority by not only invisibilizing other knowledge but also distorting and reducing concepts/ideas into a narrow framework. We have discussed how colonization itself created the idea of race that reduced heterogeneous groups of people into a single identity (e.g., the creation of Indians in the context of North America). The extension of this logic can be seen in SLP; for example, heterogeneous groups of people and languages are reduced to a homogenous identity of "culturally and linguistically diverse" groups. In effect, anybody who is other than a White heteronormative abled individual is "culturally and linguistically diverse", thus creating a singular oppositional category in comparison to the norms of Whiteness. Thus, a reductionist logic leads to a reductionist science both unacknowledging and violating the principles of diversity and dynamicity of the world's cultures and languages and people who are embodying them. It is critical to remember that the reductionist logic itself is developed parochially (i.e., in the context of colonizing countries such as the UK, or USA). However, this parochial knowledge dismisses other local knowledge because parochial knowledge evolved through reductionist logic of White men acquires a universalizing status (Shiva, 1993). Thus "culturally and linguistically diverse" group acquires an objective and universalizing categorization with professional organizations promoting such colonial and reductive ideologies of singularity (ASHA, 1997–2024). The subversion of colonial ideologies is crucial for challenging epistemological reductionism. Decolonial theories will disrupt the superiority of epistemologies that emerge exclusively from a Western worldview, offering alternative epistemological challenge by centering local knowledge systems. For instance, Indigenous knowledges of the global south and knowledges and resistance of indigenous people living within a settler colonial state and create approaches are commensurate with decolonization and dismantling Eurocentrism (e.g., Keikelame & Swartz, 2019; also see Veracini (2010) for a definition of settler colonialism as domination of exogenous colonizers dominating and eliminating the sovereignty of the Indigenous people).

Critical Race Theory

Coloniality is dependent on racism and White supremacy, which Critical Race Theorists take as the central object of critical investigation. Originally drawn from fields such as critical legal studies, radical feminism, and the work of philosophers such as Antonio Gramsci and Jacques Derrida, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was proposed as a legal theory in the 1970s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011). CRT was formed due to the lack of discussion about the effects of race and racism in the US legal jurisprudence. Although CRT has branched out into multiple fields such as education, feminism, queer studies, Latinx studies, comparative literature, and immigration, its foundational principles such as *ordinariness, interest convergence or materialist determinism* and *social construction* have remained unchanged.

Ordinariness rejects race neutrality and considers racism as a norm rather than exception and as one of the central experiences of people of color. It also assumes that it is hard to eliminate racism, and measures targeting to promote equality can only address the most visible form of discrimination but not exterminate racism itself. *Interest convergence or materialist determinism* recognize that there is little structural support to eradicate racism as it benefits the power structures that control it. For example, dominant groups who have power to change social reality may act upon them because of their own self-interest. Therefore, social change is not possible without the support of the dominant group. *Social construction* rejects the idea of essentialism that has resulted in eugenics and scientific racism. Race is socially constructed rather than biologically determined, racial groups do not share any fixed cultural traits or other features such as moral behavior or intelligence (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). While race is socially constructed, CRT highlights the profound impact of racism on Black and other individuals of color in contemporary society.

Another core construct within CRT that has received widespread attention is intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality purports that systemic injustice towards individuals can happen not only because of a single identity (e.g., race) but intersecting identities such as race, disability, gender, language, accent, etc. Thus, a disabled Black gay male can not only be discriminated against for his race but also for his sexuality and disability indicating the co-construction of identities leading to oppression. However, intersectionality also acknowledges the importance of individual lived experience. For example, the experience of a disabled Black gay man living in New York, USA and Cali, Colombia could be different although they have similar intersecting identities.

Raciolinguistic ideologies

Raciolinguistic scholars build on race scholarship to provide a specific account of how race and language are co-constructed as a wider project to maintain White supremacy (Alim et al., 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015). This project has far reaching consequences because it not only dehumanizes individuals who are non-English speakers or English speakers who do not conform to a "perceived idealized mainstream English" (Dovchin, 2020) and creates linguistic forms and racial categories (Flores & Rosa, 2015). These linguistic forms and racial categories are used to compare English development in "Standard English speaker" and speakers of African American, Hawaiian American and Mexican American Englishes. Superficially, this exercise may appear to simply differentiate linguistic feature differences between speakers, however, this is used as a tool to identify "linguistic deficit" in minoritized speakers. Children deviating from "Standard English" are pathologized and recommended for special education services.

While much of raciolinguistic scholarship emerged in the context of the United States, one must integrate this into a wider context of linguistic racism where characteristics other than race such as class, caste can co-construct with language creating oppressive identities. As Skutnabb-Kangas (2015) noted, linguistic racism and linguistic imperialism are used as a tool to create power inequities between languages in order to maintain the hegemony of English. People of color are disproportionately affected as their languages and accents are penalized and are placed at the bottom of the linguistic hierarchy. Therefore, one must integrate raciolinguistics and linguistic racism within the framework of decolonization. Because monoculturalism and monolingualism are treated as the norm, it treats individuals who use multiple languages/dialects and who are perceived to have accents as problems to be fixed. Even the concept of world Englishes is antithesis to a raciolinguistic world view because it undermines the notion of an imperial nation state defined by nationalism, one race and a single standard language (e.g., Kubota, 2018).

Disability Studies critical race theory (DisCrit)

Similar to critical race theorists' approach to race, critical disability scholars examine disability as a political, cultural, and historical construct that upholds systems of power and oppression. Critical disability scholars have long questioned the normative ideals of the body through a material analysis (Goodley, 2013). What is constituted as "able bodies" have been changed historically in relation to the material conditions. For example, during industrialization desirable bodies were constructed depending on how bodies were useful working in collaboration with machines for maximizing economic productivity. Disorders and disabilities emerge in this context because bodies that are unqualified for economic productivity are treated as undesirable or in need of remediation (see Chapman, 2023 for a detail on this). Similarly, post industrialization, cognitive and linguistic disorders emerged because of globalization and the expansion of service industry such as international marketing and customer services. Cognitive and linguistic skills were key commodities for the successful functioning of these industries (Pierre & Pierre, 2018). Thus, conceptualization of disability is subjective and constructed based on the demands of the market.

What is often left out from interrogations of disability is how race is central to its construction. For example, influential psychologists such as John Philippe Rushton argued that the cranial size of Black individuals was smaller than Whites. He also argued that Black individuals were lower in IQ than the Whites due to the biologically determined superiority in heredity (see Western University, 2020 statement on this). While one would argue that these ideologies are no longer acceptable, critical scholars have examined how such racist ideologies have been enacted and revalorized in the construction of disability in the modern education system (Annamma et al., 2013).

Annamma et al. (2013) developed the DisCrit framework to examine the blurred binaries between race and disability. For example, DisCrit shows how overrepresentation of Black children in judgment-based disability categories, like cognitive, intellectual, and behavioral impairments but not in the category of sensory disabilities (e.g., hearing loss) as crucial evidence for the perceived lack of ability in relation to racial hierarchy i.e., racial categories other than White is classified to be lacking ability. Furthermore, DisCrit demonstrates how diverse racial categories are differentially represented, for example, underrepresentation of Asian American children in the special education system reinforces the model minority myth. In contrast, Native American children, Latinx children and Black children are vastly overrepresented in several highly stigmatized disability categories such as intellectual impairments, or behavioral issues. A significant number of these children are multilinguals and their languaging itself is classified as a disability as they deviate from the ideal White monolingual English speaking norms. Thus, racism and disability are intermingled in complex ways that reinforces racial hierarchies.

These findings are not limited to the US, for example, in the UK racism intersects with disability specifically among middle class Black parents (Gillborn, 2015). Utilizing conversation interviews with Black families, Gillborn (2015) showed that the UK schools ignore disabilities such as hearing loss, however, eagerly utilize resources to label Black children as having behavioral problems. These results from Black middle-class families are particularly striking because even when the families have achieved upward social mobility, race triumphs class in labeling children. As critical disability scholars have shown that all disabilities are subjective, DisCrit brings racism to the forefront and explicitly demonstrates that racial hierarchy and norms of ability are constructed based on racist ideologies and are mapped onto the subjective construction of disability. Racism and ableism are shown to be mutually constructing forces.

DisCrit recognizes the subjective nature of disability, and it also acknowledges how material realities of disability and racism can be vastly different for different individuals. It underscores focusing on the individual intersectional experiences of racially minoritized and cautions against generalizing specific experience of disability from a local context as generalizable knowledge.

Subaltern theory

Abay and Soldatic (2024) argue that disability studies are often entangled in reproducing colonial narratives and proposed subaltern resistance toward Eurocentricism. The term "subaltern" refers to the *other* who are at the margins of both social and economic oppression (Spivak, 2003). Subaltern theory was popularized by Indian scholars as a response to the proimperial history that was often found in the colonized scholarship. Although subaltern theory is generally considered to have emerged from post-colonial thought, Chakrabarty (2012) argued it as an anti-colonial theory. Subaltern scholars, influenced by Antonio Gramsci, resisted the proimperial narrative that colonialism was a beneficial and legitimate enterprise because the colonized subjects consented to it. In the colonial era, not only did the subaltern experience oppression from the colonizers, but also from upper class nationalists (e.g., Chaturvedi, 2007).

One of most noted subaltern theorists, Spivak (2003), argued that in the post-colonial world, the subaltern continues to have no agency because of the unfulfillment of the promise of social justice. It is not that subalterns cannot speak, but their voices are often not heard or silenced by the state. Knowledge construction by colonized researchers further undermines the agency of the subaltern and homogenizes their diverse cultural, linguistic, and social experiences into a single Euro-centric view. It is important to point out that while subaltern theory originated in the post-colonial developing world (e.g., India), it also speaks to people who are displaced because of globalization. This includes, for instance, refugees, Indigenous Americans living in Indian reservations and individuals from poor rural communities in the United States (Viruru, 2005).

Although initially post-colonial theories such as subaltern were confined to deconstructing historiography of the colonized world (e.g., South Asia), its influence is enormous in several disciplinary fields. For example, Viruru (2005) analyzed its impact in early childhood education and noted that educators in the developing world are critiqued for designing early educational programs that are locally based because these educational programs do not conform to the Western play-based methods. The theories of Vygotsky and Piaget are treated as universal where there is an expectation for all children to go through a linear sequence of development. These attitudes can be explained through subaltern theory in that colonization undervalues diverse cultural and linguistic experiences of the colonized and constructs a universal idea of child development. (See Viruru, 2005 for a detailed account of effects of post-colonial theories on early childhood education). It is important to note that while subaltern theory is considered to be a postcolonial theory, we incorporate this into this critical scholarship as subalternity focuses on anti-colonial thought and how dominant ideologies of race, caste, colonialism, nationalism and politics influence knowledge production and erases the voices of the marginalized (see Bhambra, 2014 for a more detail on this).

Indigenous theories

Indigenous theories are not a set of unified theories, but a collection of different theories rooted in Indigenous thought. Indigenous thought or philosophy assumes a non-separation between science, religion, and literature. In contrast, Western philosophy compartmentalizes these branches into distinct categories (Burkhart, 2004). Burkhart (2004) explained this distinction between Indigenous and Western philosophies through the story of three sisters (corn, beans, and squash). The Senecas knew that these three crops must be planted together through their direct experience and close connection with the land. The principles of nitrogen cycle, biodiversity and companion planting were embedded within this knowledge, and it was passed through oral storytelling. The planting and harvesting also included spiritual ceremonies to express gratitude to the spirits of the three sisters. The colonizers later came and planted only one crop resulting in the erosion of soil health. It then resulted in years of scientific experiments to later identify the issue of nitrogen deficiency in the soil. Chemical fertilizers were used to fix nitrogen deficiency, but it only further exacerbated the destruction of both soil and human health. This example illustrated by Burkhart (2004) is critical in understanding the distinction between Western and Indigenous thought. The former needed "scientific experiments" and hypothesis testing to confirm the nitrogen cycle whereas in the latter case, careful observation and contemplation with the land already provided the Indigenous people with this knowledge. Yet, the crucial aspect of the nitrogen cycle was told as a story indicating the interconnection between literature, science, spirituality, and practical wisdom.

Indigenous thought, therefore, offers us the possibility for a redefinition of knowledge and value knowledge that are not consistent with Western philosophy. Crucial to this endeavor is tribal critical race theory proposed by Brayboy (2005). Although inspired by critical race theory, tribal critical race theory posits colonialism as central to oppression. This contrasts with critical race theory that views racism as endemic in society. One of the central tenets of tribal critical race theory is the non-separability of stories and theories as illustrated by Burkhart (2004). Brayboy (2005) further advocates for a shift in pedagogy and research methodology by "hearing" the stories of the Indigenous people and utilizing them for meaningful social change. Brayboy (2005) makes a key distinction between listening and hearing the stories. The former involves the necessary pragmatic aspect of listening to a speaker. Hearing on the other hand involves the listener

placing value on the story as well as a keen interest in knowing the subplots. The listener also explores the likelihood of what may or may not have occurred within the story. This shift in thinking is crucial not only to challenge the hegemony of Western cultural ways of knowing and action, but also for emancipation, for example, interrogating why Indigenous children are overrepresented in special education.

Critical pedagogical theories

Brazilian thinker and one of the foremost intellectuals Paulo Freire (1970) was the first to describe education as disrupting political neutrality, focusing on critical consciousness, and practicing freedom. A critical pedagogy is one that disrupts naturalized, or widely accepted, perceptions of "knowledge ownership," that welcomes the notion of incompleteness in our own learning journeys, and engages in dialogical inquiry accommodating doubt, curiosity, openness, and freedom to reflect, re-structure, and re-imagine our own frameworks. As such, this way of relating in the classroom disrupts traditional roles of teacher-student and it is actioned through critical stances and critical literacies, in order to unveil, interrogate, unlearn, and subvert oppressive ideological structures (Freire, 1987).

In the US, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) was the first to propose a theory for culturally relevant pedagogy. Until then, although features of culturally responsive teaching and culturally responsive education were discussed (e.g., Cazden & Leggett, 1976; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982), these discourses were limited to how different cultures influence the strength of different learning styles (e.g., visual vs auditory learning) or identifying strategies to bridge the gap between classroom teaching and the culture of the community. In her seminal article on culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1995) not only offered a deeper understanding of culture that will help students succeed academically, but also argued that the *"development of sociopolitical or critical consciousness"* as one of the primary goals of culturally relevant pedagogy. This approach was a departure from the earlier colonized deficit-based framework that viewed students from minoritized communities, especially Black students, having an achievement gap compared to their White peers. Although, much earlier, W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the most noted Black scholars of 20th century, viewed education as a crucial tool for racial emancipation and leadership (DuBois, 2001), the dominant color-evasive ideology that was prevalent in education (Annamma et al., 2017) prevented any meaningful development of critical consciousness among students and teachers. Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy was premised on three key theoretical strength-based propositions or principles: *Conception of self and others, social relations, and conceptions of knowledge*.

Conceptions of self and others: The teachers who engaged in a culturally relevant pedagogy questioned the perceived notion of low-status students. They believed in the strength of all students where students' ability to succeed academically was emphasized and reinforced. For these teachers, culturally relevant pedagogy was not an abstract idea, but an opportunity to make a positive impact in their community. The teachers positioned themselves as productive members of their local community. This approach enabled the minoritized students to relate with the classroom better and build confidence in themselves.

Social relations: Culturally relevant teachers turned their classrooms into places where students not only excelled in academics but also demonstrated a significant development in critical consciousness. Teaching critical consciousness would include understanding and analyzing unequal power structures that exist in society and equipping students with strategies to confront these power structures. In order to propound critical consciousness, teachers consciously eliminated any hierarchical relationship that existed in the classroom. Ladson-Billings (1995) argued that such flexible boundaries between teachers and students promoted deep collaborative learning and focused on learning as a community rather than a competitive activity.

Conceptions of knowledge: Culturally relevant pedagogical framework is based on the idea that knowledge is not a stagnant notion of ideas, but it is constructed, evolving and amenable to change. Within this view, knowledge must be viewed critically. Culturally relevant teachers reflected on their pedagogy and critically examined standardized testing required by the curriculum or state. A crucial part of conceptions of knowledge includes assessments where teachers encourage students to ask "why" questions rather than only focusing on right answers. Students were also allowed to code switch between languages (e.g., African-American English and "Standard English") during their answers creating an open environment for communication.

While this framework formed the early foundation for a culturally relevant pedagogy, Gay (2002) argued that culturally responsive teaching should aim to center a pedagogy that is rooted in the lived experience of racially and linguistically minoritized students. This approach is based on the understanding that any learning that focuses on the lived experience of students is more relatable and facilitates deep learning. In her more recent work Gay (2015) suggested that culturally responsive teaching would involve *"ideological, ethical, and methodological enterprise"*. These enterprises consist of focusing on "*social justice, social transformation*", embedding principles of *"cultural significance"* and *"personal relevance"* to pedagogy as well as determining methodological decisions such as *"what and how to teach"*. Gay (2015) further provided a framework to situate culturally relevant pedagogy globally with a *"dual-focus"* that is aimed at establishing general principles of culturally relevant pedagogy and applying these principles as it relates to specific sociocultural and geographic context (amongst other factors such as political and economic context). The universal hierarchy and singularity that exist in global education because of European colonization would consider

the construction of European knowledge as highly valued. Knowledge evolved by Indigenous and other minoritized cultures are treated outside the realm of science. Culturally responsive teaching would transcend beyond a strength-based pedagogy in education to one that challenges the European hierarchy and Euro-centric singularity in the instruction.

Although acknowledging the value of strength-based pedagogies, Paris (2012) argued that terms such as culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy may not be adequate in capturing the complex, dynamic and evolving nature of culture in a pluralistic society. While the scholarship on culturally relevant pedagogy asserted the value of cultural knowledge of minoritized students, these pedagogies were not successful in sustaining the languages and cultures of these students in classrooms. Paris (2012) proposed the term *culturally sustaining pedagogy* and expanded upon previous frameworks of responsiveness and relevance. Democratization of schooling through celebration of cultural knowledge and practices of minoritized students in the classroom is central to culturally sustaining pedagogy. This type of learning would create cultural connectedness by devising learning through the inclusion of heritage languages, African American Language, sustenance of bilingualism or cultural practices where students can fully express their identity through exploring their own cultural and linguistic pluralism.

Paris and Alim (2014, 2017) further expanded the idea of culturally sustaining pedagogy by arguing that it questions the fundamental idea of schooling in the colonized and settler colonized cultures as a project to impose Whiteness and English monolingualism. Educational policies are designed to promote assimilation of minoritized students to White middle-class norms and cultural practices. These policies by nature explicitly discredit and pathologize literacy and language practices of working-class students of color. In sum, by centering classrooms that foster multilingualism, democracy and anti-assimilation educational policies, culturally sustaining pedagogy challenges the notion of superiority of White middle class cultural norms and practices (Paris & Alim, 2014).

Critical foundational concepts for decolonization in SLP

We have argued that decolonial, and critical theories undoubtedly offer a strong resistance to colonial and racist ideologies in SLP. Although we have indicated that critical and decolonial theories evolved and conceptualized at different contexts, from the literature reviewed, collectively these theories decenter performative diversity, interrogate racist power structures and Eurocentrism, dismantle colonial ideologies, and utilizes the voices of the marginalized as a key methodology for transformation and social justice. However, the scope of this research transcends beyond a mere challenge to this dominant colonial ideology. Borrowing from the terms used by Berryman et al. (2013), we argue that the aims of decolonial and critical theories is to resist *"colonized research, essentialism, decontextualized and exploitative research, superiority, and self-interest, pathologization of disability, evolution of local knowledge and lived experiences of the oppressed and minoritized communities"* (pp. 16). Scholars working towards decolonization, therefore, must recognize colonized research as reductionist. This is because colonized research asserts that truth can only be known through randomized experiments (House, 2006). House (2006) termed this as methodological fundamentalism, where research methodologies outside randomization are considered to be deficient and constitute low-quality evidence. Theories from critical research would contrast this worldview because truth can also be known by centering the local knowledge and lived experiences of the minoritized individuals. Evidence from this research is legitimate science, in fact, has the highest potential for community transformation and ensuring social justice. Decolonial and critical research methodologies and theories employ critical qualitative methodologies focusing on justice and equity (e.g., Denzin et al., 2017). These theories draw attention to the stories of marginalized subjectivities and consider those experiences as valid forms of knowledge (e.g., Nhemachena et al., 2016).

In the following section, we propose five critical concepts evolved from decolonial and critical theories for SLP that would center the intersectional experiences of minoritized disabled individuals. Although these concepts shall be considered as foundational approaches for a decolonial framework in SLP, it can be utilized to dismantle the notion of cultural competence and performative diversity. These foundational concepts are *a) Reframe the notion of disorder and pathologization; b) Center the insider; c) Focus on intersectionality; d) Integrate positionality and e) Enact Indigenous knowledge as alternative epistemology*.

1. Reframe the notion of disorder and pathologization

The field of SLP was established as a profession to rehabilitate "disorders and pathologies" of speech, language, and communication. For instance, the category "language disorder" assumes that there is a lack within the individual often exhibited as "disordered language" either because such disorders occur developmentally or manifest due to acquired brain injury or stroke. This medicalized view considers individuals as being "disordered," thus, disorder and the rehabilitation of such individuals acquire an objective medical status. However, a critical disability view has demonstrated that all disorders appear and disappear at historical points coinciding with the material needs of a given society. Critically, DisCrit has shown that all disorders are subjective, and such subjectivity is often determined through ideologies of race and ability. When disorders are constructed in a particular historical context, ideologies of racism and ability are mapped into the construction of norms and enacted as tools of exclusion, specifically on racialized bodies.

Implications for Research, Pedagogy, and Praxis: Two issues are particularly relevant to research in relation to the notion of disorder and pathologization. First, based on DisCrit, the issue of over and under-identification of racially minoritized children for SLP services needs to be understood. In the US, aggregating 10-year data, Robinson & Norton (2019) indicated that Black children who are from African American backgrounds were disproportionately represented in the category of speech and language impairment in 75% of US states, under-representation in 62%, and over-representation in 14%. In speech-language pathology, racial disproportionality is currently framed as merely a failure to accurately distinguish between "typical" differences in language use and a "disordered" performance. A DisCrit-informed understanding, however, illuminates disproportionality to be a predictable outcome of the overlapping systems of discrimination that marginalize children on the basis of their race as well as ability (Yu et al., 2021). Thus, in this context, disorder is not an objective category but manufactured through abled White norms to label deviant body-minds as lacking ability.

Second, speech and language interventions are largely focused on approximating the communication of disabled subjectivity to normative standards. While DisCrit scholars would acknowledge the material challenges of living with disability in an ableist and racist society, it would question the very ideological construction of a disorder, something that needs to be remediated and eradicated. It would center disabled subjectivities as capable of diverse ways of languaging, socializing, and being in manners that are transmodal and beyond oral communication (Henner & Robinson, 2023). This reframing would prioritize the expertise and experiential knowledge of disabled students and clinicians. It would restructure clinical practice from "intervention" to collaborative practices affirming and accounting for the needs of the disabled subjectivity to function in an ableist society (Henner & Robinson, 2023; Milton, 2012).

2. Center the insider

Banks (1998) defined an insider as someone who is a member of a particular community who may have unique knowledge, believes in cultural values or perspectives and is seen as a true representative of the community by peers. Although insider identities can be fluid (Rabe, 2003), we define insiders as individuals or groups whose lived experience(s) of disability can provide unique insights that result in the advancement of knowledge (also see Garivaldo & Fabiano-Smith, 2023). Based on this view, the insiders who are marginalized in SLP would be (but not limited to) racially minoritized individuals with speech, language and hearing disabilities.

Implications for Research, Pedagogy and Praxis: Academic research, teaching and praxis in SLP must center the insider in two ways. First, it should place value on the stories of the minoritized individuals with speech and language disabilities. Second, the value of insider researchers of color who share similar identities with the minoritized clients of color must be recognized. Colonized research practices would consider involvement of insider researchers as less rigorous given the emotional relationship due to the similarity in the identities and experiences between the participant and the researcher (Botha, 2021). Decolonization practices would challenge this myth of objectivity and argue that insider researchers are capable of reflexivity and add value in research through their embodied knowledge.

It is important to note, however, that "insider" status in itself does not bring about criticality. Insider researchers must challenge colonial and Euro-centric ideologies or risk (re)constructing knowledge that is rooted in performative diversity. For example, insider researchers carrying out and promoting a survey examining the linguistic proficiency of bilingual clinicians may be replicating hegemonic norms. This is because the standards of proficiency set out by professional organizations are based on standard language ideologies which can be used as a tool for exclusion of minoritized bilingual clinicians who do not conform to these set standards. Therefore, insiders must utilize their knowledge and experience to advance social justice rather than to preserve performative diversity. Without critical consciousness, the mere increase of numbers of researchers who identify as, for example, disabled, persons of color, gender non-conforming, is unlikely to bring about substantive change.

In line with what critical theories have proposed, the insider stories from clients would also have the potential to question the dominant research methodologies that exert a hegemonic influence on knowledge production. For example, research from psycholinguistics and cognitive science examining bilingualism and language development has put forward the idea that using two or more languages is an asset and that families should be encouraged to support multilingual development. Cioè-Peña (2020), however, has found that this favorable view of multilingualism and encouragement of family language development are not often extended to racially-minoritized, disabled children and their families from minoritized language communities. Bilingualism research has historically disregarded unequal power relationships between languages. Utilizing the testimonios methodology to interview Latinx mothers of labeled disabled children, Cioè-Peña (2020) documented the ways in which bilingualism of the racialized speakers is devalued. In other words, bilingualism acquires a prestigious status only in a White able-bodied subjectivity, and as an elitist commodity for the privileged.

Eurocentrism also assigns a privileged status to Western European languages such as French, German, English, etc. As decolonial scholar Mignolo (2009) pointed out, colonial ideologies have perpetuated the idea that to be perceived as fully human, the "colonized other" must communicate in one of the Western European languages. Yet, Euro-centric research ignores the differential power status of non-Western European languages and the effects of raciolinguistic ideologies on racially minoritized. Testimonies from the Latinx mothers questioned

this dominant research narrative that neglected the experiences of the minoritized bilingual families. It also revealed the need to move beyond fragmented and reductive research findings (e.g., bilingualism is an asset) that neither operates from a zero-point epistemology nor can be considered universal.

These ideologies must be questioned beyond research, for example, in both classroom and clinical spaces. If bilingual/minoritized clients whose languages and languaging lack power in a racialized society, how can we expect these families to engage with their children without showing concerns about their ability to speak English? SLP training often emphasizes the value of home language(s) to students. Clinicians often advise bilingual families to focus on their home language. However, if the home language itself is marginalized in society such superficial recommendations without examining the intersection of race, power and disability will not be helpful to the families. A number of these bilingual families (e.g., refugees) are at the margins of economic and political oppression, therefore, their subalternity is rarely considered in the context of disability and SLP service delivery. It is imperative that criticality is employed both in training and clinical spaces so dominant raciolinguistic ideologies are questioned.

3. Focus on intersectionality

Drawing from critical race theory and Black feminism, and coined by Crenshaw (1989), the concept of intersectionality offers a critical tool to describe the impact of multiple, interwoven identities and the complex lived realities that arise. Recall we discussed intersectionality in the context of critical race theory; however, Erevelles & Minear (2010) explain that this concept is far from simple. For example, based on the *anti-categorical* view in feminist scholarship, race is merely a social construction. However, intersectionality rejects this simplistic narrative and argues that it erases the material effects of racism. Intersectionality moves beyond this and incorporates *intra-categorical* and *inter-categorical view* (McCall, 2005). Intra-categorical view considers how the intersection of different identity categories, such as gender, race, and disability, produces a complexity of lived experience in individuals. Yuval-Davis (2006) noted that this approach has become so popular that even the UN Commission on Human Rights has acknowledged the criticality of examining oppression based on multiple intersecting identities. A third *inter-categorical* view further questions whether an additive approach is sufficient. In addition to examining how intersections of different identity categories produce specific experiences for individuals of color, it proposes to interrogate the structural and social conditions that are responsible for these experiences and integrate them into various historical time points (see Erevelles & Minear, 2010; McCall, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006 for detailed discussions on this).

Implications for Research, pedagogy and praxis: Although professional organizations in the field of SLP have often made statements against systemic racism (ASHA, 2020), these statements are based on an *anti-categorical* framework that does not acknowledge the complexity of intersectionality. Critically and more alarmingly, there is no current research training in SLP that focuses on intersectionality. The concept of intersectionality, when discussed in SLP, is through an uncritical, depoliticized and additive lens. In one of the few studies, Guerrero-Arias et al. (2020) illustrated the intersectional experience of a young Black woman with aphasia named Margarita from a lower socio-economic status living in Cali, Colombia. They captured Margarita's daily interaction with several interlocuters including her speech language therapist. Margarita aspires to become a journalist but faces challenges including oppressive experiences from her journalism college. Observation of speech and language therapy sessions revealed that the therapist focused on a pre-determined set of narrow linguistic abilities targeting written production of predicates and reading aloud of sentences. When Margarita could not perform this activity, the therapist referred her to mental health services noting her lack of interest. Guerrero-Arias et al. (2020) demonstrated that the therapist provided a decontextualized language therapy failing to account for language skills critical for Margarita's educational aspirations. Critically, the therapist showed no understanding of how race, class, gender, and disability create oppressive barriers for Margarita. It was not the lack of interest that prohibited Margarita from taking part in therapy but her difficulty navigating structures that are oppressive due to her new identity of disability, along with her other intersecting identities.

While Margarita's story underscores the importance of intersectional experiences, both pedagogy and praxis shall relocate knowledge and disrupt power. By relocating power, we do not simply mean to discuss research such as Margarita's story in the classroom. Beyond this, in line with critical pedagogy, we must prepare students to engage as justice-minded practitioners. It is important to remember that student clinicians and practicing clinicians do not operate in a void, and the experiences of their clients are dictated by their socio-political context. If our teaching and service delivery are not attuned to intersectional experiences, we must end up implementing services that are decontextualized and neutral to injustice such as in the case of Margarita. Focusing on both learning and actioning becomes a crucial practice for social justice as it invites criticality, disrupts injustice and epistemic violence, and co-imagine disability justice within one's own research, teaching, and clinical practice. Epistemic violence in this context refer to the systemic oppression and eradication of other knowledge systems because of colonialism (e.g., invisibilizing Margarita's experience). Epistemic violence upholds the idea of "other/colonized subjects" as passive (e.g., disabled individuals are dependent on SLPs for support) and incapable of knowledge production. Knowledge construction within this context is a continuation of colonial ideologies where the colonized is compared to the superior and modern Europe. Epistemic violence erases the complex history,

knowledges, and cultures of the other. It reduces them to inferior subjects who are intellectually dependent on Europe and the United States for advancement (e.g., Heleta, 2016).

4. Integrate positionality

Both decolonial and critical research emphasize engaging in reflexivity. It is argued that reflexivity is key to critical research which is achieved through integrating researcher positionalities (e.g., Bourke, 2014). Although it is difficult to arrive at a definition for positionality, it can be considered as a tool for researchers, students, and practitioners to be reflexive as to how their identities of race, class, nationality, citizenship, sexuality, or gender have an impact on research, interpretation of research results, classroom teaching and clinical practice (e.g., Bourke, 2014). Boveda & Annamma (2023) argued positionality statements must be more than a declaration of identities or a claim on authority via asserted proximity to marginalized communities, but rather must contend with power dynamics that affect their relationships to their participants, data, and their approaches to interpreting and communicating findings.

Implications for Research, Pedagogy and Praxis: We started this article by describing our identities and our experiences within the higher education setting. They reveal our positionalities in that our experiences within the academy contributed to our current positionality–which is a strong commitment for decolonization. We also extend positionality beyond research to classroom teaching and clinical practice. As critical pedagogy has demonstrated, educator positionalities are crucial for focusing on critical consciousness in the classroom. Clinician positionalities are crucial for focusing on a reflective praxis that disrupts deficits views and incorporates practices rooted in social justice and client/family preferences. We pose the following questions for reflection to those who are committed to decolonizing SLP.

- How does your positionality guide selection of your research topic, methodologies, coding or analysis of the data and the way in which you assign meaning to what you are looking for?
- What type of reflective practices do you implement in your research?
- How does your positionality as a White academic affect your research on racially minoritized disabled individuals/bi/multilinguals across the life span?
- How does your positionality as a racially minoritized academic affect your research on racially minoritized disabled individuals/bi/multilinguals across the life span?
- How does your positionality as a White academic affect your perception of the field of SLP?
- How does your positionality as a White student affect your perception of the field of SLP?
- How does your positionality as a minoritized student affect your perception of the field of SLP?
- What are your identities as an educator or a clinician and how do they affect your ideas and stances about the subject you are teaching or the clients you are serving?
- What positionalities are hidden that you have not considered in your research, teaching, or clinical service delivery?

While these questions are not meant to be prescriptive, it is important to recognize the impact of reflexivity in research, pedagogy, and clinical practice. In order to encourage reflexivity, Jacobson & Mustafa (2019) proposed a reflexivity tool that would map out eight different social identity categories. These categories include *race, citizenship, ability, age/generation, class, sexual orientation, cis/trans,* and *gender*. While these categories are fluid, it is suggested that researchers, educators, and practitioners reflect on the complexities of their intersecting social identities, and how they might embody certain hidden positionalities that can impact their research and clinical practice (readers who are interested in utilizing reflexive praxis shall refer to Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019 for a tool on practicing reflexivity and positionality). It is critical to note that examining positionality is not merely an exercise of listing one's identities (Boveda & Annamma, 2023). They are meant to critically interrogate the intellectual foundations of a field or one's own research and reveal interlocking identities of oppression or power that can either marginalize knowledge production or reinforce Whiteness in the academy. Positionality, therefore, must be theoretically infused by utilizing critical and decolonial thinking rather than a static statement that marginalizes the intersectional and embodied experience of the marginalized and moves oppressive White structures to innocence (see Boveda & Annamma, 2023 for a detail on this).

5. Enact Indigenous knowledge as alternative epistemology

In 2017, the United Nations adopted The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) after years of opposition from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. The UNDRIP is a significant global document that recognizes the political, cultural, and legal sovereignty of all Indigenous people around the world. Higher education settings, therefore, have an obligation in promoting Indigenous thought involving Indigenous scholars (i.e., scholars who identify as Indigenous rather than scholars who research on Indigenous culture).

Implications for Research, Pedagogy and Praxis: We recognize and reject the dominant Euro-centric influence and epistemological oppression of Indigenous thought in speech and language research. As a field that primarily focuses on speech, language and communication disability, Indigenous ways of understanding disability can provide a crucial understanding of the impact of disability labels in children. This is especially critical given Indigenous children are often overrepresented in the special edu-

cation services (Brayboy, 2005). Velarde (2018) indicated that the idea of disability is unknown to Indigenous cultures. Disability is treated as a human variation but not as a social identity. Based on this view, correcting, and fixing variance in communication abilities utilizing Eurocentric assessment and intervention becomes an obsolete approach. However, the overall research framework in SLP is not conducive to this world view. Critically, the impact of colonialism in speech and language assessment and intervention practices involving Indigenous individuals is not fully understood. Therefore, a significant aim of decolonizing research would be to examine the harm caused by the imposition of colonial language practices on Indigenous individuals with speech and language disabilities. This research should center principles of *tribal critical race theory* as the framework because it ensures examining Indigenous cultures utilizing Indigenous world views rather than Euro-centric theories. As Brayboy (2005) indicated, Indigenous thought does not recognize a separation between theories and stories as these stories contain rich theories and philosophy.

From a research perspective, it makes little sense to examine speech and language development or disability utilizing theories developed for English monolingual children. Held (2019) indicated four underlying principles for research based on Indigenous theories. They include a) there are multiple realities, and they are influenced by social and historical events, b) knowledge is interconnected that ensures balance in relationships, c) accountability is key to interconnected relationships, and d) research methodology should be transformational and liberatory. These views are directly at odds with Eurocentric positivist methods that argue for a singularity in reality through replication of correlational and causational data. In rejecting the latter world view, we emphasize the value placed on participation and liberation in Indigenous thought. This would also mean that scholars in SLP utilizing Indigenous theories as their research framework must reject exploitation of Indigenous knowledge and let the Indigenous scholars or community lead the research.

In pedagogy and praxis, these theories must be actively brought into the classrooms and clinical practice in conceptualizing and understanding Indigenous ways of viewing disability and communication. For example, Kapp (2013) critically examined autism cross-culturally and argued that compared to the Western medical model that views autism as a disease, Navajo philosophy has a relational wellness principle that benefits autistic people. Several core values in Navajo philosophy such as absence of negative and dehumanizing language when referring to autism, emphasis on community and requests for help as normal, individual identity as collective in relation to the family or community, principle of discipline, emphasis on cooperation, community and shamanistic society spiritual principles over materialism and economic productivity are beneficial for the well-being of autistic individuals. These knowledge and principles have been unknown and marginalized in the classroom and in clinical practice, yet they are beneficial for all speech and language disabled individuals. One of the core challenges in implementing an Indigenous epistemology is how the educational and clinical systems are dominated by medicalized approaches towards communication disability. Strategies to combat this include forming alliances with educators and clinicians working within the school or clinical systems, enacting clinical practice that is based on relational ethics, creating subversive and non-extractive scholarship rooted in indigeneity that challenges dominant narratives on communication development (e.g., Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017; Quigan et al., 2021)

Challenges and Final Reflections

In this article, we laid out a framework for decolonizing SLP through five foundational concepts. We utilized critical and decolonial theories as means to disrupt Eurocentrism, colonial and racist ideologies in SLP. Although we summarized diverse theories, we recognize that there are additional theories that are compatible with decolonization. For example, crip linguistics foregrounds and disrupts the notion of language as disordered to language as "multimodal languaging" (Henner & Robinson, 2023). A decolonial crip linguistics would expose competence and norms as characteristics of colonizer societies focusing on productivity. It focuses on creative "nonnormativity" in communication as expansive communication practices that disrupt predictability (Canagarajah, 2023). These emerging perspectives are critical; however, a detailed discussion of all emerging theories is not possible in a single article. Although we have laid out five foundational concepts, we do not claim these concepts to be static or resistant to expansion. It can be added further; however, any such expansion shall be based on decolonial and critical thinking. Frameworks that are rooted in performative diversity do not disrupt colonial, racist, and ableist structures and will fail to reframe current research, pedagogy, and praxis which was generated by the same structures.

We find critical conceptual similarity in our decolonial approaches with what has been laid out by Pillay and Kathard (2015) from a South African context. We place our work along with the one that has emerged from Global South (South Africa) than highlighting it as a first account originated from the Global North. However, we do face challenges in enacting decolonial epistemologies particularly because of our positioning as minoritized scholars located within the colonial and settler colonial Northern contexts. There are two challenges that we encounter in bringing decolonial praxis into real life. First, we critiqued the efforts to increase performative diversity measures through promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. We highlighted that these measures are liberal tropes that suffer a failure to ignite critical change. While we have made our positioning clear, given the large uncritical nature of SLP as a field, we recognize our arguments could also be characterized as another effort to increase "diversity or inclusivity". We reject this portrayal. We explicitly point out to the readers that the structures

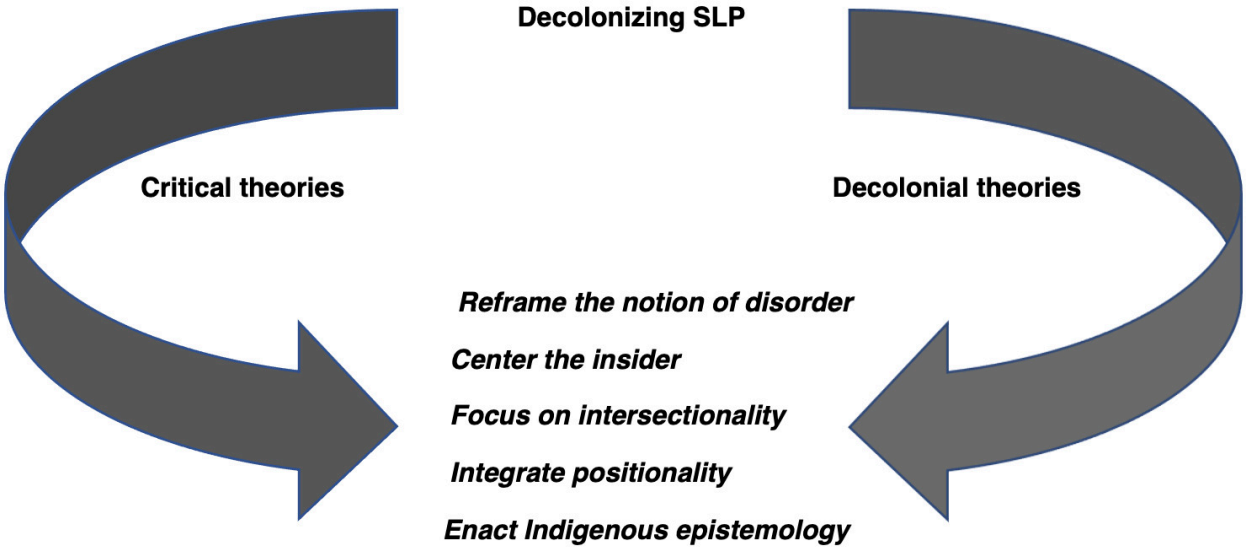

Figure 1. Representation of theories and foundational concepts for decolonizing SLP.

Note: Figure 1 represents the broader goal of decolonizing SLP through critical and decolonial theories that lead to five foundational concepts. While these foundational concepts are not static and amenable to changes, any new additions or future changes shall be rooted in critical and decolonial theories.

of oppression as it is characterized in the SLP through excessive medicalization and overrepresentation of Whiteness cannot be challenged through those inclusive measures.

As scholars, our decolonial approach is to subvert, question and challenge narratives of inclusivity and reject the colonial gaze in our scholarship. We believe our small, albeit collective steps have guided us in challenging performative inclusive discourses. One of the recent examples towards this is our refusal to accept liberal inclusive discourses on accent modification that failed to take a critical stance (Yu et al., 2022). As scholars, tools of criticality have validated our embodied experience and further gave us theoretical grounding towards challenging specific oppressive clinical practices. Because of our location and marginalization within the academy, we recognize the power of collective in this work, without which the critical work will be ceded.

The second challenge we face is in relation to our role as educators in higher education spaces within the Global North. In the introduction, we invoked Gopal (2021) and asked why is SLP so White? We face other similar questions, such as "How do we begin to decolonize Euro-centric curriculum and structures guiding these approaches? How can one implement the foundational concepts that we laid out within a university setting? How can we mentor next generation SLP scholars and clinicians in a critical and decolonial theoretical lineage?" These are complex questions; however, we are inspired by Freire (1970) vision on education through dialogic learning. In writing the introduction to pedagogy of the oppressed Donaldo Macedo rejected the idea of dialogic learning as a tool and characterized it as an educational and social philosophy. We are inspired by this philosophy which is directly at odds with Euro-centric thinking where the curriculum and education philosophy are tightly controlled by university managerial class and neo-liberal standards of performance and consumerism (Freire, 1970). For us to move into and center a critical and political consciousness, we take inspiration from dialogic learning. For example, Freire (1970) pointed out that

> "Critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation. The content of that dialogue can and should vary in accordance with historical conditions and the level at which the oppressed perceive reality. But to substitute monologue, slogans, and communiques for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication. Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated" (pp 65).

We need to apply our subversion tactic in a colonial higher education space in adopting "critical and liberatory dialogue" as foundational philosophy to our educational praxis. This is particularly critical for a field that explicitly trains students to "normalize and liberate" the disabled—reflective dialogue becomes crucial to create critical consciousness among students and educators. We must dismantle our role as "pathologists" and "therapists" in upholding systems of oppression and being complicit in maintaining hierarchies of good and bad communication.

In our final remark, we reflect on how the readers may treat the five foundational concepts as distinct—however, we highlight the overlapping features that distort the boundaries between them. For example, although positionality is critical for reflexive praxis, it is impossible to deconstruct positionality without considering the intersectional experiences of an individual. Similarly, centering the insider would consider the intersectional experiences and demonstrate how such experience is creating new knowledge that cannot be unraveled by the traditional positivist science. We do not claim the concepts presented in this article as an end point for a discussion on decolonization. Instead, we argue that for far too long, alternate ways of constructing knowledge rooted in linguistic and disability justice have been absent in SLP. Colonial, racist and ableist ideologies and performative diversity have been hidden, uncritically accepted and applied, and maintained as objective knowledge. A decolonial framework emerges in this context to dismantle deficit ideologies and disobey the singularity in knowledge production imposed through colonizing Western science. It opens a space and invites scholars to practice epistemic disobedience by highlighting colonizing science as not universal. It will bring together marginalized epistemologies in SLP and center the parochial/local as legitimate knowledge existing in an expansive decolonial knowledge continuum.

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