ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Linguistic Anthropology

Language otherwise: Linguistic natures and the ontological challenge

Jan David Hauck[1,2]

[1]Department of Anthropology, The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

[2]Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Correspondence
Jan David Hauck, Department of Anthropology, The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.
Email: jandavidhauck@protonmail.com

Abstract

Linguistic anthropology has remained largely unaffected by debates about ontology in other subfields. In turn, the concept of language has been conspicuously absent from ontological debates. The past few years, however, have seen attempts at articulating the two, interrogating *what language is* from ethnographic perspectives and extending the analytic focus to *ontologies of language* or *linguistic natures*. This article discusses such efforts and compares them to previous critical engagements with the concept of language. Calling into question the ontological equivalence of language within and across cultures, communities, and regions, it explores understandings of what language is that go against the grain of existing theoretical models.

KEYWORDS
linguistic natures, ontologies of language, decolonization, critical language research, language ideologies

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic anthropology has remained largely unaffected by debates surrounding the notion of ontology in other subfields in the past two decades. Itself part of a broader intellectual trend interrogating key analytic concepts of academic knowledge production in ongoing efforts at intellectual decolonization, the "ontological turn" (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017) has reverberated throughout sociocultural anthropology and beyond. While some linguistic anthropologists have occasionally weighed in on the debate (Course 2010; Keane 2009, 2013; Mannheim 2019), most of this engagement has been about what linguistic or semiotic approaches—including attention to the grammatical features of particular languages—have to say about ontologies, not what ontological approaches might have to say about language.

If linguistic anthropologists have not yet embarked on an ontological exploration of language, neither have those involved in discussions of ontology, whether proponents of the ontological turn or their critics. There is now a large body of ontological literature that puts foundational Western concepts such as nature, culture, humanity, or personhood to the test of ethnographic realities elsewhere. But save a few notable exceptions (Vilaça 2016), language has so far largely escaped ontological scrutiny. This is all the more regrettable given that particular conceptions of what language is frequently inform these other concepts—from how the Ancient Greeks devised humanity (Heath 2005, 7–10) to the modern concept of culture (Bauman and Briggs 2003, 257).

To be sure, ontologically challenging understandings of what language is abound in ethnographies. To name but a few, for some communities language is a bodily substance, in others it is shared with nonhumans, elsewhere it is intrinsically connected with the land or has its own spirit, power, or agency (e.g., Chernela 2018; Course 2012; Ferguson 2019). But while they may be discussed as examples of local language ideologies, such understandings are rarely employed to challenge prevalent theories of language as a human practice or a system of symbols—theories on which we continue to rely to analyze discourse. We seem to have all but made up our minds about what language is.

The past few years, however, have seen efforts by some linguistic anthropologists to put the question of what language is back on the table. Starting from ethnographic challenges to prevalent understandings of language, we have begun to interrogate language ontologically, extending our analytic focus to "ontologies of language" (Ferguson 2019; Hauck 2016) or "linguistic natures" (Heurich and Hauck 2018). Parallel endeavors have also been undertaken in disciplines adjacent to linguistic anthropology, in particular applied linguistics (Demuro and Gurney 2021; Gurney and Demuro 2022; Hall and Wicaksono 2020; Ortega 2018; Pennycook 2018) and integrational linguistics (Orman 2013; Pablé 2021; Severo and Makoni 2021). There the decolonial impulse of scrutinizing language ontologically has fallen on fertile ground as part of renewed attempts at theory building from the Global South (Makoni, Verity, and Kaiper-Marquez 2021; Pennycook and Makoni 2020).

In this article, I situate such efforts in relation to other critical engagements with the concept of language. I then discuss different ways ontological questions have been posed in sociocultural anthropology before specifying the approach that Guilherme Orlandini Heurich and I have developed under the label of "linguistic natures"—and why we prefer this term over "ontologies of language" (Hauck and Heurich 2018). Lastly, I turn to ethnographic cases to exemplify what an ontological approach to language may offer to linguistic anthropology.

CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP

The concept of language is a central concept not just for the anthropological subfield bearing its name but also for the human and social sciences more generally. It is usually taken to designate one of the core traits distinguishing humans from nonhumans, as well as a means through which human communities distinguish themselves from one another. It has also played a crucial role in the shaping of other foundational anthropological concepts, such as culture, and modes of analysis, such as structuralism.

But the concept has also been the target of criticism. For a long time, we have been pointing out that conceptions of languageness inevitably rest on unexamined philosophical assumptions that are the products of a particular intellectual history, while making claims of their universal applicability and relevance to the ways of speaking or communicating of the Others of that history. This is what Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs (2003, 68) characterize as the "deprovincialization of language," drawing on Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) critique of the reliance on European concepts and theories to represent non-European histories and experiences in the practice of (European and non-European) scholars. Analyzing the

discourses of Enlightenment and Romantic philosophers such as John Locke and Johann Gottfried Herder, Bauman and Briggs (2003) unearth the origins of ideas such as that language exists as an autonomous entity, that it should be maintained in a pure form to ensure clear communication, and that each nation has one language that best expresses its culture and character. They analyze how a politics of inequality was enshrined in the very conception of what language is through the twin processes of language ideological purification—by which language was devised as an autonomous, representational medium, severed from its (indexical) ties to nature and society—and indexical hybridization—by which language came to represent the ways of speaking of particular (white, male) intellectual elites and national and cultural traditions. To this day, such an understanding of language works as the "silent referent" (Chakrabarty 2000, 28), the benchmark to which all language practices are aligned, enabling deficit views of non-standard varieties or of practices of mixing and switching (Hauck and Mitsuhara 2023) associated with negative stereotypes held about racialized and socioeconomically marginalized populations (Rosa and Flores 2017).

At the risk of oversimplifying a vast literature, I suggest that the strategies that we employ to counter such default understandings of language usually come in four forms. On the one hand, we advocate for abandoning the concept of language entirely, on the other, for extending it. And we employ each of these strategies for each of the two senses of the English term "language," language in general (as a human capacity) as well as particular (named) languages, tokens of the type. I will briefly outline these four strategies in what follows.

The argument that language in general does not exist most often targets narrow understandings of language as a module of the brain in the formal linguistic tradition but also the broader idea of language as autonomous domain and a trait that distinguishes humans from nonhumans. It has been cast in both evolutionary and historical terms. As Tim Ingold (2000) argues, all that humans have evolved is speech, a skill and practice; attempts to look for the origin of language are futile, the results of misguided conceptions of what language is. The idea of language arose in a particular historical context and was entirely unknown in many other parts of the world (Heryanto 1990). We should therefore strive to "disinvent" (Makoni and Pennycook 2007) language and replace it with alternative concepts such as discourse or languaging (Becker 1991; Sabino 2018).

If not outright abandoning the concept of language, an alternative strategy has been to expand or amplify it to include features that had before been considered non- or paralinguistic. Language use is always accompanied by gestures and other forms of embodied behavior, mediated by artifacts and technologies, and embedded in micro- and macro-contexts that shape the forms it takes and are co-constitutive of meaning-making. A lot of recent work in linguistic anthropology has contributed to broadening the concept of language by focusing on multimodality (Goodwin 2010; Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron 2011) or materiality (Cavanaugh and Shankar 2017). As Alessandro Duranti (1997, 339) points out at the very end of his textbook treatise of the field, this "has meant that we have amplified the phenomenon 'language' to such an extent that it seems increasingly difficult to identify what is not language." Alastair Pennycook's (2018) posthumanist applied linguistics equally strives to expand language as distributed, cognitively and spatially, and not necessarily confined to the human. And similar arguments can be found in research on language evolution (Hauck 2021): the discovery of features once considered uniquely human in various nonhuman animals has led some to call for abandoning the Cartesian conviction that "language belongs to man alone" (quoted in Lieberman 2000, 8) and can thus be said to attack reductionist definitions of language from the other side.[1]

Parallel arguments have been advanced with regards to particular (named) languages. It has become commonplace to argue that languages don't exist other than as social constructions. Much of the work on language ideologies (Kroskrity 2022) is dedicated to investigating the motivated construction of linguistic boundaries (Urciuoli 1995), deconstructing notions of linguistic purity, and challenging "one language, one people, one nation" equations. Instead

of uncritically relying on common glottonyms, we should shift our analytic focus to linguistic units (Enfield 2005), to linguistic or communicative repertoires (Blommaert and Backus 2013; Gumperz 1964, 137; Pennycook and Otsuji 2015), or to translanguaging (García and Li 2014).

At the same time, the recognition of languages as (mere) ideological constructs has led to efforts at expanding what particular glottonyms may designate. We now pluralize Englishes (Ortega 2018) and focus on processes of codeswitching, mixing, hybridization, creolization, and the ubiquity of language change to contest understandings of languages as stable, homogenous entities (Hauck and Mitsuhara 2023). As Sinfree Makoni and Alastair Pennycook (2007, 21) emphasize, "all languages are creoles," which is to say that any language always already incorporates elements beyond its borders.

The four strategies are not mutually exclusive and are frequently employed jointly, challenging conceptions of language from multiple angles and from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical orientations. Linguistic anthropologists frequently draw from the toolkit of the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce (1991). One the one hand, semiotic concepts such as indexicality may be said to expand language by grounding it in sociocultural and physical contexts of use. On the other hand, a semiotic approach also goes far beyond language. Unlike Ferdinand de Saussure, for whom a definition of language was a precondition for his inquiry, Peirce remained agnostic about the ontological status of language (Benveniste [1969] 1981). A sign need not be a linguistic sign and a semiotic framework is thus able to illuminate a wide variety of phenomena, from grammar, style, register, or accent to identity, race, gender, or fashion. Thus, Peircean semiotics has proven highly productive for critical analyses while at the same time furnishing an inclusive and nonreductive model of communication.

My goal is not to question the merits of critiques of mainstream Western conceptualizations of language or of efforts to develop alternatives, especially for those of us who work with communities whose diverse discursive practices—ranging from forms of song, music, and ritual speech to practices of switching and mixing—have for a long time challenged narrow understandings of language as autonomous medium of denotational code. And yet, while such efforts are no doubt important for destabilizing the Western and colonial constitution of language, the concepts and theories to replace or transform language have been adopted, yet again, from the Euro-American tradition—whether derived from critical French theory or from American pragmatism. Given the wide availability of ready-at-hand critical and nonreductive models for understanding communicative practices, few linguistic anthropologists have felt the need to seriously engage alternative analytic concepts from people with whom we are doing our fieldwork. Moreover, the ontological assumptions underlying our own concepts remain largely unexamined. The scrutiny that we are so adept at applying to mainstream Euro-American models of language—especially the formalist linguistic tradition—is rarely applied to the ontological commitments that we rely upon for our critical models.

As Pennycook and Makoni (2020, 58) have recently put it, while "we cannot move straight towards alternative visions of language without establishing what they are alternatives to … in doing so we inevitably bring a lot of northern baggage into the discussion." They urge us "to be cautious lest the critique fills too much space (a critique of northern linguistics can still be seen as an internal debate)" and to "seek alternative forms of knowledge for renewal of our discipline" from the Global South. While Pennycook and Makoni are talking specifically about applied linguistics, much the same is true for linguistic anthropology.

We have already made up our minds about *what language is not*. Language is not a module hardwired into the brain, it is not an autonomous domain separate from the material and social worlds, it is not an essence tied to soil, blood, race, ethnicity, or gender. We have, of course, good reasons for rejecting such ontological presuppositions. But we have made up our minds about them nonetheless. Likewise, we also have already made up our minds about *what language is*, namely a social construction, a human practice, or, rather, a set of heterogeneous practices, an assemblage of linguistic or communicative resources, verbal

and nonverbal (see below and Demuro and Gurney 2021, 8). Again, there are good reasons for taking language in these ways. However, most of the time they are, yet again, a priori assumptions with little regard for whether or not they correspond to those of our interlocutors.

Such ontological commitments have not emerged as a major problem as long as critique of Western mainstream conceptions of language (and their local effects) has remained our primary goal. They are also rarely an issue for those of us who work within a linguistic anthropological or semiotic framework but whose primary interests are phenomena other than language. But those of us working in contexts where we encounter communicative practices and language ideologies that rest on fundamentally different ontological assumptions about what language is, we are often confronted with a disjuncture between our concepts and those of our interlocutors.

We are frequently at a loss when we encounter claims that go radically against the grain of our carefully crafted critical stance, such as that language *is* a kind of bodily essence (Chernela 2018), that language *is not* what separates humans from nonhumans (Vilaça 2016, 59), that a specific language or register is to be kept pure (Ferguson 2019, 81–106; Kroskrity 1998, 107–9), or that when people cease speaking their language they also cease being the kind of people their language is supposed to index.[2] What are we to make of such claims? Indeed, why are so many Indigenous communities struggling to maintain and revitalize their ways of speaking as "languages," standardizing and institutionalizing them (Costa, De Korne, and Lane 2018)? And why are others interested in adopting the "languages" of the former colonizers (Horta 2021; Menezes de Souza 2014)? Should such efforts be dismissed simply as "misrecognition" (Bourdieu 1990, 112–21)? Mistaken "beliefs" about language? The "colonization of consciousness" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991)? As Pennycook and Makoni (2020, 134) put it:

> What is considered to be progressive in the North is projected onto the Global South as what scholars there are (or perhaps should be) interested in. And relatedly, projects that do not fit this progressive mould—forms of southern positivism, for example, or demands for access to European languages … —are likely to be rejected as northern capitulation rather than southern creation (the old false consciousness framework mapped onto North and South).

We, the enlightened northern anthropologists and linguists are aware that languages are actually social constructions, that people don't really speak the pure or standard forms that they purport to be using, that nonhumans are not truly capable of symbolic reference. We can accept challenges to such understandings as particular examples of local language ideologies. But we would not go as far as letting such claims call into question our own scientific models of language and communication, no matter how "ideological" we take these to be. Our own ontology of language or communication remains untouched.

It is here that I would like to urge us to pause—to take ontological challenges to language seriously in their own right. I do not mean this as a replacement for the other critical strategies surveyed. We don't need an ontological critique to recognize that Indigenous and minority efforts at language standardization or purification are the consequence of being subjected for decades if not centuries to the regimenting and standardizing educational policies of nation-states. It would be hypocritical to reject the desire of Indigenous communities for their children to be educated in a non-Indigenous language (Horta 2021; Menezes de Souza 2014) as "capitulation" to the Northern hegemon. We also don't need an ontological critique to recognize that there is a big difference between a nation-state regimenting language use through deprovincializing practices imposing a literate standard on a diverse population (Silverstein 1996), and a small Indigenous village fighting for resources to create a literate standard of their own language (Costa, De Korne, and Lane 2018); that there is a big difference between claims of an intrinsic

connection between a national language and national character and interest (Bauman and Briggs 2003, 163–96), and Indigenous claims to a connection between their ways of speaking and their ways of being (Meek 2012); and finally, that there is a big difference between the use of a colonial language by an anthropologist when addressing a non-Indigenous audience (including in the very practice of writing this article) and an Indigenous leader's use of a colonial language to have their voice heard by the same audience (Cusicanqui 2012; Kopenawa and Albert [2010] 2013; Krenak 2019). Laura Graham (2002) has aptly described the double bind that Indigenous leaders find themselves in, having their authenticity questioned by a white audience when speaking in a colonial language, while compromising their ability to communicate to that audience when speaking in an Indigenous one (see also Horta 2021; Muehlmann 2008). We must never lose sight of such differences.

And yet, while nation-state purism is different from Indigenous purism, while the indexical relation of a European language to the nation-state regimenting its use is different from that of an Indigenous language to its speakers, while the use of a colonial language of an Indigenous leader is different from that of an anthropologist or linguist, we assume that *what language is is nonetheless the same*. We locate the respective differences in context, in power, in ideology, in different subject positions. Paying attention to such differences is no doubt important. But they are not the *only* differences that we should be paying attention to.

Taking seriously our interlocutors' claims about language, even if—and perhaps especially if—they are at odds with our critical stance, means being open to the possibility that when we, anthropologists or linguists, and our interlocutors use the term *language* we may not be talking about the same thing. Could it be that disjunctures such as those mentioned above not only point to different stances, opinions, or beliefs that different people have about the same thing, language—different language ideologies—but instead may hint at more fundamental misunderstandings about what language is? Heurich and I suggest the notions of "linguistic natures" or "natures of language" as a way of conceptualizing fundamental, ontological differences in language (Hauck and Heurich 2018), taking inspiration from the renewed ethnographic interest in other concepts such as humanity, nature, culture, or personhood that the turn to ontology exemplifies.

ONTOLOGICAL TURNS

The notion of ontology has caused many debates in anthropology in the past decades. A common starting point that unites different theorists that have turned to the concept in their work is the search for alternatives to what Bruno Latour ([1991] 1993) calls the "modern constitution," the great divide between natural and social realms. One of the primary motivations for this search is the desire to do justice to ethnographic realities that do not abide by such a divide or that configure it in radically different ways, and which, therefore, are excluded from participation in modernity. In one way or another, all ontological turns aim at displacing the modern constitution and "provincializing its alleged universal ontology as specific to the West: one world (even if perhaps the most powerful one) in a pluriverse" (de la Cadena 2010, 346).

A comprehensive review of different understandings and uses of ontology in anthropology is beyond the scope of this article. But to situate the concept of linguistic natures and to address common misperceptions of ontological approaches, I shall briefly clarify some uses of the term in recent anthropological scholarship. Following Martin Holbraad and Morten Pedersen (2017, 30–68) we may distinguish three trends of ontological thinking in anthropology.[3] The first is the search for an alternative ontology. Holbraad and Pedersen (2017, 46–54) identify this tendency with the proposal for a nondualist ontology in the work of T. M. S. Evens (2009), with that of a "one world anthropology" of a "world of becoming" in the phenomenologically inspired work of Ingold (2018), as well as with the semiotic anthropology

beyond the human of Eduardo Kohn (2013). What unites these arguably very distinct proposals is the desire to find an alternative ontology, but in the singular, a better alternative to replace the "dualist" or "two worlds" ontology of the moderns.[4]

The second trend in scholarship on ontology does not necessarily aim to replace the modern constitution with an alternative one but rather to situate it in relation to other such ontologies. Explicitly comparative, this work is united in its goal to uncover the primordial assumptions underlying a given ontology, which is why Holbraad and Pedersen (2017, 55–65) label them "deep ontologies." Michael Scott (2007, 10, 12), for instance, distinguishes mono-ontology, based on the "consubstantiality of all things as a result of their common origin," from poly-ontology, that "posits two or more fundamental and independently arising categories of being." Philippe Descola ([2005] 2013) proposes four ontologies or "modes of identification," conceptualized as different relations of continuity and discontinuity between "interiorities" and "physicalities."

While there are important lessons to be learned from both of these for ontologies of language, the inquiry into linguistic natures (Hauck and Heurich 2018) resonates primarily with the third trend in ontological thinking, which Holbraad and Pedersen associate with the work of Roy Wagner ([1975] 1981), Marilyn Strathern (1988), and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro ([2009] 2014). The primary way in which the provincialization strategy of this approach differs from the others is that instead of substituting the modern constitution with a better alternative or situating it as one possible configuration among others, the goal is its transformation by means of the ethnographic encounter. Perhaps closest to Chakrabarty's (2000, 16) project of provincializing Europe, which does not aim at "rejecting or discarding European thought" but rather at "exploring how this thought—which is now everybody's heritage and which affects us all—may be renewed from and for the margins," this ontological turn aims at the reconceptualization of anthropology's core concepts from the ethnographic realities it encounters. As Martin Savransky (2017, 19, emphasis in original) summarizes,

> its task is no longer that of putting non-European realities and the thinking that is cultivated in and from them to the test of modern, western thought. Nor is it that of attempting to level the playing field by raising all concepts to the status of *representations* thereby forcing others to partake in the modern game of epistemology. Instead, such a decolonial, speculative project seeks to put modern, western thought to the test of non-modern, non-western realities, and to experience the transformation of our western imagination by the radical, decolonising differences other realities, other concepts, and other truths, make.

In a certain way, this approach may be seen as simply taking to its logical conclusion one of the most fundamental axioms of anthropological practice, to not study other cultures with categories derived from one's own (Boas 1889). This may not seem to cause too much trouble as long as we are dealing with kinship categories, the classification of plants, or a phonological inventory. But what about the core concepts that the practice of anthropology itself relies upon, including the notion of "culture"? Any anthropological inquiry proceeds, as Wagner ([1975] 1981, 10) reminds us, "'as if' there was culture." However, this invention of culture—made possible by the counterinvention of nature (Wagner [1975] 1981, 71), Latour's ([1991] 1993) "great divide"—was the invention of one particular culture: the European one. Deprovincialized into a human universal, the concept is now supposed to be what explains differences between human groups from Tierra del Fuego to Siberia. But, as Wagner ([1975] 1981, 16) elaborates, the study of culture operates on our, Western terms, and runs the risk of "forcing our own preconceptions onto other peoples. … For every time we make others part of a 'reality' that we alone invent, … we use those people and their way of life and make them subservient to ourselves."

The counterstrategy that Wagner proposes is to recognize peoples' fundamental creativity and inventiveness. Across the world, people are as capable of creating concepts as are Western theorists. Our job as anthropologists is to recognize these concepts on their own terms—and to acknowledge that they might be at odds in crucial ways with corresponding concepts that we are familiar with. Instead of assuming that we already know what culture "is" and only have to go around the world and document local instances of it, we should ask what culture might be from perspectives that do not make an a priori radical distinction between nature and culture, between reality and its representation, between humans and nonhumans, or where such distinctions are configured in a fundamentally different way. Thereby, the goal is not to abandon any such distinction altogether in favor of a nondualist ontology, but, as Tânia Stolze Lima (2000) puts it, to develop an "ethnographic theory of the nature/culture distinction"—a theory grounded in the ethnographic reality of the people we work with. If, for instance, the Yudjá in the Brazilian Amazon with whom Lima has been working do not take culture, language, and social life as that what distinguishes humans from nonhumans—since spirits and animals have such traits as well—then this ethnographic fact invites us to reconsider what culture, language, and social life might be. It does not suffice to say that Yudjá "culture" is different in the sense of different practices or beliefs or world views and the like. Nor does it do justice to them to say that the Yudjá "don't have" culture or that the culture concept "doesn't apply" to them. If, in terms of the modern constitution, we take culture or language to be "what humans have" and what makes us different from nonhumans, taking the claims of the Yudjá seriously inevitably forces us to reconsider both culture and language. In this way, the issue is less one of finding alternative ontologies in the sense of comprehensive "accounts of whatever there is" (Lloyd 2012, 39), but rather acknowledging *ontological differences* in the kinds of conceptual translation that we are always inevitably engaged in.[5]

Viveiros de Castro (2004, 9) uses the notion of *equivocation* to refer to a "communicative disjuncture where the interlocutors are not talking about the same thing, and know this." The Yudjá and the anthropologist may both be using concepts translatable as "culture" or "humans," but since they rely on different underlying ontological assumptions of what these are, they are involved in an equivocation. Viveiros de Castro's point is that such equivocations are inevitable, and it should not be our aim to render them invisible in the ways we explain them in anthropological discourse but to make them explicit—"to avoid losing sight of the difference concealed within equivocal 'homonyms'" (Viveiros de Castro 2004, 7) such as "culture," "nature," but also "language." Disclosing such ontological differences in what language may be is what the concept of *linguistic natures* aims to do.

LINGUISTIC NATURES AND ONTOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE

To begin a discussion about ontological linguistic differences, Guilherme Heurich and I convened a double panel on "Language in the Amerindian Imagination" at the 2016 AAA meetings in Minneapolis, which we were then invited to submit as a special issue to *Language & Communication* (Heurich and Hauck 2018). Expanding on the well-known notion of language ideologies, while going beyond narrow understandings of ideologies in terms of beliefs or representations, initially we did frame our discussions in terms of an inquiry into different "ontologies of language." As we advanced in writing the introduction, however, we became increasingly concerned with how the term ontology was being used (perhaps overused) in anthropology, losing some of its purchase. Moreover, the concept "ontology of language" (Smith 1987) could be easily misunderstood as if our goal was to establish its "real" nature, similar to other work aiming to find an alternative to the Western ontology. Indeed, much of the critical language scholarship seemed to be doing just that, whether implicitly or explicitly (see Hall and Wicaksono 2020, and below). We agreed that we needed a better concept and Heurich suggested "language natures" as a construct that would best capture our goals.

While using a core component of the modern constitution, "nature," the plural "s" disrupts its association with a singular "nature of language" and also resonates with perspectivist multinaturalism (Viveiros de Castro [2009] 2014). Pluralizing "the nature of language … creates a conceptual uneasiness, a discomfort to be systematically addressed" (Hauck and Heurich 2018, 3). We elaborated on our reasoning more fully in the introduction to the special issue and specified the concept as "linguistic natures"[6] with the side effect of allowing us to talk about the "linguistic natures of …" different communicative phenomena (see below).

Reservations about the term ontology notwithstanding, I recognize here that in recent years a number of parallel efforts have been advanced by like-minded scholars who frame them in terms of "ontologies of language" but who otherwise are very much aligned with our goals. For instance, Eugenia Demuro and Laura Gurney (2021, 3) take our special issue introduction as their "starting point … [but] prefer to use the term 'ontologies of language' in place of 'natures of language'" for their tripartite typology (see below). Similarly, Pennycook and Makoni (2020, 71–4) draw on our work and incorporate the idea of "multiple language ontologies" into their repertoire of "innovations" for a renewal of applied linguistics from the Global South.

From a linguistic anthropological perspective, perhaps the most explicit formulation of a concept of "ontologies of language" has been that of Jenanne Ferguson (2019) in her recent book *Words Like Birds*. Building on her earlier work (Ferguson 2016) on the spirit of language, *tyl ichichite*, that Sakha speakers recognize (see below), Ferguson argues for the need to situate understandings of language "in relation to culturally shaped ideas of existence and being" (Ferguson 2019, 6). Parallel to the trajectory Heurich and I have followed, Ferguson takes the concept of language ideologies as her starting point, while also recognizing its limitations. She writes:

> My issue with the phrasing of "language ideologies" is that it does not always link those ideologies to those fundamental existential, spiritual conceptualizations of what speakers believe to be the nature of existence, or what it means to be and to act with agency in the world.
>
> (Ferguson 2019, 25)

Much in line with recent work by Paul Kroskrity (2018, 134) on "language ideological assemblages" that recognizes language ideologies "as part of a larger complex of relevant beliefs and feelings," Ferguson (2019, 97) suggests "to broaden the definition of language ideology to include spiritual or existential beliefs about what language is—and does—as well."

At first sight this seems to contrast with our call to "move beyond" the notion of belief (Hauck and Heurich 2018, 2) and therefore to be unsuited for our project: standard definitions of language ideologies as "beliefs about language" still rest on modernist assumptions of a dualism between reality (language) and its representation (beliefs about). However, Ferguson's emphasis on "spiritual conceptualizations of what speakers believe to be the nature of existence" also points beyond such a conceptualization of belief, moving it towards the realm of ontology. Broadening the concept of language ideologies to "spiritual or existential beliefs" in this way accomplishes much the same as our linguistic natures—and furthermore implies ontological differentiation of "belief" in addition to "language." A similar move can be found in efforts to expand linguistic ideologies to semiotic ideologies (Keane 2003, 2018; Tedlock 1988). As Webb Keane (2018, 65–6) puts it, semiotic ideology refers to people's "underlying assumptions about what does or does not count as a sign," linking "the ways people make sense of their experiences to their fundamental presuppositions about what kinds of beings animate the world"—their ontology.

Ultimately, then, I take such efforts to be united in their goal to mobilize kinds of difference that we have heretofore not been able to capture within our conventional, Euro-American theoretical frameworks; "rather than attempting to think *about* difference, … to think *with* the difference that thinking from the South itself makes" (Savransky 2017, 19, emphasis in the original).

FROM MULTIPLE ONTOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE …

To reiterate, then, the goal is not to come up with an "alternative" (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017, 46) ontology (sg.) of language or communication to replace the Western one—parallel to efforts within the first ontological turn identified earlier. Nor are we aiming at a finite set of ontologies (pl.) of language, to situate a set of linguistic natures within a set of ontologies as prepredicative "modes of identification" of self and other (Descola [2005] 2013)—such as a "naturalist" linguistic nature that would contrast with "animist" or "totemic" linguistic natures—in line with the second ontological turn, Holbraad and Pedersen's (2017, 55) "deep ontologies" trend.

Both of these are valuable enterprises. The critical efforts reviewed in the first section, whether aimed at expanding or abandoning notions of language/languages, as well as the explicitly ontological critiques of applied and integrational linguists (e.g., Hall and Wicaksono 2020; Orman 2013; Ortega 2018) have come a long way towards destabilizing underlying assumptions of what language/languages are and highlighting more inclusive alternatives (e.g., García and Li 2014; Sabino 2018)—"better" ontologies of language. The same can be said of Kohn's (2013, 40) critique of anthropologists' "conflation of representation with language" and his call for attention to sign processes beyond the human with its explicit goal to provincialize language, not in favor of an ontological multiplicity (of language or otherwise) but rather for a singular (albeit "open") ontology (see also Pennycook 2018).

Likewise, in view of the multiplicity of ontologies or modes of identification as basic orientations to self and the world (Descola [2005] 2013), it is certainly a valuable research endeavor to try to understand how language fits into such schemas. When contrasting "language in naturalism" with "Amerindian natures of language" (Hauck and Heurich 2018, 3–5), we have already advanced a number of thoughts in this direction, and we do not want to dismiss the possibility of some commonalities in the linguistic natures of animist collectives, where a "generalized pan-spiritual form of communication between souls" would contrast with a "physical intra-species form of communication via bodily specific languages, constructed for non-general forms of communication (such as daily conversations between an Indigenous kin group in non-ritual, non-shamanistic, and non-transformational events)" (Hauck and Heurich 2018, 4). But this should not be assumed as a general model for a finite set of but two distinct linguistic natures in Amerindian collectives (Hauck forthcoming).

Furthermore, we also do not want to suggest that there is a singular ontology—whether of language or more broadly—of "the West" that would be radically distinct from ontologies (pl.) of "the rest," where the former would rest on an ostensibly "false" understanding of the nature of language as an autonomous domain, an object, an innate faculty, or a cognitive operator, while elsewhere people "correctly" recognize language as a practice, behavior, or activity, and languages as heterogeneous, hybrid assemblages. When using "naturalist" ontological assumptions about language as a foil for Amerindian linguistic natures, we did not mean to imply that there is but a singular Western/naturalist linguistic nature opposed to an animist or perspectivist radical linguistic-natural multiplicity. While it is true that the constitution of language as autonomous realm that was part and parcel of the modernist separation of nature and society (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Latour [1991] 1993) has had a lasting impact on Western folk-understandings of and scholarly approaches to language alike, even in arguably naturalist collectives such as contemporary Euro-American societies, understandings of what language is vary greatly in practice and ideology, "folk" as well as "scientific" (see Candea and Alcayna-Stevens 2012, for a parallel argument). The point is to recognize that there are important ontological distinctions of language/languages within as well as across geographical regions but also within and across collectives and communities.

In a recent article that brings our work on linguistic natures into conversation with work in applied and educational linguistics, Demuro and Gurney (2021, 6–10) survey three distinct ontologies of language, namely language-as-object, language-as-practice, and

language-as-assemblage. They associate language-as-object primarily with the familiar ontology of language as autonomous domain or internal module that Bauman and Briggs trace back to the work of John Locke. Language-as-practice, by contrast, is the ontology underlying post-monolingual and languaging approaches in applied and integrationist linguistics (e.g., García and Li 2014; Orman 2013; Pennycook and Otsuji 2015), and, I would argue, also most work in linguistic anthropology. Finally, language-as-assemblage subsumes Deleuze and Guattari ([1980] 1987)-inspired, critical posthumanist, new materialist, affect-theoretical, and ontological approaches (see DeLanda 2016, esp. chapter 2; Gurney and Demuro 2022; Pennycook 2018) that take language "as neither object nor practice, but as the (post-Cartesian) junctures which manifest between these: emergent practices reconceived in line with the relations between the constituent parts of (more-than-)linguistic interactions" (Demuro and Gurney 2021, 10).

In light of this classification, we might be tempted to associate the language-as-object ontology only with distinctively "Western/Northern" or "naturalist" assumptions. However, Demuro and Gurney also cite work by Janet Chernela (2018), Harry Walker (2018), and Alan Rumsey (2018) as non-Western examples of ontologies of language as object—although, as they recognize, the *kinds* of objects as which languages emerge in these cases are quite distinct from and should not be conflated with Western ones (see below). If anything, they "exemplify the multiple, complex and widespread practices which give ontological validity to stable and separable languages as entities, which are storied in different ways" (Demuro and Gurney 2021, 8). Furthermore, while the language-as-assemblage ontology may be "the least likely to generate specific and replicable ontonorms"—and thus well-suited for critical projects—they are careful "to avoid putting [it] forward … as the 'correct' form of ontologising languages/languaging" (Demuro and Gurney 2021, 10). While some approaches may be more complex and comprehensive than others, "it would be remiss and inconsistent … to declare that *x* ontology has more validity than *y* or *z*" (Demuro and Gurney 2021, 11).

In this regard, even language-as-practice or language-as-assemblage could be characterized as Western or Northern ontologies—after all, both of them originate in intellectual traditions that have their roots in Euro-American modernity. They are also what Holbraad and Pedersen (2017, 46) identify as "alternative" ontologies, attempts to displace and reprovincialize the language-as-object ontology, although not in favor of an ontological openness to multiple linguistic natures, but rather in favor of an open ontology, a singular ontology even if designed to be "open" (in the sense of Kohn 2013, 15) to accommodate all of humanity and beyond.

Instead of a typology of ontologies of language or linguistic natures, I would like to suggest we might want to take inspiration from Susan Gal and Judith Irvine's (2019) work on semiotic differentiation and recognize not just multiple ontologies of language but multiple *axes of ontological linguistic differentiation*, i.e., multiple ways in which linguistic-natural distinctions emerge locally. Axes of differentiation may appear across regions and across collectives, but there may also be axes within regions and within collectives.

… TO AXES OF ONTOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIATION

Gal and Irvine (2019, 19) introduce the notion of axes of differentiation as a way of conceptualizing how qualitative contrasts between signs and their objects are recursively projected onto other levels, forming "large clusters of paired, contrasting qualities" (118). Their main focus is on social differentiation, on the ways differences and hierarchies between social groups come to be organized via sign processes. I propose here that we may productively extend their notion to capture how discursive phenomena are ontologically differentiated, i.e., how linguistic-natural contrasts emerge between different discursive forms. Importantly,

Gal and Irvine (2019, 118) emphasize that while axes of differentiation are "totalizing schemas" that organize difference at multiple levels, there can be multiple axes that may intersect or encompass one another. In the remainder of this article, I will discuss a number of possible axes of ontological contrast that have been reported in ethnographies, both within as well as between regions or collectives.

The Mapuche in southern Chile speak two languages, Spanish and Mapudungun, which stand in an asymmetrical relation to each other. It is highly inappropriate to use Spanish in certain contexts, above all for particular rituals that mandate the use of Mapudungun. Magnus Course (2012, 2018) attributes this asymmetry to the Mapuche understanding that Mapudungun is coextensive with the force, *newen* that is constitutive of all being.

> That language is said to have its own "force" is neither to personify it, nor to deny that it can serve the intentions of a speaker. Rather, it is to suggest that the excess or potentiality of language is of a kind, or continuous with, the essential force of which all things are instances.
>
> (Course 2012, 10)

This connection to *newen* is particular to Mapudungun and does not extend to Spanish in the same way. Indeed, while the Mapuche term for Spanish is *winkadungun*, the language of the *winka* (whites), the corresponding term for the Mapuche language, *mapudungun* is not conceived of as the language of a particular group of people such as the Mapuche but rather as the *dungun* (language/speech) of the *mapu*, the land itself. This asymmetry leads Course to suggest that it might actually be wrong to think about Spanish and Mapudungun as "languages" in the common sense of the term, as symbolic systems of representation each indexical of different values and identities but each to a certain extend arbitrary and translatable. Instead, he suggests, Spanish and Mapudungun may be ontologically nonequivalent, "fundamentally different kinds of things," where Spanish is indeed an arbitrary system of signs representing things in the world, whereas Mapudungun is part of the world itself, a force that exceeds human intentions and agency (Course 2018, 12). Within the same collective, the Mapuche, we are thus able to recognize an axis of ontological differentiation between Mapudungun and Spanish. The two "languages" do not come together on a metalevel as different tokens of the same type (language) but should be understood as having different linguistic natures.

The understanding that language has a particular force or agency is not unique to the Mapuche. The Sakha in Siberia, as Ferguson (2019, 22) reports, understand "words (especially Sakha words) to have a very real, agentive power in the world."

> Language is believed to possess a kind of guardian spirit (*ichchi*) or spirited essence, just as a lake or a tree or fire does. The usual term is *tyl ichchite*, or the "*ichchi* of language." This spiritedness, or animacy, of language in turn entails a certain relationship with the speaker; for Sakha who ascribe to this belief, language has both its own intrinsic power as well as power that is imbued by the speaker of the words; acting in the world via language thus takes on certain agentive qualities.
>
> (Ferguson 2019, 28)

Thus, language is not just a practice used by human beings or a system of referents used to talk about states of affairs but language itself is a type of being. Similar to Mapudungun, it also entails a deep connection to the land and other beings that inhabit it as part of a "broader ontology that configures land, language, ancestors, and creatures who would apprehend said language as parts of a whole system" (Ferguson 2019, 99).

Here, we have thus a radically different understanding of what language is when compared to the Western intellectual tradition. But does this understanding apply to Sakha only? Is Sakha of a different linguistic nature than, say, Russian or English? Or is language generally considered differently. I read Ferguson's rich ethnography in that both would be true. On the one hand, Sakha say that "not only the Sakha language, but every language, has its own soul" (Ferguson 2016, 95). On the other, the power of words is "especially" attributed to Sakha words (Ferguson 2019, 22, 28). This is also true for the Mapuche. As Course (2018, 13) makes clear, "theoretically" the relationship of language with force is applicable also to Spanish. However, there is no doubt that Mapudungun is "more embedded in the flow of *newen* than is Spanish" and the "insistence on the use of Mapudungun in certain contexts, is … premised on its perceived continuity with the 'world' (*mapu*), an indexical rather than wholly arbitrary relationship like that constituted through Spanish."

We may thus be facing two intersecting axes of ontological contrast. On the one hand, the linguistic nature of language in general in these communities differs considerably from Western ones. On the other, different languages used in these communities may each also be of a different linguistic nature. I suspect that more often than not we will encounter multiple axes of differentiation in a given community and it requires careful analysis to work out their relationships.

Take natures of language as substance, reported from a wide variety of communities across the world. The Dogon in the central plateau region of Mali, for instance, understand words to be bodily fluids that are contained in the collar bone. To speak them, they are heated in the liver and then evaporate in the lungs before leaving through larynx and mouth. The addressee's ear then absorbs and recondenses them (Calame-Griaule [1965] 1986, 50–61). Thereby, speech also has a life of its own. While it is a part of human beings, it is also considered as the "double of a living being" (Calame-Griaule [1965] 1986, 17) with its own force and agency.

This understanding mirrors that of the Urarina in the Peruvian Amazon who also take speech to be a material substance. As Walker (2018, 16) observes, here words can have "a greater or lesser degree of materiality, as well as force or instrumentality, depending on the context." This is the case for a particular class of chants called *baau*, which are used for healing children suffering from mystical harm caused by spirits and other non-humans. To heal a child, someone experienced must whisper words into a bowl of mother's milk or other liquid, which the infant ingests. Inside the body the words spread out and "paint" or "dye" the blood which alleviates the symptoms. Walker here draws on work by Emanuele Fabiano (2015), who explains the ability of the chants to enter the body with the fact that they *are* a kind of fluid themselves. And the words not only have materiality but also an agency of their own that allows them to have material effects on the body of the patient. Importantly, as Walker (2018) points out, comprehension of the words by the patient is not necessary, nor are they thought to carry a "message." On the contrary, the performative force of ritual chanting is more like a physical action. "Words are considered to be subject to direct absorption by the body, rather than interpretation by the mind" (Walker 2018, 16).

We see that in these cases, differences in what language is inevitably intersect with other ontological differences, and different linguistic natures should always be understood as part of larger "assemblages" (Kroskrity 2018, 134) of practices and understandings of "the nature of existence" (Ferguson 2019, 25) that shape the linguistic lifeworld of a particular community. We cannot simply try to uncover multiple ontologies of language while leaving the rest of our metaphysics intact. On the other side of the globe in Aotearoa (New Zealand), for instance, a Māori philosophy of language holds "language in its various forms—from general phenomenon to discrete word—to be dense with the full interplay of the world" (Mika 2016, 166). According to Carl Te Hira Mika (2016, 167), "in Māori thought, a concept and a real thing are equally material." A Māori ontological challenge to the concept of

language thus inevitably entails a challenge of the concept of the concept (Corsín Jiménez and Willerslev 2007).

A particularly striking example of the interconnectedness of linguistic natures and particular understandings of the body, identity, and kinship comes from the Upper Rio Negro region across the Colombian and Brazilian border, especially the valley of the Vaupés River. This area is well known to linguists and anthropologists for the role that languages play in exogamous marriage patterns (Jackson 1983; Sorensen 1967). The language one speaks determines whom one can and cannot marry. In particular, it is one's "patrilect" (Chernela 2018), the language of one's father's clan or sib that determines one's identity. Given exogamous marriage practices, one must therefore marry someone who speaks a language different from the language of one's father. This leads to a system where one's "mother always represents a different tribe and a different linguistic group" (Sorensen 1967, 677).

A classic linguistic anthropological take on this phenomenon would interpret it in terms of indexicality. Jean Jackson (1983, 165), for instance, proposed to understand language as a "badge of identity" that carried "a kind of message." The strong association between one's patrilect and one's kin group results from the fact that specific ways of speaking index a speaker's identity—by virtue of their similarity to the practices of other speakers. However, Chernela (2018) goes beyond this interpretation, based on her ethnography among the Tukano/Kotiria, one of the groups in the area. She suggests that language is not merely a practice but instead a corporeal substance, a material component of the person that is shared with one's paternal kin. Marrying someone speaking the same language as oneself is proscribed not because of a shared practice (speaking in the same way), but because of shared substance.

Note that here we have a common, perhaps "dominant" (Kroskrity 1998) nature of language as bodily substance that is attributed to all languages in the area, whether Kotiria, Makuna, Bará, or Desana and governs their relationships. Unlike the ontological distinction between Mapudungun and Spanish, this linguistic nature is shared across the region. And yet, even here we may still be able to detect other axes of ontological differentiation within each language community. As Stephen Hugh Jones (2021) discusses, similar to the Urarina and many other groups, a nature of language as substance is especially true for songs and flute music for which an equivalence of language, blood, breath, and soul is widely recognized. As he puts it, "all language qua speech … is substance but some (versions of) language/speech is more substance than others" (personal communication). Linguistic natures may come in kinds but also by degrees.

Axes of linguistic-natural differentiation are often particularly salient when comparing everyday speech to song and other ritual languages, and here we are indeed able to find some commonalities across communities. First, ritual forms of communication frequently foreground materiality (Heurich 2020) and downplay referentiality (Graham 1986) in ritual performance. Second, they often extend the possibility of communication to nonhumans, whether animals (Kohn 2013, 135–40), spirit beings (Ball 2018; Lewy 2017; Oakdale 2018), or the dead (Heurich 2018a). And finally, they thereby allow the practitioner to inhabit different perspectives simultaneously, to bridge different domains of the cosmos (Graham 1995; Lewy 2017; Oakdale 2018; Townsley 1993). Thus, a linguistic-natural multiplicity is intrinsically connected to other ontological differences, both in the sense of different ontological regimes as well as in the sense of the different worlds that these disclose.

Finally, how languages are connected to nonhumans, to the land, or to personhood may have important implications for language pedagogy, revitalization, and reclamation. Indeed, the "decontextualizable nature of language" implied in linguistic documentation, focusing on orthography and dictionary development, contrasts markedly with Indigenous understandings of language "as essentially connected to places and people" (Ennis 2021, 320). Bernard Perley (2012, 146) aptly criticizes what he calls "zombie languages," i.e., Indigenous

languages that only exist in an undead state in the form of recordings and documentary artefacts but disembodied and disconnected from their community of speakers. Taking ontological differences seriously means to recognize that activities such as writing or recording a language (High 2018) or saving it in digital format (Heurich 2018b) may have far reaching consequences for its linguistic nature (Hauck 2018). As Perley (2011, 145) emphasizes, language death itself implies ontological change.[7] Revitalization initiatives need to take ontologies of language into account, not merely to preempt disjunctures between different stakeholders (Ennis 2021), but also because recognizing how language is embedded in encompassing ontological frameworks may help their valorization and reappropriation (High 2018). Among the Sakha, for instance, in school curricula children are taught about the importance of respectfully addressing other people, other beings, and aspects of nature in Sakha, and treating the Sakha language itself with respect, which has contributed to its relative vitality (Ferguson 2019, 99, 276). Recognizing ontological differences may thus help opening new pathways for "alternative vitalities" (Perley 2011).

CONCLUSION: THE INHERENT AMBIVALENCE OF "LANGUAGE"

What does thinking with ontological differences entail for a critical linguistic anthropology? To think ontologically means first and foremost an invitation to pause. Far from defining ontologies of language, the goal of drawing attention to linguistic natures and axes of ontological differentiation is to bracket our ontological certainties (Pedersen 2020) about language and learn to listen what others might have to say. To forego a priori assumptions of what language is and remain open to language otherwise.

By no means does this imply that we would need to disavow our analytical apparatus entirely and start from scratch. Recognizing that language has a spirit (Ferguson 2016) or that language speaks (Course 2012) doesn't mean it cannot be used by human speakers to convey a message. Even as a being in its own right, language can serve as a medium of expression for the intentions of other beings, such as human speakers. Indeed, people everywhere draw on resources provided by others in meaning-making. To use someone else's linguistic resources and agency to convey a message is something that we can also observe in contexts familiar to the Euro-American anthropologist, for example, when a man with severe aphasia uses his family members' words, memories, and co-presence to tell a story (Goodwin 2004). There is nothing particularly "magical" about this. The point is to not make a priori assumptions about the ontological status, about the agency, subjectivity, or materiality of the linguistic and human "resources" involved.

As mentioned above, Peirce has been so appealing to linguistic anthropologists not least because he remained agnostic about what language is (Benveniste [1969] 1981). Peircean semiotics does not entail "an ontological divide between thought or language and reality" (Ball 2014, 153). It is "highly ontologically flexible" (Chumley 2017, S4) and does not oblige us to make any ontological commitments as to what "language" or "speech" may actually be. As Keane (2018, 83) emphasizes, "there is in principle no determinant ground of a sign," i.e., there is no vantage point from which the outside observer would be able to judge which construal of a relationship of sign and object would be true or false, a matter to be left to the "messier, open-air landscapes of ethnography" (Keane 2018, 65; see also Silverstein 1998, 124). Thus, there have been a number of recent efforts to conceptualize questions about the ritual efficacy of language or its materiality in semiotic terms (Ball 2014; Cavanaugh and Shankar 2017; Chumley 2017; Chumley and Harkness 2013; Keane 2003, 2018; Manning and Meneley 2008).

In the previous section, I contrasted understandings of language as cosubstantial with its speakers—such as those encountered along the Vaupés River—with claims that language (merely) indexes speakers' identity. But Chernela (2018, 30) herself uses this very

way of phrasing it when writing that language in the Upper Rio Negro region is "an index of group belonging"—albeit with the important qualifier "reflecting a theory of the nature of language and being." There is nothing wrong with this formulation as long as we recognize that we are using the concept of indexicality in two very different ways. As Constantine Nakassis (2018) argues, there is an inherent ambivalence in the concept of indexicality in that it simultaneously signals immediacy, (co-)presence, and existential relations as well as mediation and representation. It is a virtue of the ambivalences of semiotic concepts such as indexicality that they can be mobilized to explain a vast range of very different phenomena, from a particular speech register to the movements of a woolly monkey in the canopy (Kohn 2013, 30–8). The point is that the ease with which we use such concepts runs the risk of overlooking crucial dimensions of the ethnographic phenomena that we are studying. It's not wrong to say that a Kotiria boy from a village on the Vaupés River "indexes his identity" by speaking Kotiria. But this should not lead us to believe that we can understand this in exactly the same way as, say, the use of a particular style by a Californian nerd girl (Bucholtz 1999). The underlying linguistic natures of the phenomena at hand are different, even though our descriptive tools allow us to talk about them in similar ways. Speech in California and in the Upper Rio Negro region may have different linguistic natures.

An inquiry into linguistic natures thus requires us to remain open to the transformation of other concepts. Nakassis (2018, 292) suggests we should take the ambivalence of indexicality as an "opportunity and invitation, a site for analytic and theoretical refinement and productivity":

> Rather than assuming that we know what indexicality is so as to show how presence is realized, how can an openness to the question of presence—in all its ethnographic complexity—reformulate our conceptualization, and thus analytic use, of indexicality?

> (Nakassis 2018, 291)

As indexical phenomenon, language is inherently ambivalent. As analysts we should take this ambivalence as an invitation to remain open to ways of being otherwise of language. With the Māori we should "remain open to the influence of language as an entity-filled phenomenon that may decide to disclose different facets of itself at its whim, and to be prepared for the uncertainty attending that revelation" (Mika 2016, 173). That also means to recognize the "limitations on what we can say definitively about language" (Mika 2016, 174). And if you are now wondering what I might even mean by the word "language" … I know I have achieved my goal.

ORCID
Jan David Hauck 🔘 https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9818-5303

ENDNOTES

[1] Perhaps tellingly, this has led to a further reduction of what is "essential" to language in the formal tradition (see Berwick and Chomsky 2016; Hauser, Chomsky, and Fitch 2002).

[2] As one Indigenous teacher with whom I used to work insisted a few years ago: "An *indígena* (Indigenous person) who no longer speaks their [heritage] language is no longer an *indígena*."

[3] I am restricting this discussion to the three anthropological ones of their five ontological turns, bracketing those in philosophy and science and technology studies.

[4] Holbraad and Pedersen also count the work of Marisol de la Cadena (2015) and Mario Blaser (2013) as part of the "alternative ontology" tendency. While they certainly aim at "alternatives" to the modern constitution, I do not read them as necessarily proposing a *singular* ontology, as their recent volume, *A World of Many Worlds*, attests (de la Cadena and Blaser 2018). Thus, I see them more aligned with the third trend (see below) than Holbraad and Pedersen would have it.

[5] This has the side effect of moving the focus from the noun "ontology" with its inevitable invocation of "world" or "reality" to the process of ontological differentiation as always unfinished becomings (see below).

[6] At this point, we are not making any distinction between natures of language, language natures, or linguistic natures (see Woolard 1998 on linguistic/language ideologies vs. ideologies of language).

[7] I recognize that Perley's concept of distinct "ontological states" of language as alive or extinct differs from the ways I have been using the concept of ontology in this article. Nonetheless, I see his call for recognizing alternative and emergent vitalities as very much in line with the goals I have articulated here.

REFERENCES

Ball, Christopher. 2014. "On Dicentization." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 24(2): 151–73. https://doi.org/10.1111/jola.12046.

Ball, Christopher. 2018. *Exchanging Words: Language, Ritual, and Relationality in Brazil's Xingu Indigenous Park*. Santa Fe, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Bauman, Richard, and Charles L. Briggs. 2003. *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Becker, Alton L. 1991. "Language and Languaging." *Language & Communication* 11(1): 33–5. https://doi.org/10.1016/0271-5309(91)90013-L.

Benveniste, Émile. (1969) 1981. "The Semiology of Language." Translated by Genette Ashby and Adelaide Russo. *Semiotica* 37(S1): 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.1981.37.s1.5.

Berwick, Robert C., and Noam Chomsky. 2016. *Why Only Us: Language and Evolution*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Blaser, Mario. 2013. "Ontological Conflicts and the Stories of Peoples in Spite of Europe: Toward a Conversation on Political Ontology." *Current Anthropology* 54(5): 547–68. https://doi.org/10.1086/672270.

Blommaert, Jan, and Ad Backus. 2013. "Superdiverse Repertoires and the Individual." In *Multilingualism and Multimodality: Current Challenges for Educational Studies*, edited by Ingrid de Saint-Georges and Jean-Jacques Weber, 11–32. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Boas, Franz. 1889. "On Alternating Sounds." *American Anthropologist* 2(1): 47–54. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1889.2.1.02a00040.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bucholtz, Mary. 1999. "'Why Be Normal?': Language and Identity Practices in a Community of Nerd Girls." *Language in Society* 28(2): 203–23. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404599002043.

Calame-Griaule, Geneviève. (1965) 1986. *Words and the Dogon World.* Translated by Deirdre LaPin. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.

Candea, Matei, and Lys Alcayna-Stevens. 2012. "Internal Others: Ethnographies of Naturalism." *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 30(2): 36–47. https://doi.org/10.3167/ca.2012.300203.

Cavanaugh, Jillian R., and Shalini Shankar, eds. 2017. *Language and Materiality: Ethnographic and Theoretical Explorations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chernela, Janet M. 2018. "Language in an Ontological Register: Embodied Speech in the Northwest Amazon of Colombia and Brazil." *Language & Communication* 63: 23–32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.02.006.

Chumley, Lily. 2017. "Qualia and Ontology: Language, Semiotics, and Materiality; an Introduction." *Signs and Society* 5(S1): S1–20. https://doi.org/10.1086/690190.

Chumley, Lily Hope, and Nicholas Harkness. 2013. "Introduction: QUALIA." *Anthropological Theory* 13(1/2): 3–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499613483389.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. 1991. "Of Revelation and Revolution." In *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol I. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Corsín Jiménez, Alberto, and Rane Willerslev. 2007. "'An Anthropological Concept of the Concept': Reversibility Among the Siberian Yukaghirs." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13(3): 527–44. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2007.00441.x.

Costa, James, Haley De Korne, and Pia Lane. 2018. "Standardizing Minority Languages: Reinventing Peripheral Languages in the 21st Century." In *Standardizing Minority Languages: Competing Ideologies of Authority and Authenticity in the Global Periphery*, edited by Pia Lane, James Costa, and Haley De Korne, 1–23. New York: Routledge.

Course, Magnus. 2010. "Of Words and Fog: Linguistic Relativity and Amerindian Ontology." *Anthropological Theory* 10(3): 247–63.

Course, Magnus. 2012. "The Birth of the Word: Language, Force, and Mapuche Ritual Authority." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2(1): 1–26.

Course, Magnus. 2018. "Words Beyond Meaning in Mapuche Language Ideology." *Language & Communication* 63: 9–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.03.007.

Cusicanqui, Silvia Rivera. 2012. "Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization." Translated by Brenda Baletti. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111(1): 95–109. https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-1472612.

de la Cadena, Marisol. 2010. "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond Politics." *Cultural Anthropology* 25(2): 334–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2010.01061.x.

de la Cadena, Marisol. 2015. *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*. Durham: Duke University Press.

de la Cadena, Marisol, and Mario Blaser, eds. 2018. *A World of Many Worlds*. Durham: Duke University Press.

DeLanda, Manuel. 2016. *Assemblage Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. (1980) 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Demuro, Eugenia, and Laura Gurney. 2021. "Languages/Languaging as World-Making: The Ontological Bases of Language." *Language Sciences* 83: 101307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2020.101307.

Descola, Philippe. (2005) 2013. *Beyond Nature and Culture*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Enfield, N.J. 2005. "Areal Linguistics and Mainland Southeast Asia." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34(1): 181–206.

Ennis, Georgia. 2021. "Linguistic Natures: Method, Media, and Language Reclamation in the Ecuadorian Amazon." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 30(3): 304–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/jola.12281.

Evens, T.M.S. 2009. *Anthropology as Ethics: Nondualism and the Conduct of Sacrifice*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Fabiano, Emanuele. 2015. "'Le corps mange, tout comme la pensée soigne' : Construction des corps et techniques de contamination dans la pratique chamanique urarina." PhD thesis. Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

Ferguson, Jenanne. 2016. "Language Has a Spirit: Sakha (Yakut) Language Ideologies and Aesthetics of Sustenance." *Arctic Anthropology* 53(1): 95–111. https://doi.org/10.3368/aa.53.1.95.

Ferguson, Jenanne. 2019. *Words Like Birds: Sakha Language Discourses and Practices in the City*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Gal, Susan, and Judith T. Irvine. 2019. *Signs of Difference: Language and Ideology in Social Life*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

García, Ofelia, and Li Wei. 2014. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Goodwin, Charles. 2004. "A Competent Speaker Who Can't Speak: The Social Life of Aphasia." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 14(2): 151–70. https://doi.org/10.1525/jlin.2004.14.2.151.

Goodwin, Charles. 2010. "Multimodality in Human Interaction." *Calidoscópio* 8(2): 85–98. https://doi.org/10.4013/468.

Graham, Laura R. 1986. "Three Modes of Shavante Vocal Expression: Wailing, Collective Singing, and Political Oratory." In *Native South American Discourse*, edited by Joel Sherzer and Greg Urban, 83–118. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Graham, Laura R. 1995. *Performing Dreams: Discourses of Immortality Among the Xavante of Central Brazil*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Graham, Laura R. 2002. "How Should an Indian Speak? Amazonian Indians and the Symbolic Politics of Language in the Global Public Sphere." In *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation, and the State in Latin America*, edited by Kay B. Warren and Jean E. Jackson, 181–228. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Gumperz, John J. 1964. "Linguistic and Social Interaction in Two Communities." *American Anthropologist* 66(6): 137–53.

Gurney, Laura, and Eugenia Demuro. 2022. "Tracing New Ground, from Language to Languaging, and from Languaging to Assemblages: Rethinking Languaging Through the Multilingual and Ontological Turns." *International Journal of Multilingualism* 19(3): 305–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1689982.

Hall, Christopher J., and Rachel Wicaksono, eds. 2020. *Ontologies of English: Conceptualising the Language for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hauck, Jan David. 2016. "*Making Language: The Ideological and Interactional Constitution of Language in an Indigenous Aché Community in Eastern Paraguay.*" PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles.

Hauck, Jan David. 2018. "The Origin of Language Among the Aché." *Language & Communication* 63: 76–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.03.004.

Hauck, Jan David. 2021. "Language Evolution." In *International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology*, edited by James Stanlaw, 853–75. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hauck, Jan David. Forthcoming. "On the Ontological Diversity of Language in Indigenous South America." In *Southern Epistemologies: Knowledge, Wisdom and Understanding in the Andes and Western Amazon*, edited by H. Clark Barrett, Pablo Quintanilla, Emanuele Fabiano, and Edouard Machery. Chicago: HAU Books.

Hauck, Jan David, and Guilherme Orlandini Heurich. 2018. "Language in the Amerindian Imagination: An Inquiry into Linguistic Natures." *Language & Communication* 63: 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.03.005.

Hauck, Jan David, and Teruko Vida Mitsuhara. 2023. "Mixing, Switching, and Languaging in Interaction." In *New Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, edited by Alessandro Duranti, Rachel George, and Robin Conley-Riner, 86–106. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hauser, Marc D., Noam Chomsky, and W. Tecumseh Fitch. 2002. "The Faculty of Language: What Is It, Who Has It, and How Did It Evolve?" *Science* 298(5598): 1569–79. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.298.5598.1569.

Heath, John. 2005. *The Talking Greeks: Speech, Animals, and the Other in Homer, Aeschylus, and Plato*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Heryanto, Ariel. 1990. "The Making of Language: Developmentalism in Indonesia." *Prisma: The Indonesian Indicator* 50: 40–53.

Heurich, Guilherme Orlandini. 2018a. "Reporting, Capturing and Voicing Speech Amongst the Araweté." *Language & Communication* 63: 49–56. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.03.001.

Heurich, Guilherme Orlandini. 2018b. "The Shaman and the Flash Drive." In *From Filmmaker Warriors to Flash Drive Shamans: Indigenous Media Production and Engagement in Latin America*, edited by Richard Pace, 148–57. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Heurich, Guilherme Orlandini. 2020. "Broken Words, Furious Wasps: How Should We Translate the Sonic Materiality of Araweté Ritual Singing?" *Journal de La Société des Américanistes* 106(1): 105–26. https://doi.org/10.4000/jsa.18302.

Heurich, Guilherme Orlandini, and Jan David Hauck, eds. 2018. "Language in the Amerindian Imagination." Special issue, *Language & Communication* 63.

High, Casey. 2018. "Bodies That Speak: Languages of Differentiation and Becoming in Amazonia." *Language & Communication* 63: 65–75. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.02.005.

Holbraad, Martin, and Morten Axel Pedersen. 2017. *The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Horta, Amanda. 2021. "The Other's Tongue: Place, Perspective, and the Desire to Speak Portuguese Among the People of the Xingu Indigenous Territory." Translated by Matthew Carey. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 26(2): 256–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/jlca.12544.

Hugh-Jones, Stephen. 2021. "Monteverdi's Unruly Women and Their Amazonian Sisters." *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 46(3): 405–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/03080188.2020.1830519.

Ingold, Tim. 2000. "Speech, Writing and the Modern Origins of 'Language Origins'." In *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* 392–405. London: Routledge.

Ingold, Tim. 2018. "One World Anthropology." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 8(1–2): 158–71. https://doi.org/10.1086/698315.

Jackson, Jean E. 1983. *The Fish People: Linguistic Exogamy and Tukanoan Identity in Northwest Amazonia*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Keane, Webb. 2003. "Semiotics and the Social Analysis of Material Things." *Language & Communication* 23(3–4): 409–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309(03)00010-7.

Keane, Webb. 2009. "On Multiple Ontologies and the Temporality of Things." *Material World Blog*. http://www.materialworldblog.com/2009/07/on-multiple-ontologies-and-the-temporality-of-things/.

Keane, Webb. 2013. "Ontologies, Anthropologists, and Ethical Life." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3(1): 186–91.

Keane, Webb. 2018. "On Semiotic Ideology." *Signs and Society* 6(1): 64–87. https://doi.org/10.1086/695387.

Kohn, Eduardo. 2013. *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kopenawa, Davi, and Bruce Albert. (2010) 2013. *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*. Translated by Nicholas Elliott and Alison Dundy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Krenak, Ailton. 2019. *Ideias Para Adiar o Fim do Mundo*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

Kroskrity, Paul V. 1998. "Arizona Tewa Kiva Speech as a Manifestation of a Dominant Language Ideology." In *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, edited by Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, 103–22. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kroskrity, Paul V. 2018. "On Recognizing Persistence in the Indigenous Language Ideologies of Multilingualism in Two Native American Communities." *Language & Communication* 62(B): 133–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.04.012.

Kroskrity, Paul V. 2022. "Language Ideologies and Social Identities." In *Approaches to Language and Culture*, edited by Svenja Völkel and Nico Nassenstein, 101–25. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Latour, Bruno. (1991) 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lewy, Matthias. 2017. "About Indigenous Perspectivism, Indigenous Sonorism and the Audible Stance: Approach to a Symmetrical Auditory Anthropology." *El Oído Pensante* 5(2): 1–22. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6093561.

Lieberman, Philip. 2000. *Human Language and Our Reptilian Brain: The Subcortical Bases of Speech, Syntax, and Thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lima, Tânia Stolze. 2000. "Towards an Ethnographic Theory of the Nature/Culture Distinction in Juruna Cosmology." Translated by Frances Tornabene de Sousa. *Brazilian Review of Social Sciences*, special issue 1: 43–52. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69092000000500004.

Lloyd, G.E.R. 2012. *Being, Humanity, and Understanding: Studies in Ancient and Modern Societies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Makoni, Sinfree, and Alastair Pennycook. 2007. "Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages." In *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages*, edited by Sinfree Makoni and Alastair Pennycook, 1–41. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Makoni, Sinfree, Deryn P. Verity, and Anna Kaiper-Marquez, eds. 2021. *Integrational Linguistics and Philosophy of Language in the Global South*. London: Routledge.

Mannheim, Bruce. 2019. "Ontological Foundations for Inka Archaeology." In *Andean Ontologies: New Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by María Cecilia Lozada and Henry Tantaleán, 240–70. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Manning, Paul, and Anne Meneley. 2008. "Material Objects in Cosmological Worlds: An Introduction." *Ethnos* 73(3): 285–302. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141840802323997.

Meek, Barbra A. 2012. *We Are Our Language: An Ethnography of Language Revitalization in a Northern Athabaskan Community*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Menezes de Souza, Lynn Mario T. 2014. "Epistemic Diversity, Lazy Reason and Ethical Translation in Post-Colonial Contexts: The Case of Indigenous Educational Policy in Brazil." *Interfaces Brasil/Canadá* 14(2): 36–60.

Mika, Carl Te Hira. 2016. "Worlded Object and Its Presentation: A Māori Philosophy of Language." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 12(2): 165–76. https://doi.org/10.20507/AlterNative.2016.12.2.5.

Muehlmann, Shaylih. 2008. "'Spread Your Ass Cheeks': And Other Things That Should Not Be Said in Indigenous Languages." *American Ethnologist* 35(1): 34–48. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2008.00004.x.

Nakassis, Constantine V. 2018. "Indexicality's Ambivalent Ground." *Signs and Society* 6(1): 281–304. https://doi.org/10.1086/694753.

Oakdale, Suzanne. 2018. "Speaking Through Animals: Kawaiwete Shamanism and Metalingual Play." *Language & Communication* 63: 57–64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.02.004.

Orman, Jon. 2013. "New Lingualisms, Same Old Codes." *Language Sciences* 37: 90–8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2012.12.001.

Ortega, Lourdes. 2018. "Ontologies of Language, Second Language Acquisition, and World Englishes." *World Englishes* 37(1): 64–79. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12303.

Pablé, Adrian. 2021. "Three Critical Perspectives on the Ontology of Language." In *Integrational Linguistics and Philosophy of Language in the Global South*, edited by Sinfree Makoni, Deryn P. Verity, and Anna Kaiper-Marquez, 30–47. London: Routledge.

Pedersen, Morten Axel. 2020. "Anthropological Epochés: Phenomenology and the Ontological Turn." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 50(6): 610–46.

Peirce, Charles Sanders. 1991. In *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic by Charles Sanders Peirce*, edited by James Hoopes. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Pennycook, Alastair. 2018. *Posthumanist Applied Linguistics*. London & New York: Routledge.

Pennycook, Alastair, and Sinfree Makoni. 2020. *Innovations and Challenges in Applied Linguistics from the Global South*. London: Routledge.

Pennycook, Alastair, and Emi Otsuji. 2015. *Metrolingualism: Language in the City*. London: Routledge.

Perley, Bernard C. 2011. *Defying Maliseet Language Death: Emergent Vitalities of Language, Culture, and Identity in Eastern Canada*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Perley, Bernard C. 2012. "Zombie Linguistics: Experts, Endangered Languages and the Curse of Undead Voices." *Anthropological Forum* 22(2): 133–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2012.694170.

Rosa, Jonathan, and Nelson Flores. 2017. "Unsettling Race and Language: Toward a Raciolinguistic Perspective." *Language in Society* 46(5): 621–47. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404517000562.

Rumsey, Alan. 2018. "The Sociocultural Dynamics of Indigenous Multilingualism in Northwestern Australia." *Language & Communication* 62(B): 91–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.04.011.

Sabino, Robin. 2018. *Languaging Without Languages: Beyond Metro-, Multi-, Poly-, Pluri- and Translanguaging*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.

Savransky, Martin. 2017. "A Decolonial Imagination: Sociology, Anthropology and the Politics of Reality." *Sociology* 51(1): 11–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038516656983.

Scott, Michael W. 2007. *The Severed Snake: Matrilineages, Making Place, and a Melanesian Christianity in Southeast Solomon Islands*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Severo, Cristine Gorski, and Sinfree Makoni. 2021. "Integrationism and the Global South: Songs as Epistemic Frameworks." In *Integrational Linguistics and Philosophy of Language in the Global South*, edited by Sinfree Makoni, Deryn P. Verity, and Anna Kaiper-Marquez, 156–69. London: Routledge.

Silverstein, Michael. 1996. "Monoglot 'Standard' in America: Standardization and Metaphors of Linguistic Hegemony." In *The Matrix of Language: Contemporary Linguistic Anthropology*, edited by Donald Brenneis and Ronald Macaulay, 284–306. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Silverstein, Michael. 1998. "The Uses and Utility of Ideology: A Commentary." In *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, edited by Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, 123–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Barry. 1987. "Husserl, Language, and the Ontology of the Act." In *Speculative Grammar, Universal Grammar, and Philosophical Analysis of Language*, edited by Dino Buzzetti and Maurizio Ferriani, 205–27. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Sorensen, Arthur P. 1967. "Multilingualism in the Northwest Amazon." *American Anthropologist* 69(6): 670–84. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1967.69.6.02a00030.

Strathern, Marilyn. 1988. *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Streeck, Jürgen, Charles Goodwin, and Curtis LeBaron, eds. 2011. *Embodied Interaction: Language and Body in the Material World*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Tedlock, Dennis. 1988. "Mayan Linguistic Ideology." In *On the Ethnography of Communication: The Legacy of Sapir; Essays in Honor of Harry Hoijer 1984*, edited by Paul V. Kroskrity, 55–108. Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Anthropology.

Townsley, Graham. 1993. "Song Paths: The Ways and Means of Yaminahua Shamanic Knowledge." *L'Homme* 33(126/128): 449–68.

Urciuoli, Bonnie. 1995. "Language and Borders." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24(1): 525–46. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.002521.

Vilaça, Aparecida. 2016. *Praying and Preying: Christianity in Indigenous Amazonia*. Translated by David Rodgers. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2004. "Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation." *Tipití: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2(1): 3–22.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo (2009) 2014. *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology.* Translated by Peter Skafish. Minneapolis: Univocal.

Wagner, Roy. (1975) 1981. *The Invention of Culture*. Revised and expanded edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Walker, Harry. 2018. "On Logophagy and Truth: Interpretation Through Incorporation Among Peruvian Urarina." *Language & Communication* 63: 15–22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2018.03.003.

Woolard, Kathryn A. 1998. "Introduction: Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry." In *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, edited by Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, 3–47. Oxford: Oxford University Press.