

***Hospitable Linguistics: Alternative, Indigenous and Critical Approaches to Language Research and Language Encounters.* Nicholas Faraclas, Anne Storch, Viveka Velupillai. Multilingual Matters, 2025, pp. 368.**

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In *Hospitable Linguistics*, the fourth volume in the *Global Forum on Southern Epistemologies* series, editors Nicholas Faraclas, Anne Storch, and Viveka Velupillai curate a multifaceted and genre-blending volume that is both immensely interesting to read and invites one to reconsider what it means to research language/s in ways that are ethical, inclusive, and just. It builds on the political momentum of earlier works in the series, such as *Decolonial Voices, Language and Race* and *Shades of Decolonial Voices in Linguistics*, and continues to challenge the oft Eurocentric and exclusive traditions of mainstream linguistics while offering diverse alternatives drawn from Indigenous, feminist, postcolonial, and Global South voices and perspectives.

The central concept of “hospitable linguistics” signals a significant departure from disciplinary norms. Rather than treating hospitality as a simple metaphor, the volume approaches it from an ethical lens. In *Hospitable Linguistics*, hospitality more or less means opening up linguistic research to those who have historically been silenced—speakers of marginalised languages, racialised communities, colonised peoples, and women and queer-identifying scholars whose voices have long been dismissed or excluded. Hospitable linguistics is defined as a lifelong journey and engagement with the diverse possibilities of examining language at large. It is about accepting “epistemic diversity,” and seeking to understand “how the violent marginalisation of most of the world’s language practices and the silencing of Indigenous knowledges” contributes to our complicities with ecocidal, patriarchal, and racist systems (p. 30). Simply put, linguistic hospitality is not framed as politeness per se, but as resistance and responsibility. The book itself is divided into four thematic sections—‘Language as a Gift’, ‘Language and Sharing’, ‘Language, Resisting and Undoing Enclosures’, and ‘Language and Reassuming Sovereignty’. Each section offers a series of short to long essays that vary in tone, style, and form—some scholarly, others poetic or epistolary. As a result, this plurality of styles enacts the book’s call to destabilise academic hierarchies.

Exemplary of such is researcher in sociolinguistics and critical African studies Anne Storch’s chapter, “Sunset at a Place Visited for No Ordinary Reason.” Written rather poetically and in a semi-autobiographical style, it invites readers to reimagine fieldwork in linguistics as an intimate encounter rather than an extraction of knowledge or transaction of sorts. She takes aim at linguistic fieldwork

practices, which seem to be “a performance of expert identity” rather than “intellectual excitement”, adding that we need the “*jouissance* part of fieldwork” to free ourselves” (p. 60). Storch’s account of fieldwork in Nigeria emphasises not only the joy and curiosity involved in fieldwork, but also vulnerability and the unlearning of stale practices. Written in a similarly casual yet more critical tone, Fatou Cissé Kane’s contribution is another standout. Kane critiques institutional racism and epistemic violence in German academia and museums based partly on her personal experience. “Being a Black woman with a doctorate doesn’t change my status as a simple ‘foreigner’ in a society where foreigners are not welcome,” she writes (p. 197). Her chapter is both a raw, personal narrative and a critical intervention into the politics of academic labour, museums, and state-funded research systems. She denounces the continued silencing of African voices in German academia, arguing that nowadays “many projects deal with colonialism and decoloniality [...] but those who really suffered the misdeeds of colonization are left completely out in the cold” (p. 198). For educators and researchers concerned with gender, race and decolonising linguistics, Kane’s contribution provides a model of critique grounded in lived experience.

In the collaborative piece “Pastiche: A Conversation Between Kenyan Sheng and South African Tsotsitaal Youth Language Speakers,” Ellen Hurst-Harosh and Fridah Kanana Erastus do away with scholarly authority to foreground young voices instead. Their goal, they suggest, is to take their “voices out of the data” and “to allow speakers themselves to explain their language use” (p. 288). The result is what could be called linguistic humility—an approach deeply relevant for educators facilitating student-centred learning, especially in multilingual or multicultural classrooms. In this fashion, the entire volume challenges the institutional structures of academia. The afterword also calls out the “gatekeepers” of knowledge—editors, publishers, reviewers, and elite institutions—who continue exclusionary practices. Hospitality, as the editors argue, “should be at the very heart of (almost all) linguistic research,” especially in contexts of “migration, encounter and creating or maintaining a sense of belonging in the face of Otherness” (p. 390). These insights resonate strongly in Japanese universities, where internationalisation efforts often emphasise surface-level diversity while leaving structural inequalities unchallenged. For scholars invested in feminist pedagogy, *Hospitable Linguistics* is a reminder that inclusivity is not about representation alone—it is about the redistribution of power.

Although many chapters take liberties with academic writing conventions (or do away with them altogether), it is clearly by design. The editors argue that rigid disciplinary norms, especially in the field of linguistics, often exclude the very knowledges they seek to include. While this has the potential to be disorienting for readers expecting a stuffy 400-page text in linguistics, I argue that it

aligns with the book's decolonial mission to unsettle who gets to produce and define knowledge. Whether teaching ESL, sociolinguistics, or even intercultural communication, this book provides rich material to deconstruct linguistic imperialism. It encourages us to interrogate how our own classroom practices may replicate colonial dynamics and foster learning environments based on "hospitality", humility, and dialogue. The inclusion of gendered and racialised experiences in academia (particularly from women in the Global South) opens important space for critical reflection within Japanese academic institutions—which remain male-dominated and hierarchical in many respects. *Hospitable Linguistics* is not a traditional academic text, nor does it intend to be. It is a deliberately unruly and intellectually courageous work which challenges the field of linguistics—and by extension, universities—to become more generous, ethical, and inclusive spaces. For researchers and educators in a time when DEI policies are being rolled back, this volume offers a toolkit for reimagining language education and research not only as a technical skill, but as an ethical practice of solidarity, care, and resistance.

References

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