

Language in Professional Psychology Training: Towards Just Justice

Abstract

The dominance of white, middle-class, English- and Afrikaans-speaking people within professional psychology, both in training and practice, continues the marginalisation of Black lifeworlds. As part of Black lifeworlds, language in the training of psychologists remains an important, but under-engaged aspect of the effectiveness of psychologists to render services to the South African population. Using Lewis R. Gordon's work on justice, and drawing on the question, what is the training of psychologists for? I argue for the centralisation of language in the training of psychologists – and subsequent practice – as one way to alleviate the marginalisation of Black lifeworlds in professional psychology. To make visible how marginality and exclusion are enacted within psychology, I focus on the contestations brought about through language in higher education. I expand on unjust justice and just injustice as two ways in which Black lifeworlds have been rendered perpetually marginal during colonialism, apartheid and in democratic South Africa. I end the paper by gesturing towards possibilities of just justice through the selection of candidates for training into professional psychology.

Language in the training of psychologists remains important, but an under-engaged aspect of the effectiveness of psychologists to render services to the South African population. Currently, most practitioners are therapy proficient only in English (Health Professions Council of South Africa) [HPCSA], 2017), while – according to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)

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(2016) – English is not the primary language for the majority of South Africans. Ahmed and Pillay (2004: 634) bemoan the disparities in language distribution between practitioners and potential clients that can cause a situation wherein “the majority of people in the country do not have access to psychological help, and those who do are likely to receive this help from someone who does not speak their language. The human rights implications here are rather disturbing”. It has been over a decade and a half since Ahmed and Pillay (2004) made this observation, and language within the professional training of psychologists remains a peripheral topic (see Bantjes et al., 2016; HPCSA, 2018; Young & Saville-Young, 2019).

Following on the question posed by Premash Lalu (2015), *What is the University for?* We are brought to think about *what is psychology for?* In this paper, this question is specified to be *what is the training of psychologists for?* What I mean by asking the latter question is that unless the purpose of professional training is clearly articulated, the practice of psychologists will continue to be skewed in favour of white, middle-class, primarily English-speaking people (see Bantjes et al., 2016).

One answer to the question *what is the training of psychologists for?* is offered by the Professional Board for Psychology (HPCSA, 2019b: 2) in their training document for clinical psychologists, stating that: “[t]hese professionals will provide psychological services, that will enhance and promote the psychological well-being of the South African population”. Similar types of explanations of counselling psychologists (see HPCSA, 2019c) and those of educational psychologists (see HPCSA, 2019a) are offered. Stein (2019) observes that policies, particularly higher education policies, limit the possibilities of change, but remain the very policies from which change is imagined. In keeping with this observation by Stein, I recognise the limitations placed on the professional training of psychologists by such policies as the ones offered by Professional Board for Psychology (2019a, 2019b, 2019c). I also recognise that policies such as the **Language Policy for Higher Education** (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2002) that govern the operation of public universities also place similar limitations on change.

This article uses Lewis Gordon’s (1997, 2017) conception of justice as it is manifested in unjust justice, just injustice and just justice. I explore the social justice implications of the dominance of English and its subsequent normalisation in the consideration of candidates for the Masters degree-professional training. In thinking through language and social justice in the professional training of psychologists, it may be pertinent to contextualise the role that language plays within the South African society. I will briefly outline the historical and contemporary contestations of language in South African society with special reference to higher education. This is important in understanding

how language comes to act as a mechanism for social (in)justice. I will then outline what I mean by justice in its complexities concerning the professional training of psychologists, and end by gesturing towards language as just justice in the professional training of psychologists.

Historical legacies of language

It is near impossible to fully explore all the complexities of language in South African society, as language is deeply intertwined with the colonial and apartheid history of the country. Keeping the historical and contemporary configurations of South African society in the foreground, this paper aims to make the simple assertion that language needs to be a central component in the professional training of psychologists. My concern in the paper is not with the language policies of universities, although these are an integral part of how professional programs may structure their training. I am, however, interested in the relationship between professional training programs' *official* language and how it hampers (or promotes) effective psychological services in society.

While much attention has focused on university language policies (see Foley, 2004; le Courder, 2013; Habib, 2016; Ralarala, 2019), in this paper, I am attempting to make visible how language can act to render Black lifeworlds marginal in the training of psychologists, and their subsequent practice. I use the term lifeworlds in the way that the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1985: 124-125) used the term to argue that the lifeworld can be understood “as represented by a culturally transmitted and linguistically organized [*sic.*] stock of interpretive patterns...[l]anguage and culture are constitutive for the lifeworld itself”. My intention in highlighting the issue of the lifeworld is to impress that language should not be regarded as the panacea of the resolution of the challenges of professional psychology. Rather, what I am advocating for is that the lack of consideration of language perpetuates the exclusion, and marginalisation of Black people.

Altbach (2013) notes that English has become the hegemonic language of academia around the world. Africa has not been spared from the hegemony of English, because of the history of colonialism throughout the continent (see wa Thiong'o, 1994; Van Rooy, 2020), even as some countries on the continent had been colonised by the French, the Belgians, and the Portuguese. The aftermath of colonialism and coloniality, has given rise to configurations of power, mainly through the United States of America's (US) rise as a global superpower (Quijano, 2000). A global superpower that maintains and perpetuate the dominance of English (Quijano, 2000). Coloniality can simply be understood as the normalisation of injustice and oppressive systems, thus making certain forms of domination necessarily invisible (see Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). According to Mbithi (2014), while in countries such as Kenya,

English – along with Kiswahili – are official languages, it is English that is the language of instruction in higher education. Samuelson and Freedman (2009) reported that Rwanda has been preparing to replace French with English as an official language in universities and other places. The move by Rwanda illustrates the dominance of English in academia around the world (Van Rooy, 2020), indicating that the struggle for justice through language is a struggle against coloniality.

In South Africa, one of the more notable examples of the relationship between colonialism, apartheid, and language were the events that lead to 1976 Soweto students' uprising (Swartz & Drennen, 2000). The attempt to change the language policy of the country was part of the apartheid state's initiatives of white Afrikaner domination in all aspects of South African society. The domination was realised in numerous policies, most notable of which was the implementation of **The Bantu Education Act of No. 47 1953** (Union of South Africa, 1953), whose primary role was the subjugation of Black people in both education and work. The attempt to force Black students in basic education to use Afrikaans as the primary mode of learning by the apartheid government illustrates how language can be used as a tool to dominate people. Similarly, Neville Alexander observes that: "it is not true that languages simply develop "naturally", as it were. They are formed and manipulated within definite limits to suit the interests of different groups of people" (2005: 2). In South Africa, the manipulation of language to privilege white racial groups through the domination of Black people has remained one of the more enduring legacies of the colonial and apartheid regimes.

Du Plessis (2006) notes how the development of monolingual universities was influenced largely by the increasing numbers of either Afrikaans-speaking students or English-speaking students at those universities. These universities are now known as historically white Afrikaans-speaking universities (HWASUs) or historically white English-speaking (HWESUs). Even as the numbers of ethnic groups at various universities may have influenced the development of the universities as either Afrikaans-speaking or English-speaking, it is important not to diminish the significant influence of the socio-political context. The development of HWESUs and HWASUs was in large part a kind of social engineering that began with the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 (see Cross, 1999). This social engineering took shape in various policies both specific to higher education such as **The Extension of the Universities Act No. 45 of 1959** (Union of South Africa, 1959), and more generally to South African society such as **The Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950** (Union of South Africa, 1950). It is therefore important to place in the context of the larger social and political tapestry the contestations brought forth by language, rather than limiting the rise of HWASUs and HWESUs to a happenstance of the proliferation of ethnic groups at certain universities.

Since the abolishment of apartheid in 1994 and the subsequent ushering in of the **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa** (Republic of South Africa, 1996), there was recognition of the majority Black languages as official languages of the country alongside the previous two, English and Afrikaans. This recognition of majority Black languages was additionally identified as one of the key pillars of developing an equitable society (Drummond, 2016). Moreover, according to Cakatha and Segalo (2017), with regards to education, the Constitution maintains that every person has the right to be taught in their mother tongue. However, Drummond (2016: 72) notes the apparent caveat in the South African Constitution that states that the application of teaching in a mother tongue language can be done “where that education is reasonably practicable”. This caveat can become a way out for the implementation of teaching in languages that have been previously marginalised.

The 2015/2016 student protests lifted several issues related to practices of exclusion and marginalisation in higher education, including the issues of high fees, and institutional cultures at HWUs (see Naicker, 2016). As an example of the contestations that are brought forth by language, the hashtag #OpenStellenbosch movement is noteworthy. The student movement centred the institutional culture of the university as being white, heteropatriarchal, middle-class, and extended on the issue of ‘dual’ language policy which privileged English and Afrikaans as being exclusionary to Black students (Mpatlanyane, 2018). More precisely, the students raised that Afrikaans language speakers were unfairly benefitting from the dual language system with many classes being Afrikaans-only (Open Stellenbosch Collective, 2015). In terms of the example of the #OpenStellenbosch movement it may be important to note that there is a large proportion of people who self-identify as, and are identified as, Coloured, and who speak Afrikaans as a primary language. Even with the Coloured population speaking Afrikaans as a primary language, due to the history of the country Afrikaans has a negative view in South Africa. Moreover, the inequalities though predicated on the issue of language were entangled with racialisation and class because of the history of colonial and apartheid systems. Furthermore, while issues of representation have often privileged race, the #OpenStellenbosch movement raised how language can be used as a system of continued exclusion.

As of 2016, Stellenbosch University adopted a language policy in which modules will use Afrikaans and/or English, which – according to the university – promotes multilingualism (Stellenbosch University, 2016). Given the history of South Africa, it is rather troubling that Afrikaans continues to hold such a central position within higher education. However, the **Language Policy for Higher Education** (DHET, 2002: 10) states that: “in the light of practical and other considerations it will be necessary to work within the confines of the status quo until such time as other South African languages have been developed

to a level where they may be used in all higher education functions.” The status quo refers to the continued use of Afrikaans and English as primary languages of teaching and learning. Concerning this continued status quo, Cakata and Segalo (2016: 322) argue that the “sector still reflects the oppression-era language practices with English and Afrikaans the prominent instruction media in a majority of learning institutions”.

What becomes visible in looking at Stellenbosch University as an example is that when change is premised on existing policies, change is effectively limited (see Stein, 2019). The focus on language here raises pertinent issues on the conception of justice and injustice. On the other hand, Stellenbosch University is well within the given parameters of multilingualism as set out in the **Language Policy for Higher Education** (DHET, 2002) – language policies that continue to perpetuate the marginalisation of majority Black languages and by extension Black South Africans. It is this grey area of justice which I am concerned with elucidating in the next section, focusing on how language comes to impact the training of psychologists.

Justice

In psychology, largely due to the history of the discipline (see Louw, 1988; Nicholas, 1993) that shapes contemporary power relations, speaking English – over, for instance, Sesotho – is prized. Before discussing the conception of justice, it may be important to understand two points regarding to the history of psychology in South Africa. A note is required here: I am speaking specifically about the history of psychology in South Africa rather than the history of South African psychology, a distinction made by Ratele (2017). While the former refers to Western-centric psychology, the latter refers to all psychology done in, for, and about Africa(ns) – all of psychology.

On the two points, firstly, the hegemonic South African psychology – which is to say psychology in South Africa – was never meant to cater to Black lifeworlds. Psychology’s primary premise, whether it is looked at from emanating in the (US), or from Europe, or even the early work in late 19th century South Africa, reinforced Blackness as the deviant, pathological Other (see Bulhan, 1985; Nicholas, 1993; Danzinger, 1994; Seedat & Mackenzie, 2008). A common example here can be seen in psychometric tests, which are developed using Western, mostly white, English speaking people in the United Kingdom (UK) and the US (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009). These tests, throughout the history of psychology in South Africa, have been used to show how Black people are inferior to white people – an essential example being the **Intelligence Test Results of Poor White, Native (Zulu), Coloured and Indian School Children and the Educational and Social Implications** by Michael Fick (1929). The second point, which is related to the first, is that psychology’s primary epistemic project was never separate from the project of whiteness. This whiteness project was entrenched within dominant societal discourses of colonial

and apartheid South Africa, or Europe's Aryan domination, or even the US's oppression of minority groups – this includes the ways that Edwin Black (2003) and Enrique Dussel and colleagues (2000) have thought of the US and European domination.

These histories of psychology across various geographies, present varying ways of injustice while countering forces of what can be understood as justice. There exist a plethora of meanings of what is meant by the use of the word *justice* in any context. Broadly, justice can be seen as as restorative, distributive, procedural, and retributive (see Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016). Each of these conceptions of justice means different things in different contexts. For instance, restorative justice has been shown to have highly contested meanings (Johnstone & van Ness, 2007). The struggle for justice as a countering force for injustice can thus be seen in the multiple ways in which societies, people, institutions, and other interested parties define the parameters of justice. Social justice can thus be understood as “conditions that promote equitable distribution of resources, equal opportunity for all, nonexploitation, prevention of violence, and active citizenry” (Stark, 2019: 62). Although this definition by Stark (2019) is broad enough to encompass various activities of what justice may mean, there remains a conundrum in how justice is enacted.

I suggest that a more compelling conception of justice is offered by Gordon (2017) in a chapter titled **When Justice is not Enough: Toward the Decolonization of Normative Life**, in which he offers an important way to understand the adoption of justice in the world today. Gordon contends that:

“The standard position is this: Struggles for liberation are fought against injustice. The society, in other words, is unjust. Fixing the society requires eliminating injustice. This injustice often is about those who have versus those who lack. What happens, however, if a struggle is fought an evil institution has lost, and yet what remains is social misery? Is it correct to say justice was not achieved?” (Gordon, 2017: 31)

The fallacy is that justice is achieved when one group of people is replaced by another. However, justice appears to require more than the changing of faces, towards understanding how although there is ‘integration’, social misery remains a prominent feature of society (Gordon, 2017). During the height of apartheid, the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), Steve Biko (2004/1978) argued that racial integration will not resolve the problems inherent in a society such as South Africa. The situation described by Biko (2004/1978) can be understood to yield out of what Gordon (1997) described as the ‘classic tragedy’ in the formulation of justice:

“The current situation is a tragic situation. It is marked by tragedy because of the classic, paradoxical conflicts of just injustice and unjust justice that emerge from its

various relations of power. Unjust justice is the lived condition of people under the ideological weight of a system whose legitimation is attained through the absence of a better system [...] the question of formulating a just justice in a system that offers no alternative but a just injustice – a justice whose only claim to legitimacy is the supposed absence of any better alternative...” (Gordon, 1997: 166)

A couple of issues arise from the tragedy described by Gordon (1997), each of which is linked to language as it is currently configured within higher education in general and psychology training specifically. Firstly, in terms of the right to be taught in a mother tongue, and the caveat of ‘wherever reasonably possible’ (DHET, 2002) illustrates the point of the tragedy that supposes no alternative except to keep the status quo. Secondly, for the most part, those who stand to benefit from the current world order have been those people who have been racialised as white or those that have approximated whiteness through various social capitals, such as educational background and class (see Booi et al., 2017). Thirdly, issues of just injustice, unjust justice, and just justice pose a conundrum for the selection and practice of psychologists. In the following sections, I will attend to each one of these ways of thinking about justice as they pertain to psychologists and language. The general aim is to illustrate how forms of injustice are perpetuated by the continuous privileging of English, and how psychology training might move toward just justice.

Language, unjust justice and just injustice

In terms of language, and Gordon’s (1997, 2017) explication, there is perhaps a differentiation that can be made to understanding the complexity of justice. On one hand, it may be possible to look at colonialism and apartheid as being constructed around an unjust justice, in which the those who came to be white (see Coates, 2015) were reaping the rewards of the world order. During colonialism and apartheid white people accrued what was understood by the majority of Black people as unjust justice, which is to say that the oppression (unjust) of Black people was legalised (justice). The language policies that recognised only English and Afrikaans as the official languages of South Africa (Drummond, 2016) bare testament to the unjust justice of the colonial and apartheid eras. This colonial and apartheid marginalisation was the continuous exclusion of Black people, their inferiorisation based on the premise of white superiority (Ndimande-Hlongwa et al., 2014). Ndumiso Dladla recognises the issue of unjustness of colonialism and apartheid in his 2017 book **Here is a Table: A Philosophical Essay on the History of Race in South Africa**, in which he purposefully reminds the reader throughout the book that the colonial wars that lead to the ‘conquering’ of South Africa were ‘unjust’.

The focus then on the unjustness of the previous world orders reveals that justice in colonial and apartheid South Africa is an injustice, with several political trials bearing testament to the injustice (see Arnold, 2017). In one sense, it may be possible to argue that the student uprising of 1976 was against the fact that the imposition of Afrikaans in predominantly Black schools was unjust, even as it was sanctioned in law. On the other hand, it may not be enough to simply agree that colonialism and apartheid were fundamentally unjust societies, thus leading to the fallacy of democracy as the great equaliser of South African society. Some historians have warned against Whig historiography, the tendency to write history as a linear movement from unjust to just systems (see Long, 2016). It is more accurate that the fall of colonial and apartheid states, and the subsequent ushering in of democracy, has in many ways been fraught by disjunctures in the attainment of justice, which has in the main seen just injustice being the order of the day. An ever-growing number of people evidenced by such movements as the #RhodesMustFall, #OpenStellenbosch movement, and Abahlali baseMjondolo to name a few, would necessarily agree that contemporary democratic South Africa continues an injustice.

The current system is just injustice as it is founded on democratic majority rule, which signals to a kind of justness in the system, yet social misery – exclusion – remains. A variety of laws, such as **Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998** (Department of Labour [DoL], 1998), as well as other anti-discriminatory laws that have opened the possibilities of university entry for many Black South Africans, such as **Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997** (DHET, 1997), and more specific policies on language, like the **Language Policy for Higher Education** (DHET, 2002), are a testament to the current system being just. However, as in Gordon's (2017) explanation of the tragedy, the current system maintains an injustice to Black people because "the integration [of Black people] only meant a welcoming of black bodies into white spaces, and ignored that which they bring (their knowledges, their experiences and their world)" (Cakata & Segalo, 2017: 322). Language is part of 'that which Black people bring', that which is continuously ignored by maintaining the status quo and arguing that home language teaching can be accommodated where practically possible.

There are, however, complexities when looking at justice through the lens provided by Gordon (1997, 2017). If the system were to be changed with the hegemony of English – and Afrikaans – diminished, those who are currently reaping the rewards of the current configuration of society may argue that the system is an injustice to them. Returning to the example of Stellenbosch University's language policy that I used earlier, the court case that went as far as the highest court in South Africa – the Constitutional Court – illustrates such an interpretation of injustice. One side represented by the *Gelyke Kanse* "had argued that giving preference to English while diminishing Afrikaans at the

university, the 2016 policy contravened Section 29(2) of the Constitution, which provides for every person to receive education in an official language of their choice” (Moubray, 2019: para. 3). In this argument, *Gelyke Kanse* may be understood as making the argument that the university language policy is an injustice to students who are home language speakers of Afrikaans. The tragedy is visible here as the #OpenStellenbosch movement argued that the privileging of Afrikaans is an injustice to them as home language speakers of marginalised South African languages (Open Stellenbosch Collective, 2015). However, it remains to be said that while Afrikaans under the language policy of that university will not enjoy the same status as it has historically enjoyed under apartheid, a careful reading of that policy makes mention of how different modules in the university will use Afrikaans (Stellenbosch University, 2016). Moreover, this example reveals what Gordon (1997) calls the ‘classic tragedy’ about how fights to correct unjust practices often lead to those that are reaping the rewards of the current world order feeling that the new system is an injustice.

The colonial and apartheid structures created what some have accepted to be just systems in which certain groups by virtue of the colour of their skin, their language, educational, and economic background come to dominate others. In contemporary society, this just injustice plays itself as coloniality, in almost all spheres of life, including power and being (Quijano, 2007). In the context of the tragedy, coloniality is the maintenance of just injustice. The privileging of English in the professional training of psychologists can be understood as unjust justice, in that the demographic change within psychology is being governed through English. This is to say that entry into professional psychology, as is the case with much of the formalised world (see Cakata & Segalo, 2017), is dependent on the command of English (see also Altbach, 2013). This is an injustice, predicated on the justness of democratic South Africa, as many of the people who do not have access to these spaces are denied access through language, specifically English.

The centrality of English, and to some degree Afrikaans, in higher education are one form of just injustice. Foley (2004) makes a similar argument when presenting the following dilemma:

“at the moment, English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans, are the only languages capable of functioning fully as languages of learning and teaching at higher education institutions; yet many, perhaps most, potential higher education students are not sufficiently fluent in English and/or Afrikaans to be able to study effectively through these languages.” (Foley, 2004: 57)

The dilemma by Foley refers to the place of English within higher education and how it mediates access. My concern includes this access to higher education and extends

towards how English mediates access in professional psychology services. This type of just injustice is enacted in policies that have remained centralised on English (see Foley, 2004; Cakatha & Segalo, 2017). The command of English as an important component for entry within higher education in general, and specifically within the training of psychologists, creates just injustice.

Ahmed and Pillay (2004) contested that in the training of psychologists, the discussion on language and its role in the practice of psychologists has often been on the periphery. Whilst there is a focus on race and gender (see Bantjes et al., 2016), language has not had a focus as an important component to socially just psychology. In making language invisible in the training of psychologists, certain people have also been rendered perpetually invisible. Though we become aware of how language can oppress and render certain people invisible, through such movements as the #OpenStellenbosch student movement (Open Stellenbosch Collective, 2015). In the main, language in the training of psychologists remains an afterthought rather than as part of how just injustice is maintained.

I have attempted to explicate, on the one hand, that colonialism and apartheid relied on unjust justice in which the oppression of the majority Black people was sanctioned through law. On the other hand, the current configuration of society creates a just injustice, in which there is majority rule but yet the majority remains excluded. How then might this social misery be alleviated? I turn next to the concept of just justice as a way to move away from the conundrum of just injustice in professional psychology.

Language and gesturing towards just justice

Language remains an important part of what Stein (2019: 157) argued to be “[i]nterventions at the level of ontology [which] are perhaps the trickiest to engage, as they are long-term and necessarily open-ended.” In gesturing towards just justice it may also be important to consider the role of language in the training of psychologists within the larger context. This is a context in which certain of lifeworlds – white – come to be centre of society, and others – Black – come to perpetually occupy the margins. In language and professional training, just justice does not only occur through the introduction of Othered languages. It also means that Black lifeworlds – culture, epistemologies, and ontologies – are considered in such things as the curricula (see Ndimande-Hlongwa et al., 2010a).

It is not possible to attempt to say what a just justice may entail in South African society as this would be a tendency towards essentialising and oversimplifying the problem that faces the country. Rather, it may be possible to speak about specific areas that require addressing within, for instance, the selection and training of psychologists.

I am proposing no easy answers to the conundrum of just injustice and unjust justice. I am arguing that the attainability of just justice requires flexibility in dealing with the challenges brought about by language, rather than the rigid focus on the institutional policies. I am advancing the view that the starting point of how one might move from a state of paralysing just injustice, which relies on policies that serve the needs of the few, towards a dialectic between society and university. This dialectic is one that considers the needs of society, which in this case is that the majority of people speak English as a second or even third language, thus making it more of an imperative that continuously Othered languages be given more of a consideration in selection. In this way, it is possible to think through the question I advanced at the beginning of this paper: *what is the training of psychology for?* In firmly placing the issue of language within this seemingly grand question, it may become feasible that just justice, at least within the training of psychologists, may become a reality.

Language has legitimising powers in how it can be used to delineate belonging. As Toni Morrison in **The Origin of Others** argues:

“Language (saying, listening, reading) can encourage, even mandate, surrender, the breach of distances among us, whether they are continental or on the same pillow, whether they are distances of culture or the distinctions and indistinctions of age or gender, whether they are the consequences of social invention or biology”
(Morrison, 2017: 35-36)

Taking cognisance of what Morrison is expounding in this extract, that language breaches the distances between people, the disjuncture between the predominant language of psychologists – both as a home language and as a language of practice (HPCSA, 2017) – with the most common languages in South Africa (StatsSA, 2016) is concerning. The challenge rests in many respects with the profession as having to change how it views its purposes, aims and goals. In thinking through the role of language in creating just and equitable practices in psychology, engaging who is selected, where will they work, with whom will they work, and in what ways will they work, become important components in the training of psychologists. If professional psychology intends to reach beyond its current middle-class, white, predominately English- and Afrikaans-speaking clientele (HPCSA, 2017) and include the majority working-class, Black, and marginalised languages, then psychologists must be able to communicate/ work with this population group.

Many authors have argued that the issue of demographics of both clients and psychologists are important parts of the training of psychologists (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Bantjes et al., 2016; Pillay & Siyathola, 2016). Specifically, I would argue that

any attempt to attain just justice is placing the command of, for instance, Sesotho, IsiXhosa, Xitsonga, and TshiVenda, on equal par with English. This is to say that the selection of candidates needs to privilege candidates who can speak these languages that have continuously been marginalised within psychology. It is no longer feasible that primarily English speakers enjoy the privilege of professional training and practice, which acts to exclude the majority population. To borrow the wording offered by Ahmed and Pillay (2004), some human rights implications are being ignored if the status quo continues to prevail.

The attainment of just justice through bringing languages on par with English (and Afrikaans) is complex as can be seen at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) attempt at doing so with isiZulu. In 2006 UKZN introduced a language policy which stated that: ["t]here is a need to develop and promote proficiency in the official languages, particularly English and isiZulu" (UKZN, 2006: 1). This led to an attempt to establish isiZulu as a medium of instruction at the university, with the choice of isiZulu being prompted by the university's location in a majority Zulu speaking province (Kamwendo et al., 2014). The amended policy on language for UKZN focused on capacitating students and staff on isiZulu as a language of teaching and learning (UKZN, 2014). Ndimande-Hlongwa et al., (2010b: 155) note the development of a discipline-specific curriculum in teaching and learning of isiZulu in psychology (and nursing) at UKZN as important in reducing the occurrence of "practices of the apartheid era, whereby students are trained to work with their own population". The language project at UKZN has not been without its problems. These difficulties have stemmed from both students and staff in various studies resisting the introduction of isiZulu (Moodley, 2009; Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2010a). It is these challenges that make the attainment of just justice complex as some may view the attainment of just justice as an (just) injustice.

At the centre of psychological practice should undoubtedly be the breaching of distances between the psychologist and the people who may require services. Attaining just justice requires that the importance of language be underscored in how practitioners engage clients. If the current status quo continues, wherein the psychologist primarily uses English, there is a sense that the client must or is forced to meet the practitioner where they are, both metaphorically and physically. There is continuing injustice in that there is a possibility of doubly injuring the client, in which the client must not only deal with the psychosocial pain but also with a psychologist who may not be able to fully grasp their pain due to language barriers¹. Language

¹ This double injury was mentioned by Professor Sipho Seepe at the book launch of Kopano Ratele's *What the world looks like from here: Thoughts on African Psychology*, at Nelson Mandela University in September of 2019. See recorded book launch here: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=k-ZsLKceizk&t=1731s>

understood in this way is not only an issue of effective communication but also brings us towards the understanding of what the role of psychologists might be in society.

Conclusion

In the article I intended on highlighting the complexity of attaining justice in a world that offers no alternative except for unjust justice and just injustice. Gordon's (1997, 2017) conception of the 'classic tragedy' to which those currently reaping the benefits of the current world order, that maintains English – and to some extent Afrikaans – as the *lingua franca* view, change as unjust. Simultaneously, those that have been perpetually rendered marginal and excluded from full participation in higher education recognise the maintenance of the current world order as an injustice. The higher education policies have created a situation wherein the only conception of justice is the manifestation of injustice for most Black people.

I have argued that just justice within the selection and practice of psychologists require at least two central considerations. Firstly, the linguistic gaps between psychologists and potential clients must be breached through the selection of psychologists that can speak in languages that have been marginalised. In the conception of justice, I have proposed, there will be some that may argue that it is an injustice. I would propose that the marginalisation of Black lifeworlds cannot continue unabated. Secondly, I argued that the continuation of the status quo can act to doubly injure clients as misrecognition can occur within the therapeutic space. These two factors are essential for moving towards just justice in professional psychology, as a probable means for the correction of the unjust justice created through the colonial and apartheid systems, and the subsequent just injustice of the current system.

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