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Whose Voice Matters? Chronotopic Position(ing)s and the Dialogic Inclusion of Marginalized Stakeholders in Critical Applied Linguistics

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In this paper, we argue that critical applied linguists must work towards the materially transformative, dialogic inclusion of marginalized voices in order to create more just social relations. We show how a spatiotemporal theorization of voice as materially situated and discursively imaginative can enable a more holistic approach to including such voices. Illustrative data come from the experiences of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong and includes their discourses, those of their employers, and those of domestic worker-led grass-roots organizations. We use these data to demonstrate how different stakeholders have unequal abilities to materialize the spatiotemporal imaginaries they voice out, how academic (re)theorizations of language may not always bring about changes to the material spatiotemporal conditions of marginalized stake- holders, and why the collective voices of marginalized groups should be taken into account alongside individual voices. Implications are discussed in terms of action-oriented work that critical applied linguists can engage in to support the inclusion of migrant domestic workers' voices in particular, and the voices of marginalized stakeholders in our field more generally.

INTRODUCTION

If applied linguistics concerns itself with theorizing real-world issues related to language, then critical applied linguistics does the same, but with the additional aim of uncovering and undoing the unequal power relations in these real-world language contexts. An underlying assumption of critical applied linguistics then, is that academic (re)theorizations of language have the potential to reconfigure power relations in ways that bring about greater justice and equity in the world. In this paper, we unpack this assumption through our theorization of voice as spatiotemporal (i.e. chronotopic and scalar), and through the particular case of migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong. We demonstrate that academic (re)theorizations of language are limited in their potential to create more just social relations; and argue that these limits can be addressed through the materially transformative, dialogic inclusion of spatiotemporally marginalized voices—in this case, the voices of MDWs.

The argument that critical applied linguistics cannot achieve its aims without the participation of marginalized stakeholders outside of academia is political— nonetheless, it benefits from the use of analytical tools such as scales and chronotopes. More specifically, by foregrounding the relationship between language and space-time configurations, the notion of chronotope allows us to account for structure *and* agency; for how speakers discursively imagine the social world *and* how they are situated within it by institutional imaginaries of space and time. Further, we outline an understanding of chronotopes as both discursive *and* material to foreground the dialectic relationship between discourse and embodied realities and remind the analyst not to neglect the material conditions in which voices are situated. Finally, a scalar understanding of chronotopes adds to all this a recognition that people's voices are enabled and erased in relation to variously scaled, spatiotemporal categories and conversations, and an acknowledgment that their voices are both individual and collective.

In what follows, we briefly discuss the literature that informs our under- standing of chronotopes, scales, and voice. We then move to examine particular applied linguistics concerns that are relevant to the situation of MDWs in Hong Kong. We begin with a focus on the discourses of Hong Kong parents who employ Filipino MDWs to care for and socialize their children into particular ways of using English. Examining these discourses reveals what parents are voicing out—that is, their moral, spatiotemporal imaginaries regarding their children's language socialization—and the way in which these imaginaries inform their views of MDWs. By selecting

examples from parents whose imaginaries mirror applied linguistics theories, these data also allow us to demonstrate the limits of academic (re)theorizations for bringing about greater justice and equity in the world. We then move to the discourses of the MDWs who are hired by these families to care for children. We demonstrate that they also voice out spatiotemporal imaginaries which are relevant to child language socialization, but that their voices differ from parental voices in terms of their situatedness within institutional imaginaries that (re)construct unequal positionings. Finally, we examine the collective voices of MDWs by highlighting the demands being made by MDW-led organizations in Hong Kong. The last section of the paper explores action-oriented steps that can be taken to include the spatiotemporally situated and imaginative voices of MDWs and of marginalized stakeholders in critical applied linguistics more broadly.

THEORETICAL AND INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

Chronotopes, scales, and voice

Originally formulated by the literary theorist Bakhtin (1981), the notion of chronotope is meant to capture the intrinsic interconnectedness of time and space. As the concept has been taken up within socially situated studies of language, chronotopes have come to be theorized as spatiotemporal configurations populated by social types, which come together with scripts that specify norms for behaviour (Agha 2007; Blommaert 2018). A chronotopic approach, foregrounds the primacy of these spatiotemporal configurations in (language) ideologies and ideologically mediated (linguistic) practices (e.g. Agha 2007; Blommaert and De Fina 2017; Djuraeva 2021; Karimzad and Catedral 2021; Sanei 2021). The utility of this tool stems from its flexibility in accounting for the contexts one is *speaking from* as well as the contexts one is *speaking about* (e.g. Lyons and Tagg 2019; Karimzad 2021). Thus, the analytical frame- work can be used to capture the situated agency of voice as it enables the analyst to empirically trace how *all* speakers agentively and discursively imagine their spatiotemporal worlds, even as they speak from different privileged or marginalized positions, which in turn differently constrain the impact of their discursive imaginations. That is, any speaker, regardless of social status, may voice out chronotopically situated and morally loaded statements, such as: 'We should not use language like that in this house'. Nonetheless, such articulations will not always be taken seriously or implemented, a point that is captured well by Blommaert's

recognition of voice as the unequal 'capacity to accomplish desired *functions* through language' (Blommaert 2005: 68). This is because the material conditions from which one speaks have serious con- sequences for whether one's voice is considered authoritative, and whether it can be implemented in terms of material and structural changes (Foucault 1991; hooks 1994). In other words, one's ability to materialize their imaginary is an outcome of their material positioning—making both aspects of the chronotope key to understanding how one comes to 'accomplish desired functions through language'.

The imagined aspects of the chronotope are the discursively negotiated understandings of space-times (e.g. an understanding of a house as a 'family home', which may lead to the assertion that one should not use 'language like that' in the house), while the material aspects are the physical dimensions of space-times configurations, which are experienced in an embodied way (e.g. the physical structure of a house and the audible quality of language in the house at a particular time). The two also interact with one another such that certain chronotopic imaginaries are institutionalized, thereby (re)creating material conditions of inequality, which in turn constrain the ability of marginalized groups to materialize their imaginaries. More broadly, this dialectic, through which chronotopic materialities and imaginaries recreate each other, can be understood as *rechronotopization*, that is, the processes through which space-time is constructed and reconstructed in terms of both its material and imagined dimensions (Karimzad and Catedral 2018; Karimzad 2021).

Our use of the plural 'imaginaries' and 'materialities' is meant to highlight the multiplicity of chronotopes that interact and contrast with one another (Agha 2007; Perrino 2007; Wirtz 2016). Understanding chronotopes as multiple allows for a spatiotemporal accounting of Bakhtin's heteroglossia, which is about the interconnectedness of differently situated voices with one another, as well as the inherent multiplicity within one's own voice. Bakhtin's claim that our words come out of other 'people's mouths' and other 'people's contexts' (Bakhtin 1981: 294) guides us towards an understanding of: 'We should not use language like that in this house', as operating in relation to multiple other spatiotemporally situated voices. That is, such an assertion not only relates to the chronotope of 'this house' in the moment of speaking, but also to higher-scaled chronotopes in which language is being discussed at the national level, as well as the lower-scaled chronotopes that make up the speaker's past personal experiences (c.f. Djuraeva and Catedral 2020).

Chronotopic multiplicity is scalar in the sense that chronotopes are ordered in relation to one another based on whether they are more or less recognizable, communicable, relevant, valuable, powerful, etc. (Blommaert 2015). A single scale is not sufficient to capture the complexity of spatiotemporal imaginaries and materialities, however, making a fractal system more useful. Within such a fractal system, chronotopes are linked to each other across various interconnected scales in which recursive processes create patterns that go infinitely in all directions (Karimzad 2021; see also Irvine and Gal 2000). This means that there are fractal levels of detail (made up of multiple scales and chronotopes) within a single chronotope, and also that chronotopes are ordered in relation to one another within larger fractal patterns. For a chronotopic theory of voice, this fractal system can account for the immense complexity of heteroglossia (c.f. Hill 1995; Phipps 2012). Returning to the above example, the claim 'We should not use language like that in this house' can be linked to the religious, educational, and national voices on proper conduct situated within various societal chrono- topes, and to the chronotopically situated internal conflicts within the voice of the individual speaker. Such conflicts within the individual voice might emerge, for instance, if the articulation of the statement is a *double voiced* mocking of some other, more strict, family member (see: Woolard 1998).

In sum, conceptualizing voice as situated within chronotopes that are positioning and positioned, material, imagined, multiple, scalar, and transformable allows our analysis to capture the potential for agentive expression that is built into voice (Weidman 2014), the limitations of voice within broader material and social structures (Ahearn 2001), an understanding that voice is inherently heteroglossic (Bakhtin 1981), and that this heteroglossia is spatiotemporally situated and scaled. We now turn to the question of how this analytical frame- work can be used to help us identify and include marginalized voices in critical applied linguistics.

Identifying and including marginalized voices

For marginalized stakeholders to be included in genuine dialogue about the applied linguistics issues that impact them, it is necessary for us to (i) engage with the multi-scalar, heteroglossic nature of marginalized voices, and (ii) address the material conditions and imaginaries in which these voices are situated. The first point is meant to facilitate an inclusion of diverse marginalized voices in ways that avoid essentializing some while ignoring others, and ensures an accounting for the multiple scales at which these voices operate. One problem that

can arise in attempts to include marginalized voices is the oversimplification and essentialization of these voices. Carr observes for instance, that 'women, and especially women of colour, are commonly regarded as "truth tellers" and thereby figuratively stripped of political complexity' (Carr 2010: 152). Thus, one voice among many may be selected as a 'voice of truth' in a way that overlooks the heteroglossia within the marginalized group, and also the heteroglossia within the voice of that one speaker. Alternatively, the work of advocacy organizations or scholars may be seen as revealing the truth through representativeness and may lead one to overlook important interactions and conflicts between 'represented' voices. Cabot (2016) highlights how even projects that are meant to amplify the views of marginalized people may exclude certain voices if they do not cohere with the representational goals of these projects. Identifying and including marginalized voices is also complex because of the ways in which the margins are hierarchical. Cusicanqui (2019) highlights, for instance, that it is not only colonial powers, but also the elite within colonized countries who perpetuate systems of inequality and the sub- ordination of indigenous people. Along similar lines, those scholars promoting Southern theories and epistemologies, note the difficulties of drawing lines between 'the north' and 'the south' given the presence of indigenous people in the global north, the intertwined nature of northern and southern knowledge, and a host of other complicating factors (e.g. Pennycook and Makoni 2020; Rowlett and King 2022).

In our attempt to deal with the complex, heteroglossic nature of marginalized voices, we do not advocate for rejecting any manifestations of these voices. Rather, we propose that all of this heteroglossia can be seen as contributing legitimate and complimentary pieces to an understanding of the fractal voices that speak from particular chronotopic positions. What is key then, is that each of the various manifestations of marginalized voices should be engaged at their respective scales. The voices of the individual speakers should be considered alongside the voices of advocacy organizations, unions, or other groups through whom marginalized stakeholders speak in a 'collective tongue' (Alinsky 1946: 211). In this sense, neither the individual dissenting voice, nor the coherent collective voice from the margins should be left out (see also Cabot's 2016 on Gramsci). This multi-scalar approach also allows us to provide a more complex picture that includes, but goes beyond categorizations of groups or individuals as 'marginalized' vs. 'not marginalized' by recognizing the relational nature of marginalities. In other words, marginality is defined by a particular set of oppositions (i.e. marginalized vs. not

marginalized) that makes sense within a given chronotope, but that may be reconfigured in various ways across differently scaled chronotopic contexts (see also Irvine and Gal 2000).

In addition to identifying marginalized voices amidst heteroglossia, we have also made the claim that it is necessary to address the material conditions from which these voices speak. Our use of the term 'material' here is inclusive of the materiality invoked by other applied linguists to refer to the non-verbal objects involved in meaning–making processes (Goodwin 2018; Canagarajah 2018b), and the sonic quality and physically embodied nature of language as it is verbalized and perceived (Weidman 2014). In line with work on political economy in our field (Gal 1989; Irvine 1989; Heller 2010; McElhinny 2015; Del Percio et al. 2017), we also conceptualize materiality as including the ways in which class, race, gender, immigration status, employment status, and other socio-political and economic dimensions of inequality are experienced in an embodied way. Further, following from a Marxist understanding of material conditions as the basis of transformation—we are not only interested in how the material dimensions of social life impact discourse, but *also* in how discourse impacts (or fails to impact) the material world (see also: Harvey 1996; Block et al. 2012). This leads us to define 'genuine' dialogic inclusion in terms of material trans- formation, following Freire, who asserts that the dialogic participation of the oppressed can only be considered authentic if it is able to 'transform reality'— that is, to bring about a material change (Freire 1970: 87). In other words, if we as applied linguists seek to include marginalized stakeholders, we must involve ourselves with transforming the material conditions from which they speak, so as to increase the likelihood that *their speaking* can bring about material changes. Given the field's commitment to a political and pedagogical engagement with language that responds to power relations and social inequality (Pennycook 1990, 2022; Inoue 2017; Kubota and Miller 2017; Paris and Alim 2017), critical applied linguistics has made significant contributions to reimagining the space-times in which marginalized stakeholders operate and speak. This work has been carried out in a variety of ways: by incorporating southern perspectives on language issues (e.g. Connel 2014; Cusicanqui 2019; Kubota 2020; Ndhlovu and Makalela 2021), legitimizing 'non-standard', 'non-native', and 'everyday' ways of speaking (e.g. Labov 1969; Kachru 1985; Rickford 1999; Garcia and Li 2014; Canagarajah 2018a), and critiquing the institutional systems that reproduce materially felt inequality on the basis of language ideologies (e.g. Blommaert 2001; Hosoda et al. 2012; Rickford and King 2016; Madden 2018; Martínez 2018; Djuraeva et al. 2022).

Furthermore, there is work within the field that directly aims to bring about material transformations—with scholars acting as expert witnesses to influence the outcomes of institutional proceedings, collaborating in campaigns for changes to language use, or shifting educational norms for language teaching and testing (e.g. Labov 1982; Olsen 2009; Paris and Alim 2017; Patrick 2017; Rosa 2018; Urbanik and Pavlenko 2021). However, as a whole, what takes precedence in critical applied linguistics is the transformation of epistemologies of language—through, for instance, retheorizations which move from structuralist to post-structuralist orientations to discourse, or which change the value associated with hybrid and flexible linguistic practices (e.g. Hymes 1972; Pennycook 1990; Garcia and Li 2014; Canagarajah 2018a). Such retheorizations often account for and critique the unequal material conditions from which understandings of language arise—however, by Freire's metric the inclusion of marginalized stake- holders should go further, to enable these stakeholders to bring about material change through their own speaking.

The limitations of retheorizing language and applying these retheorizations without engaging in the transformation of the broader material conditions in which marginalized speakers are situated have been highlighted by select scholars within our field. Kubota (2020) for instance, notes that theorization of materiality should not take the place of scholarly activism in order to improve real-world conditions, while Flores calls for a materialist, anti-racist approach to activism noting that, 'simply offering bilingual education outside of broader efforts to address racial and economic inequities may do little to challenge the status quo' (Flores 2017: 566; see also Flores and Chaparro 2018). Cameron questions blaming oppression 'primarily on language' (Cameron 1992: 220) while Jaspers (2019: 101) argues for a move away from a 'radical focus on facts [about language]' in working towards social transformation. Our paper then responds to these points and further illustrates why retheorizations or reimaginations of language are insufficient on their own, and why and how we should engage in bringing about broader transformations to the wide range of material issues that constrain marginalized speakers from asserting their own voices to bring about change. Note that this is not to decry the valuable work that has and should be continued in terms of (re)theorizing language. Neither is our paper meant to erase the political work that is being carried out by critical applied linguists alongside their scholarship. Rather, our goal is to demonstrate that work which goes beyond language-centred concerns is a crucial part of achieving the 'inclusion of marginalized voices'—and in this sense

should be a concern of critical applied linguists as well.

THE CASE OF MDWS IN HONG KONG

The situation of MDWs in Hong Kong is unique in that there is a strong coalition of MDW-led, grassroots organizations (Constable 2009), which allows for an ethnographic observation of what it means for those in this position to 'voice out' their chronotopically situated concerns at multiple scales: as individuals and a collective. At the same time, the voices and contributions of MDWs are routinely ignored and overlooked by socio-political and economic actors in Hong Kong, multilateral organizations monitoring migration, and our own field of applied linguistics—which does not typically position working-class caregivers as experts on language-related issues. The specifics of the multi-scalar chrono- topic situatedness of marginalized voices is explored further below in relation to illustrative data that comes from an ongoing, ethnographic project being carried out by the first author, Lydia.

The project investigates the language ideologies and discourses shaping and being shaped by the lives of Filipino MDWs in Hong Kong. It draws from inter- views with ethnic Chinese, local Hong Kong employers who hire these MDWs to care for their children, and interviews with Filipino domestic workers who care for the children of their employers.[1] For parents, the interviews were framed as discussions about their children's language acquisition in relation to the MDWs they employed, while for MDWs the interviews were framed as discussions about their experiences of caring for their wards and communication in the home of their employers. Participants were recruited through Lydia and two research assistants' (one an ethnically Chinese Hong Kong local, and one a Filipino living in Hong Kong) social networks and through Lydia's connection to NGOs and grassroots migrant-led organizations in Hong Kong. The above interviews were supplemented by discussions with leaders of the migrant organizations, and Lydia's participant observation in gatherings, meals and rallies in the various districts of Hong Kong where Filipino-led migrant organizations and Filipino MDWs more generally gather on Sundays—which is the day off for domestic workers.

Lydia is a sociolinguist studying issues of language, marginalization and migration, and is a second-generation Asian American living and working in Hong Kong. She was connected to the migrant-led grassroots organizations for the purpose of research in 2018. Since then, she has become increasingly involved with these organizations, shifting her research to include

the discourses of grassroots organizing amongst migrants, becoming a friend to the leaders and members of these organizations, and joining in solidarity efforts overseen by grassroots leaders. The co-author of this article, Madina, was invited to participate in the project at the stage of the data analysis after sharing numerous conversations about Lydia's ongoing research and life in Hong Kong. A multilingual Central Asian migrant to the United States, whose family members are labour migrants in Russia, Madina brought an intimate understanding of issues related to labour migration, raciolinguistics, and language socialization to the project. The close connections between Lydia and the migrant-led organizations, as well as both authors' commitment to addressing issues of inequality amongst marginalized speakers inform the arguments put forward in this article, and significantly influence the implications outlined at the end.

Power and materiality of parental voices

Hiring a domestic worker to care for children and household duties is a common practice in Hong Kong with about 20 per cent of married couples employing a 'foreign domestic helper' (Cheung 2021).[2] Most of these domestic workers are from Indonesia and the Philippines.[3] A widely circulated ideology that one encounters in conversations with employers of domestic workers is that Indonesians are valued for having some understanding of Cantonese (a language commonly spoken by ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong) whereas Filipino domestic workers are valued for having a greater knowledge and understanding of English (c.f. Lorente 2018; see also Vessey and Nicolai 2022). English competency is a factor in admission to what are locally considered 'prestigious' primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. Thus, Filipino MDWs are sometimes hired with the hope that they will socialize the children they care for into particular ways of using English that prepare them for such educational spaces.

Below we highlight a few different parental voices starting with the example of Nancy and her husband, both of whom are ethnically Chinese, local Hong Kongers who have consecutively employed two different Filipino domestic workers to care for their son. They decided not to renew the contract with the first MDW they hired partially on the basis of their shared assessment that her English was not 'that good'. The excerpt below highlights Nancy's further reflections along these lines.

We want to employ a helper who can speak in English. And because my husband

also very keen on employ the helper can speak in English with bet- with less Filipino accent. When employ the helper, he will listen to the accent, is it fluent… Because A [their son] is four years old at that moment it's quite important for building up the language accent. So we employ a better knowledge helper is with university grade. So her English is quite good. But last time that helper is around 43 years old already is a farmer so the English is not so good, just one to two vocabulary. Like say "yes", "no", "yes ma'am", "no problem" but not so fluent speaking. But now the helper, this one can have story time bedtime storytelling to A.

In positioning the two MDWs Nancy evaluates the first as having 'not so good English' by invoking the domestic worker's previous spatiotemporal situated- ness as a farmer in the Philippines. Nancy links this chronotope to the MDW's restricted use of phrases such as 'yes ma'am', 'no' and 'no problem'. In contrast, she evaluates the second MDW as having 'quite good English' and being able 'to have bedtime storytelling with the son', linking this ability to the chrono- tope of university. What counts as 'good English' is evaluated not only in relation to these spatiotemporal imaginations of rural vs. academic contexts in the Philippines, but also in relation to idealized images of language proficiency that bear resemblance to the academic notions of 'native speaker' and 'communicative competence'—which we discuss briefly below.

Chomsky's model of competence is based on an ideal speaker/hearer whose 'nativeness' in a language makes it innate to them (Chomsky 1986). This assumption permeates scholarship on language acquisition, and is also a commonly held folk ideology, such that the 'native speaker' becomes the unattainable ideal for all language learners (Bonfiglio 2010; Doerr 2009). It is also chronotopic in that one's position as a native or non-native speaker is based on their geographic location, race, and history (Higgins 2003; Norton 2018). While Nancy and her husband do not directly invoke the concept of native- ness, in their evaluations of the two MDWs they hired, they do discuss various spatiotemporal issues that draw attention to the boundaries typically associated with native/non-native dichotomies. For instance, Nancy relays her husband's comment that the MDW should speak better English with 'less Filipino accent'. The assumption is that the time-space of the Philippines results in non-native pronunciation, as opposed to the time-spaces of colonial powers such as the USA or the UK. Nancy also draws attention to how timing is of essence in acquiring a language ('Because A is four years old at that moment it's quite important for building up the language accent'), invoking concepts that resemble those of the 'critical period'—which emphasizes that native-like

competence in a language can be achieved only within one's youth (Penfield and Roberts 1959; Lenneberg 1967).

For the critical applied linguist, it will not be surprising that these parents invoke concepts that mirror both folk and academic discourses on nativeness in constructing reductive, commodified imaginaries of Filipino MDWs and their language use. Much research in our field has been dedicated to challenging the assumptions of nativeness and to demonstrating how this concept creates inequalities, and positions those considered 'non-native' at a considerable dis- advantage within and outside educational contexts (see Aneja 2016 for an over- view). This critical scholarship and the theories meant to replace native-speaker views of competence have done much to critique the inequalities associated with the native vs. non-native dichotomy, and to propose alternative understandings of competence that highlight language use in the relatively lower-scaled space- times of day-to-day interaction (e.g. Hymes 1972; Makoni and Pennycook 2012; Canagarajah 2018a). However, more flexible, interaction-based notions such as 'communicative competence'—that is, the competence needed to use language in contextually appropriate ways (Hymes 1972)—can also become tools of evaluation and commodification themselves (see also: Flores 2013).

We observe this in the way that parental voices do not only evaluate MDW's linguistic competence on the basis of chronotopes associated with nativeness (i.e. the nation-state), but also through chronotopes associated with the day- to-day interactions that can be captured by notions such as communicative competence. For instance, Nancy mentions that the second MDW she hires is better than the first because she tells stories to the son. In so doing, she focuses her evaluations on a very particularized, contextual competence rather than abstract notions of nativeness. Elsewhere in the interview, she emphasizes that 'daily interaction' in English is the most important thing for her son to receive from the person she hires, and that the main difference between the first worker (whose contract they did not renew) and the second was this issue of *interaction*, rather than problems of nativeness, or even problems related to household responsibilities. In another case, a mother we will call Minnie noted that she terminated the contract of the first MDW she hired after one year because—among other things—the worker did not engage in much communicative interaction with her daughter. In her words 'The first one is for filling meals, no interaction'. In contrast, she noted that she was very thankful for the second MDW she hired as this woman engaged in various types of

multimodal, interactive, communicative activities with her daughter. She noted that such interactions prepared the daughter to pass a highly competitive interview to be admitted and to attend an international, English medium of instruction kindergarten in Hong Kong.

They [the interviewers] ask a lot of questions in English and do a lot of follow instructions, and perform a lot of tasks. So if in daily life uh they [the children] didn't listen to English, didn't have chance, I don't think they can be able to get a place there… Sometimes they [the second domestic helper and the daughter] watch videos together yea and then uh my helper will ask questions and interacting with my daughter...I think this natural conversations can help understanding so...they have a lot of time for playing and interaction. That's why I actually appreciate my helper very much.

We can observe the materialization of Minnie's chronotopic imaginary as she makes hiring decisions in a way that will shape the time-space of language socialization in the home so that it aligns with the normative expectations of language use in the time-space of the competitive kindergarten. She first highlights how the kindergarten prioritizes children's linguistic competence as demonstrated by their ability to answer questions about their real life and to follow instructions. She then goes on to show how the interactions between the second MDW and her daughter are similarly communicative and interactive, and highlights the 'naturalness' of these conversations, their multimodality (involving videos and toys), and their interactive components—mirroring many of the discourses critical applied linguists have put forward in advocating for alternative epistemologies of language.

Those employers who prioritized interaction over accent generally did so for two reasons. One was because they recognized a shift in the linguistic market- place, in which communicative competence had gained linguistic and social capital (c.f. Bourdieu 1991). And the second was because they had access to other resources, such as 'native-speaker' language tutors who could work with the children specifically on issues of 'phonics' and 'pronunciation' in ways that MDWs were not expected to. Thus, we see how the shifting supply and demand of the market allows for views of language that are reminiscent of both the traditions of Chomsky and Hymes to be used to evaluate, commodify, and discredit certain groups of speakers. The key point here is not that Nancy and Minnie are 'bad employers'. In fact, Minnie's appreciation of her MDW and Nancy's comments in other parts of her interview regarding how she teaches her son to respect their MDW suggest that they value and recognize the contributions of the MDWs working

for them. This recognition is enabled in part by the importance they place on interactive language use within chronotopes of day-to-day life. However, for our purposes here, the key point is the power differential between parental and MDW voices. Parents are positioned as employers who have an expansive capacity for making employment decisions, and their powerful voices and spatiotemporal imaginaries have the potential to be materialized in ways that have a real-world impact on the MDWs they hire. This is true regardless of their views on linguistic competence or their level of appreciation. Thus, retheorizations of competence, even when they are reflected within the market and within the voices of relatively powerful speakers, do little to change the market logics. Within these market logics, domestic workers continue to be positioned as commodities required to adjust to the spatiotemporal visions of their employers, or else run the risk of losing their employment.

Multiplicity and marginalization of domestic workers' voices

The power of employers' voices and imaginaries become clearer when contrasted with those of MDWs. In the excerpts below we primarily focus on MDWs' concerns about communication and authority over children in their employers' households. Children's manners, their defiance of the MDWs instructions and their not being disciplined for their communicative and other behaviours came up frequently across interviews with domestic workers. This is likely because these types of communicative issues have a direct impact on MDWs' material, daily experiences of caring for children. In fact, one MDW noted that she could not continue her job because the children were so unruly that they physically hurt her.

The specific excerpts below come from a conversation among a group of Filipino MDWs who attend the same church and who were gathered at the church building on a rest day to chat with one another and to prepare food after the service. The conversation became extremely engaging for everyone present when Lydia asked about whether they teach the children they care for 'manners'. While the answers started out with a more explicitly linguistic focus in which the MDWs noted that they try to teach the children to say 'please' and 'thank you', it then expanded into a broader conversation about their views on (in)appropriate communicative practices between parents, children, and domestic workers at home. For instance, Ella critiqued her employers' limited communicative involvement when it came to discipline:

I think my employer she don't really interact with the children. She only interrupt us when the children already behaving wild. So you're the one to discipline -- the one who is responsible to discipline the children.

In this critique, Ella contrasts her current experience of the chronotope of 'home', in which she is responsible for disciplining the children, with her ideal image of a home in which parents would be responsible. Others align with her critique, such as Susan, who further adds that '*It is mostly Chinese parents who don't know how to discipline the children. So that's why we're here to discipline the children'*. Susan links the specific chronotope of 'disciplining children in Ella's employer's home' to the higher-scaled image of 'Chinese parents in Hong Kong disciplining their children'. This interaction between particular and generalized chronotopic images of employers parallels the interaction between particular and generalized chronotopic images of Filipino vs. Indonesian MDWs that circulate among employers.

The conversation is then redirected by Melody and Faith who voice out a different set of chronotopic contrasts relating to communication and discipline in the home.

Melody: Yea if they [the parents] are giving you the authority to do that you can. But some no…

Faith: Because the parents even teach the kids that uh you will not listen to the helper. That's why it's very hard...they [the past employers' children] told me that "No my mom told me that never listen to you"

For Melody and Faith the relevant contrast is not between an image of parents vs. MDWs taking responsibility for discipline, but rather between those space- times in which domestic workers are given communicative authority over children vs. those where they are not. They highlight that not only are domestic workers not given authority in matters of children's discipline, but also that the children they care for may be actively encouraged not to listen to them.

Beyond the issue of communicative authority, MDWs also voiced out several other concerns related to household communication. Some took pride in the language acquisition of the children they cared for in a way that aligns with the parental visions described above. For instance, when Lydia shared about the topic of her research, while visiting the Central district of Hong Kong and inter- acting with members of the migrant-led organizations, one MDW noted that her ward had gone from knowing no English when she arrived to becoming an adult who was

studying in a prestigious, English-language university abroad. Those whom Lydia met through religious gatherings highlighted spatiotemporal visions that aligned with their religious convictions and their hopes that the children they cared for would become Christians, while others expressed personal views of how children should be taught to interact with strangers, for instance. While clearly not a comprehensive overview of the communicative concerns that MDWs voice out, we mention these examples to underscore the point that not every marginalized voice is the same.

Overall, MDWs, just like employers, enact their moral evaluations in relation to spatiotemporal imaginaries that are shaped by their individual histories and moral values, operating at various scales. What is different, however, is the relative power of these spatiotemporal visions, because of the ways that these voices are differently positioned by institutional forces. As shown in the excerpts above, Melody, Faith, Ella and Susan highlight how they lack the authority to enact their moral, spatiotemporal preferences in relation to child (language) socialization, because their voices are not valued or considered by their employers, or because their employers are not willing to work collaboratively with them. Thus, while parents' moral spatiotemporal imaginaries guide the processes of commodification through which domestic workers are employed and dismissed, domestic workers' moral spatiotemporal imaginaries are typically only enacted in spaces such as the above—with other domestic workers, on a day off, away from their employers and their wards.

Transformative discourses of domestic worker-led grassroot organizations

The difference in power between the voices of employers and those of MDWs is a result of the chronotopes within which these voices have been situated by the legislation and practice of governing bodies in both Hong Kong and the Philippines, which create a permanent working class of MDWs that must flexibly adjust to the needs of those in Hong Kong according to their buying power (AMCB-IMA Presentation 2021).[4] As just one example, employers can terminate contracts with domestic workers multiple times without consequence, whereas domestic workers may be accused of 'job-hopping' and not have their visas approved if they switch employers multiple times. Relatedly, parents can act upon their imaginaries of language use in the home by terminating or renewing the worker's contract

or by asking the worker to speak in particular ways with the child. In contrast, a domestic worker will typically not be able to act on or implement their chronotopic imaginary, and they will not have the ability to easily terminate their contract if they find the communicative situation in the home unbearable.

Those rights that have been won for MDWs are mostly the result of migrant organizing in Hong Kong. Beyond winning cases for individual abused migrants, this includes successful opposition of Hong Kong government proposals to cut the minimum wage of migrant domestic workers and to abolish maternity protection for migrant workers (Hsia 2009). While these grassroots organizations are not primarily concerned with norms for communication or language socialization in the home, their discourses are crucial to an understanding of voice, as they seek to transform the chronotopic materialities within which domes- tic worker voices are situated. Grassroots organizations' attempts to transform existing chronotopic imaginaries and their corresponding materialities can be conceptualized as acts of *rechronotopization*. Relevant chronotopes include the time-space of 'home', 'workplace', and 'days off' for domestic workers, as the way these chronotopes are (re)imagined and materially enacted has consequences for lived experience. To transform relevant chronotopes in relation to legislation, MDW-led organizations stage protests, organize meetings with governmental representatives and critique existing policies. As an example of such discourses, take the following 29 July 2021 post on Facebook. The post was shared by the Filipino Migrant Worker's Union (FMWU) and was originally created by one of the migrant leaders, Eman Villanueva. It included anonymized photos of domestic workers who had been physically abused along with English text, from which the following is an excerpt:

This is the ugly face of modern-day slavery in Hong Kong...It's not just about bad employers. It's also about bad policies. Policies that create the conditions for abuse and slavery of migrant domestic workers to happen repeatedly and most often hidden from the public's attention. Forced live-in, two-week rule, criminalizing "job-hopping" or moving from one employer to another, and the consistent stigmatization of the MDW community by government officials - all these create an unfriendly, exclusionary and violent living and working environment for migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong.

The policies highlighted in this post all operate chronotopically in relation to both the imagination and materialities of particular time-space-personhood configurations. The 'live-in

rule' requires that domestic workers live in the home of their employers, while the 'two-week rule' specifies that domestic workers only have two weeks to find new employment after their contract has been terminated before their visa expires. All of this, along with the criminalization of 'job-hopping', which was described above, imagines and materializes the experience of domestic workers as temporary, and as only belonging in Hong Kong insofar as they are serving the needs of their employers. The work of organizations such FMWU then, aims to reimagine and rematerialize these chronotopes, by changing policies to account for the human rights and labour rights of MDWs.

It may appear that grassroots organizations' concerns regarding the abuse of MDWs is unrelated to the situations we have analyzed above: Employers voicing out their concerns about their children's language acquisition and individual MDWs outlining their preferences and critiques of communication in the home (though see Ladegaard 2016 for analysis of language issues in narratives of abuse experienced by MDWs). However, a chronotopic understanding of voice should allow us to see the interconnections between these various issues. That is, while domestic workers can *speak about* their spatiotemporal concerns and preferences, they *speak from* a chronotopic position that generally disallows them from materializing these preferences. It is this same, marginal position that restricts them, as individuals, from engaging in genuine, materially transformative dialogue when they face extreme abuse at the hands of their employers. Because the discourses and actions of grassroots organizations are aimed at rechronotopizing the material chronotopes from which MDWs speak, they are also aimed at creating the conditions through which domestic workers' voices can be genuinely included in transformative dialogue. This is one reason we should take these organizational voices seriously. The second is because the discourses of these grassroots organizations are a part of the heteroglossic voices of domestic workers. If we aim to account for the multi-scalar, heteroglossic voices of marginalized groups, this necessitates—in addition to individual voices—taking into account such collective voices, which have been able to enact material and structural change in a way that individual MDWs have rarely been able to.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INCLUDING THE VOICES OF MARGIN- ALIZED STAKEHOLDERS

Given what we have laid out in this paper, what might it look like for critical applied linguists to work towards the genuine inclusion of marginalized stake- holders? The following are

offered as preliminary suggestions—but should be taken with an understanding that marginality differs across contexts and thus, the applicability of these suggestions would need to be further investigated in particular cases.

Applied linguists can continue the long tradition of outreach to reshape the imaginaries of those powerful stakeholders who constrain the dialogic participation of more marginalized groups. This might look like holding workshops for employers of domestic workers, much in the way that critical applied linguists have conducted workshops for teachers to promote educational activities that use language in more inclusive ways (e.g. Whitney 2005; Higgins 2010; Djuraeva et al. 2022). These workshops could also draw on the work of previous scholars who have made such critical perspectives more accessible to broader audiences through the use of innovative technology, creative media and interactive projects (e.g. Darvin 2019; Patiño and Vieira 2019; Mena 2022). In the specific context of MDWs in Hong Kong, one can draw inspiration from social advocacy events such as the 'Happy Homes' project hosted by the Mission for Migrant Workers—which allows MDWs to nominate and speak about employers that they feel create a 'happy home' environment for their work and life.[5] Similarly, while an applied linguist could draw on their area of scholarly expertise to focus their workshop more explicitly on linguistic and communicative dynamics within the home (e.g. how children are taught to speak to and communicate with MDWs), they could also incorporate the perspectives and voices of MDWs by having them speak about their evaluations of these issues. Situating such workshops within the framework we have outlined in this paper, allows us to see them as contributions to reconstructing chronotopic imaginaries, which have the potential to lead towards material justice. This potential, however, may or may not be realized, given how reimaginations of language can be insufficient for countering the economic systems of commodification and broader material conditions in which speakers are situated—as discussed above. In order to more directly address the material conditions in which speakers are situated, critical applied linguists can follow in the footsteps of those scholars who have prioritized working with grassroots organizations in order to achieve change at the scale of policy (Santos 2016)[6]. Such political action is necessary if the goal is for marginalized speakers to participate in materially transformative dialogue. Following Santos' (2016) notion of the *rearguard intellectual*, we can understand our role in such political action as a supporting one, in which we as scholars follow the lead of those organizing on the ground. For applied linguists, this means that—in our

political engagements—we should not only focus on that which we find relevant because language is foregrounded as the main object of attention, but rather we can be open to shifting our focus to the material concerns of the marginalized stakeholders with whom we work. Letting these collective voices shift our imagination, not just of what language is, but about when and whether it is the most important thing for us to be focused on, expands the possibility of our support for the inclusion of marginalized voices (see also: Cameron 1992 on the direction of research projects; and Rickford 1999 on service to the community). In Lydia's engagement with the migrant-led organizations, this has played out in the following way. She became involved with the grassroots organizations to find ways to use her research to serve migrant communities. As she became more connected with these organizations, however, she was asked by their leaders to serve in a different way: by joining a solidarity organization focused on human rights violations in the Philippines.[7] While the migrant leaders see this work as connected to their mission of improving the conditions of migrants in Hong Kong by addressing the root causes of their migration in the homeland, Lydia was initially resistant to this request as it was outside of her knowledge, expertise, research area, and interests. Over the course of the past two years, however, she has engaged in this work under the leadership of migrant organizers and has begun to find ways to link human rights issues in the Philippines to her teaching on discourse and language-related issues.[8] She finds engagements with human rights issues in the Philippines a concrete way to 'follow the lead of those on the ground', while continuing her research—which often differs from this solidarity work in terms of its scope and focus.

In the above two implications, we have highlighted how critical applied linguists can engage in education and politics in solidarity with marginalized research participants. These types of work involve different space-times and scales, making different details of one's identity more or less relevant (Blommaert and De Fina 2017). For instance, in making a political statement, one may engage as a member of civil society, whereas in an educational workshop one's expertise and research focus on language-related issues may become more relevant. This highlights the fact that our voices as scholars are heteroglossic and multi-scalar in the same way as our participants' (Phipps 2012). Thus, a more comprehensive, multi-scalar engagement with the inclusion of marginalized voices need not be restricted to applied linguists' critiques in academic journals or to their political statements, but should also be

enacted in the interpersonal scales of daily life—particularly in relation to those over whom applied linguists as individuals have relative power. In relation to the specific case discussed here, many applied linguists in Hong Kong employ MDWs in their homes to care for their own children. In these cases, dialogic inclusion can be pursued regardless of whether the MDWs voice out imaginaries that are in line with critical applied linguistic theories or not. As one example, an MDW named Teresa explained in an interview that the mother of the children she cared for taught the children to never talk to strangers. Teresa found this frustrating as she felt that the children should be taught to say 'hello' to others they encountered in order to be 'polite' and should learn to ask 'trustworthy' strangers for help in case they got lost. In this case, there is a clash of moral imaginaries that cannot be easily resolved through an appeal to either research or critical perspectives on communication. Voices like Teresa's must, nonetheless, be considered and placed in dialogue with our own voices—as applied linguists and employers—not because they are inherently more critical, but rather because they are human voices that are deserving of respect and are impacted by and intimately connected to these real-world language issues.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have laid out a chronotopic-scalar understanding of voice as both positioned and positioning, materially situated and discursively imaginative in order to put forward a more holistic approach to the inclusion of marginalized voices in applied linguistics. Given our argument about the limitations of academic retheorizations, we want to be clear that our contribution is not a theorization of voice as an end in and of itself. Rather, this paper is meant to point towards the spatiotemporally situated voices of MDWs, and in so doing, to point the reader towards the voices of the marginalized stake- holders who are present across a variety of applied linguistics contexts. In this sense, we aim to index (Silverstein 1993) these voices rather than trying to represent them because our own trajectories as researchers have shown us that what can be learned from engaging with the heteroglossic and multi-scalar voices of MDWs, for instance, is more complex, accurate and extensive than whatever arguments we can (re)articulate in our own voices within the scope of this paper.

It is, in fact, our engagement with the individual and collective voices of MDWs that have expanded our focus to attend to language, discursive imaginaries, and ideologies about

communication and socialization *alongside* the material conditions in which MDWs find themselves in Hong Kong. Their voices call attention to the fact that in order for critical applied linguists to heed bell hooks' warning that 'theory is not inherently healing, liberatory or revolutionary [but] fulfils this function, only when we ask that it do so' (1994: 61), we must see our retheorizations of language as a first step within a constellation of multi-scalar activities in which we should be engaged. In an overview of criticality in language studies, Kubota and Miller (2017: 132) pose a question about whether the 'critical' nature of our research can 'go beyond the rhetoric of equity and social justice and make real differences in people's lives?' We would respond that it can, but that making such a difference is often dependent on critical applied linguists not only continuing their academic discussions and publications, but also going beyond what are traditionally considered the limits of our field, by following the lead of marginalized voices.

NOTES

1 Interviews were conducted in English, Cantonese, and Tagalog according to the preferences and abilities of the interviewees.

2 Note that 'migrant domestic worker' is the term typically used by MDW- led grassroots organizations, while 'Foreign Domestic Helper' is the official designation of the Hong Kong government.

3 Hong Kong government statistics on Foreign Domestic Helpers: https://data.gov.hk/en-data/dataset/ hk-immd-set4-statistics-fdh

4 From the Asian Migrants Coordinating Body (AMCB-IMA) presentation on 'Modern Slavery and Social Exclusion of Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong'

5 Source: https://www.migrants.net/ empowerment-1 (Last accessed 23 May 2022).

6 See, for example, the work of Tove Skutnab-Kangas, who works as an Advisory panel member for the organization Terralingua; and the work of Jonathan Rosa and other linguists working with activists to challenge the use of the word 'illegal' in media publications on undocumented immigrants.

7 The Hong Kong Campaign for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines: https://www.facebook.com/ HKCAHRPP

8 Oneexamplewasarecentvideothatwas created to link the notion of 'language as action' to the case of red-tagging in the Philippines for undergraduate students. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wz_MOuHdOI

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