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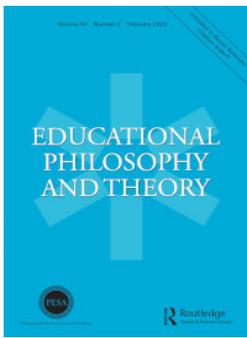


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An ecopedagogical, ecolinguistical reading of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): what we have learned from Paulo Freire

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ABSTRACT

This article will discuss Paulo Freire's global influences on environmental pedagogies and argue that ecopedagogical reinventions are essential for 'quality' education, as touted in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #4, for global, all-inclusive 'development' that is planetarily sustainable. The politics of how 'development' is taught or not taught to be critically read linguistically and dialogically will be problematized through Freire's work, and reinventions of his work, on ecopedagogy. As Freire was a pedagogue of critical literacy, ecopedagogical literacy widens 'reading the word to read the world' (all humans, human populations) to read Earth to read the world as part of Earth. Such reading is not anthropocentric. The article will first describe Freire's influence on reinventing environmental pedagogies, including education for (un)sustainable development (ESD), with specific discussions on how language of 'development' and corresponding (un)sustainability is framed. These influences from Freire will then be discussed through his de/re/constructions of citizenship, utopia and education, and globalization. Throughout the article, I will argue the need for teaching ecopedagogical literacy with ecolinguistics is essential to better understand the politics of language and (non)hierarchical dialogue which influence how 'development' goals are constructed, including the SDGs.

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Introduction

I want to be remembered as somebody who loved the men, the women, the plants, the animals, the Earth (Interview at the Paulo Freire Institute, São Paulo (Gadotti & Torres, 2009, pp. 1261–1262)).

Paulo Freire's literacy pedagogy was a paradigm shift in education – students and teachers learning together to read the world by dialectically problematizing how we are taught what the world 'is', what are the politics constructing the world, how the world 'should be', and what actions are necessary to end oppressions. Ecopedagogy widens Freire's initial notion of reading of the world (defined as the anthroposphere, all humans and human populations) to reading Earth (defined as the planetary sphere, with the world as an inseparable part of Earth).^{1,2} This *ecopedagogical literacy* includes critically reading 'development'. This article will analyze Freire's

influences on language and dialectics to unveil the politics of 'development' and hidden curricula of environmental pedagogies, including education for sustainable development (ESD).³ This includes the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and pedagogies guided by them, including SDG#4 on education quality.

Ecopedagogies – plurally conceptualized in order to acknowledge diversities within the fields - emerged from Freirean popular education movements that have an aim to end inseparable social and environmental violence and injustices (Gadotti, 2008b, 2008c; Gutiérrez & Prado, 1989; Kahn, 2010; Misiaszek, 2012, 2018, 2020b). This article's limited space does not allow for a thorough defining of ecopedagogy; however, what follows is a brief description:

Ecopedagogy is essentially literacy education for reading and rereading human acts of environmental violence with its roots in popular education, as they are reinventions of the pedagogies of the Brazilian pedagogue and philosopher Paulo Freire. Ecopedagogies are grounded in critical thinking and transformability, with the ultimate goal being to construct learning with increased social and environmental justice. Rooted in critical theories and originating from popular education models of Latin America, ecopedagogy is centered on better understanding the connections between human acts of environmental violence and social violence that cause injustices/oppressions, domination over the rest of Nature, and planetary unsustainability. [Better understanding is] through the aspect of deepening and widening understandings from different perspectives, ranging from the Self to local, to national, to global, to the planetary (Misiaszek, 2020b, p. 1).

Determining what and how environmental violence leads to social injustice and planetary unsustainability is key to Freire's contribution to in/non/formal environmental pedagogies and environmental justice. There are two important aspects to note: (1) Freire's work included the connections between the world and the rest of Earth, and (2) some of his ecopedagogical work in the posthumously published *Pedagogy of Indignation* (2004), as ecopedagogy was the focus of his next, but uncompleted, book before his death in 1997 (Gadotti & Torres, 2009; Misiaszek & Torres, 2019).

Ecopedagogical work balances 'widening' reading of world-Earth socio-environmental violence with 'deepening' reading of local contextuality, ingenuous knowledges, and diverse ways of knowing (i.e. epistemologies) (Gadotti, 2008a, 2008b; Misiaszek, 2018, 2020b).^{4,5} This includes reading how language, linguistics and communication dynamics too-often justify dominant forms of 'development' and 'sustainability' that lead to socio-environmental oppressions and planetary unsustainability.

The 'reading' or 'rereading' of reality as it is being transformed is the primary consideration, taking precedence over the mere learning of the written language... discussing generative themes related to their concrete interests. They may discuss, for example, their experience with collective production of what they need and the relationship between this activity and national reconstruction. (Freire, 1978, pp. 160-161)

Freirean reading includes the deconstruction of the politics of language and communication dynamics used oppression and dominance. Freirean literacy is inherently 'bottom-up' reading for understanding oppressions from those suffering to gain deepened and widened reflectivity in determining necessary transformative actions (i.e. praxis). Moacir Gadotti (1996)⁶ has argued that only learning oppressions without praxis is perverse, as well as anti-Freirean.

Freire vehemently argued against fatalistic education by stressing the need for utopia in teaching to guide praxis. How does language and dialogue of 'development' sustainability or counter environmental violence is an essential question to continuously problematize for constructing humanizing and planetarily-sustainable development. The language that we utilize to express world-Earth (in)separability determines how we (de)value each other and the rest of Nature.⁷

In part, I will utilize ecolinguistics to analyze Freire's influence on language and communication that decodes anti-environmentalism, unsustainability, socio-environmental injustice, and dominance over the rest of Nature. There are many differing definitions of ecolinguistics, the following two give the key aspects.

One of the unique facets of the human species is, of course, the possession of a sophisticated written and oral language. Another is the ability to single-handedly, as a species, alter the global conditions of the Earth to make it less hospitable for our species and others. What unites the majority of ecolinguists is the suspicion that these two facets of humanity are connected. Halliday (2001, p. 103), for instance, claims that 'There is a syndrome of grammatical features which conspire... to construe reality in a certain way; and it is a way that is no longer good for our health as a species'. Mühlhäusler (2003, p. 91), 'grammatical constructions have developed in the more recent past that might encourage language habits which have contributed to our present environmental crisis.' (Stibbe, 2012)

...ecolinguistics defined as 'the ecological approach to language takes into consideration the complex network of relations occurring between environment, languages and people speaking these languages' (Wendel, 2005, p. 51)

Ecolinguistical framings will be further defined selectively throughout this article to argue Freire's influences on language and intercultural communications within environmental pedagogies.

This article first focuses on the ecopedagogical work to counter the hegemonic politics of development's language and dialogue for (un)sustainability, inside and outside the SDGs. These discussions are then deconstructed through the Freirean constructs of citizenship, utopia and education, and globalization. Through analysis of Freire's influences on (eco)linguistics and reinventing environmental pedagogies, this article is written to be a macro-level guide on critically deconstructing these terms. Although not done in this article, such ecolinguistical analysis is essential upon the documentation and rhetoric of the 'Big Five' international organizations who are influential in regulating, imposing, and/or funding the SDGs (UNESCO, World Bank, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Union, and the International Labour Organization (ILO)).

d/Development: the SDGs, language, and intercultural dialogue

At [the] Paulo Freire Institute, we consider the Earth Charter an invitation from the Earth, a message, a guide for a sustainable lifestyle and a call for action. With this ethical view, we have included the Earth Charter as a transversal generative theme of all our projects, such as Adult Education, Alphabetization, Citizen Education, Curriculum etc., as an interdisciplinary theme. In order to achieve this, we have created a concept and view of an **Ecopedagogy** (initially called Sustainable Development Pedagogy), as a suitable pedagogy for the Earth Charter. (Gadotti, 2008b, p. 2, text bolded by Gadotti)

Development can be grounded in globally holistic social justice with planetary sustainability or, opposingly, rooted in hegemony through socio-historical othering and *distancing* of Nature (Gadotti & Torres, 2009; Misiaszek, 2020b, 2020c)⁸. Freire (1998a) expressed that true global sustainable development cannot happen, for example, when Brazilian ragpickers are fatalistically taught that development and their livelihood are non-contextually defined by, and compete with, Wall Street. Ecopedagogical work inherently counters such neoliberal defining of development inculcated by coloniality from, in part, globalizations *from above*,⁹ to mis-teach development as only grounded in neoliberalism and without alternatives (Gadotti & Torres, 2009; Misiaszek, 2020b, 2020c). Teaching for ecopedagogical literacy provides students the tools to critically read the language of development for *unlearning* oppressive, unsustainable Development.

I utilize lowercase d and uppercase D to signify differing framings of development, including their groundings, (lack of) contextuality, and world-Earth (de-)distancing essence. The passage below describes the essence of lower/upper-cased writing that coincides with Sandra Harding's

(2006) use of s/Sciences (e.g. Indigenous sciences versus dominant Sciences from the North) and f/Farming (e.g. permaculture versus industrial Farming practices).

...dominant form of Development (indicated with the uppercase 'D' which is also *underlined and italicized*...). Opposite to and inherently opposing Development is lowercased development. Ecopedagogical reading of the sociohistorical aspects of d/Development is essential to understand how the hidden past oppressive structures continue currently and into the future, for example, coloniality's exploitation and raping of natural resource follow globalization from above, and is suitably named neocoloniality. (Misiasek, 2020b, p. 74)

Ecopedagogical reading of the 'D' grounded by the 'S' in ESD and in the SDGs is done contextually through bottom-up approaches (from the Local (i.e. deepened reading) to the planetary spheres (i.e. widened reading)). The 'D' should be voiced and discussed as development and as impossible without planetary sustainability.

Development sustains socio-environmental injustices from the help of banking education models which instill Development as apolitical and falsely portray it as beneficial to those who are oppressed by its processes (Gadotti, 2008b, 2008c; Misiasek, 2012, 2018, 2020b). 'Quality education' termed in SDG #4 must center local-to-planetary readings of 'development' and 'sustainability' for transformational praxis for its success, as well as all the other SDGs. This includes decoding the SDGs' language, and language used in the name of the 'SDGs', to disrupt the politics for Development. Ecolinguistics is essential in disrupting language and grammar aiding Development's, including the following ways Halliday (2001) (cited in (Stibbe, 2012)) critiqued language that portrays limitless supply of natural resources (example, soil and water); greater sizes as universally positive (example, 'bigger is better'); anthropocentric terminology of agency; and pronoun usage that gives consciousness only to humans (sometimes their pets). Other arguments include the following: false division of time into past, current and future which ignores holistic geographic time ranges of Nature (Chalwa, 1991); objectifying words such as 'resources' and 'specimens'; and oversimplifying our actions' causes and effects which are extremely interconnective and complex (Goatly, 1996).

Success in teaching for world-Earth de-distancing relies on determining how globalizations from below can counter those from above through bottom-up approaches to determine globalizations' devastating effects by objectifying the non-anthroposphere.

Ecolinguistics provides an important dimension for studies of language and globalisation because it encompasses the globe, or rather the biosphere - the thin outer layer of the planet Earth and its atmosphere in which all known life resides and is supported. The need for an ecolinguistics arises only in distinction to a discipline which seems to have forgotten the ecological embedding of the animal it investigates, treating humans as existing in isolation rather than in relationship with the rest of the biosphere and the diversity of lifeforms within it. (Stibbe, 2012, p. 1)

Problematizing how language distances us from one another and all of Nature is essential to critically determine what is necessary for world-Earth de-distancing towards a single planetary community (i.e. planetary praxis).

...language awareness may be aimed not at raising consciousness among the oppressed of their own oppression, but among people in ecologically destructive societies about the impact of their societies on others, both human and non-human, close or distant, and present and future generations. (Stibbe, 2014, p. 120)

Such language awareness is not only to understand one's own oppressions but also 'my' and 'our' actions inflicted upon 'others' and Earth – planetary language awareness.

Language can be analyzed within what Bundsgaard and Steffensen (2000) termed the 'environmental constitution of human language' as having the following three dimensions of praxis: ideo-logical, socio-logical, and bio-logical dimensions (Derni, 2008). The first two dimensions explain how we construct extra-relationality: 'relations between an individuality and other

individualities' (Steffensen & Bundsgaard, 2000, p. 439) connected with the Self (i.e. inter-relationality) and as a social being (i.e. intra-relationality). The bio-logical dimension is 'about "biological collectivity"' (Bundsgaard, 2000) and the coexistence of human beings with other species' (Derni, 2008, p. 23). Reflexivity of world-Earth connectivity is highlighted in eco-linguistical work that 'considers relationships of humans not just with other humans but also with the larger ecological systems that all life depends on' (Stibbe, 2014, p. 117), forming what Boguslawska-Tafelska (2013) describes as a meta theory which 'orchestrate[s] all we observe about language and communication into one theory of language' (Stibbe, 2014, p. 118). This coincides with ecopedagogical reading of, and within, languages and communication, with the focus on de-distancing and valuing the non-anthroposphere beyond anthropocentrism. In other words, problematizing how language is used for world-Earth distancing and seeing the rest of Nature as serving only humans' needs and wants.

It is worthy to note that Gadotti (2008b) began his paper on what is needed to achieve UNESCO's *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* (DESD, 2005–2015) goals with the following quote from *Our Common Future's* Preface by Gro Harlem Brundtland.

Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development. (1987, p. 4)

What should be the language of development we teach so that 'sustainable' is not an adjective but rather the essence of development? Thus, making the 'S' redundant and all 'development' as development and Development unquestionably is de-development. By doing this d/D signification becomes pointless. This includes unlearning Development's language by teaching to recognize its normalization and justification for de-development and unsustainability. The following subsection will discuss these aspects more specifically within the often non-critically touted term 'sustainability'.

Sustainability: deconstructing the frequently touted term

Endless problem-posing 'who' (locally to planetarily) is included in determining and 'needing' sustainability occurs in ecopedagogical spaces, as well as problematizing what is the baseline(s) of sustainability (Misiaszek, 2020b, 2020c). The language of *planetary* sustainability should signify Earth holistically for the 'who' and determine the baseline(s) though recognition of contextual diversity and subjectivity of determining d/Development with defining characteristics such as progress, livelihood, and modernities. These are among other aspects which are inseparable from language and needing intercultural dialogue analysis. Sustainability without the humanization that Freire discussed as us as the only beings to be able to be self-reflective, to dream and act upon our dreams, and having histories complicates sustainability well beyond technical bio-physical sustainability adhering strictly to the Laws of Nature. Although immensely complicated in diverse ways, 'sustainability' would be much more accurate and technically determinable in its baseline and whole-Earth inclusion if all of Nature was fully understood, but it is not. Recognizing our limitations of understanding the Laws of Nature is essential, as well as recognizing education and research needing to focus on better and more completely understanding the Laws to disrupt falsities portrayed as truths in order to uphold Development (e.g. countering post-truthism) (Misiaszek, 2020a). Non-critical, shallow environmental pedagogies teach ideologies of world-Earth distancing by instilling sustainability as apolitical.

As Freire (1998b) argued that apolitical education is impossible, ecopedagogical work is grounded in that fact that unsustainability, and the teaching of sustainability, cannot be apolitical. This includes the politics of unsustainable environmental violence. I start much of my work with Michael Apple's argument that acts of environmental violence form continuums and

that the violent acts would not occur without benefits for individual(s) and/or population(s). For example, why would we drill into an ocean floor or risk nuclear power dangers unless there were benefits of energy? Without knowing my own computer's energy source currently, I could be benefiting from such environmentally violent acts here as I sit and type this in Kyoto.

There are conundrums between sustainability within the world and the rest of Earth. Our humanness that Freire (2000) argued also makes us the exclusive agents of unsustainability, as opposed to the rest of Nature that returns to equilibrium without reflection, subjectivity, or politics (Misiaszek, 2018; Misiaszek & Torres, 2019). For example, typhoons and earthquakes will happen because they relieve pressure to return to geophysical equilibrium (respectively, air pressure systems and between tectonic plates). Natural disasters do not occur from reflectivity; however, our actions can increase their frequency, intensity, and alter their geographic locations. Our environmentally violent actions emerge from our subjectivity that includes our politics, histories, languages and (lack of) critical dialogue. Stibbe (2012) describes through ecolinguistics how language is connected to humans as agents of unsustainability.

While subpopulations of any species can eventually adapt genetically to suit the environments they find themselves in, the flexibility of human language allows new lexical distinctions, discursive models, and narratives to be created and quickly transmitted within a group, allowing humans to adapt culturally to a great diversity of environments in a way which is much faster than genetic adaptation. Well adapted populations can live in the same place sustainably for hundreds of generations, while populations that cannot adapt will die out, leading to natural selection towards sustainability of settled oral cultures. However, that is not the end of the story, because for many reasons, including sudden environmental change, populations move. (p. 2)

Returning to the previous examples, our actions that results from desertification and global warming, for instance, and inhabiting highly earthquake-prone areas, coincides with what Stibbe is arguing above.

Freirean ecopedagogical work deconstructs, through bottom-up approaches, the language of d/Development as (dis)connected to what sustainability is, what it should be, and the limit situations between the two.¹⁰ Teaching to ecopedagogically read sustainability from the oppressed 'bottom's' perspectives (i.e. Freirean termed *thematic universes*) – from those who are negatively affected by the socio-environmental injustices – are essential with the recognition that environmental-oppressions most-often aligns with socio-historical oppressions (e.g. racism (ecoracism), patriarchy (ecofeminism), neo(coloniality) with globalizations from above). It is important to stress again that knowing and recognizing problematic language and communication of development and sustainability is not enough. Praxis that leads to actions which counter, unlearn, and reinvent terminology for transformative environmental action is needed. As Freire emphasized education for praxis towards a 'better world' (Gadotti, 1996), the 'better world' that UNESCO touts as possible through achieving the SDGs can only emerge through reading for world-Earth de-distancing. This includes the language and dialogue that we have in re/de/constructing 'citizenships' with one another and utopic possibilities for transformation to determine goals of praxis towards a 'better world' locally-to-globally *within* Earth. The next two sub-sections will focus on these two topics of citizenships and utopian pedagogies.

Citizenships: within and between local-to-planetary citizenships

Freire (1985, 1992, 2000, 2004) problematized citizenship in various ways including using Fanon's (1963) work to identify and counter citizen/non-citizen othering. The importance of deconstructing citizenships' framings and language is demonstrated by public schooling existing to teach for citizenship (the other reason is for development), but both form contested terrains of empowerment and oppressions (Olmos & Torres, 2009). Citizenships also form contested terrains

of environmental (in)justice and (un)sustainability (Gadotti, 2008b; Misiaszek, 2015, 2018); and schooling's roles of fostering citizenships affects the success or failure of the SDGs (Misiaszek, 2018). Ecopedagogical work widens citizenships *with* and *between* more localized citizenships (i.e. local-to-global citizenship spheres) and further widened to the planetary sphere (i.e. Earth holistically and Earth as a citizen) (Misiaszek, 2015, 2018).

The concept of sustainability should be linked to that of planetarity, which means, viewing the Earth as a new paradigm. Complexity, universality, and transdisciplinarity appear as categories associated to planetarity. What implications does this view upon the world has on education? The topic leads us to a planetary citizenship, a planetary civilization, a planetary awareness. As such, a culture of sustainability is also a planetarity culture, which means a culture that departs from the principle that the Earth is constituted by one single community of human beings, the earthlings, who are citizens of one single nation. (Gadotti, 2008b, p. 5)

Ecopedagogical work on critical citizenship education is essential to disrupt world-Earth distancing for true planetary solidarity to emerge.

Freire's *conscientização* has been essential for both intercultural awareness and communications for being/becoming an active citizen in communities (Guilherme, 2012). Phipps and Guilherme (2004) argued that global and civic education can, and should, emerge from 'a critical pedagogy of (foreign) language/culture education and of intercultural communication/interaction [which] implies a critical use of language(s), a critical approach to one's own and other cultural backgrounds and a critical view of intercultural interaction' (p. 3). I argue widening such vital pedagogies to the planetary sphere – both planetarism and planetary citizenship – is necessary with ecopedagogical and ecolinguistic tools. Global and planetary widening of citizenships in ecopedagogical work analyzes but removes citizen:non-citizen dynamics because being human and being part of Earth is the sole citizenship criteria. Thus, non-citizens do not exist. Ecopedagogues teach and learn through language and democratic dialogue for students to see themselves as part of larger global and planetary communities without exclusion, but also recognizing, respecting, and valuing the differences between communities.

Ecolinguistics is a contested term which plural ethical and philosophical framings but all framings are grounded within both social and ecological dimensions – as Stibbe (2014) closely compares this grounding with Arne Naess' ecosophy.¹¹ Ecopedagogies are inseparable from ecolinguistics in teaching world-Earth connections, as languages are tools for humans as inherently social beings, and inseparable with the rest of Nature and from culture. Naess (1989) described ecosophy through the term *gestalt* as indicating the whole (i.e. Earth) as larger than the sum of its parts as he described a segmented worm starting to 'swarm'.

For the ecosopher, vast complexes of interrelations is a characteristic of our existence which we joyfully acknowledge, contemplate, and study. Because of our severely limited knowledge, this complexity can get us into difficult situations, sometimes causing death, but the hanging together with 'everything' is experienced and conceived as a positive value. We participate and take care. (Naess, p. 135)

Freire (1970) used the following quote by Marx (1932) discussing the work of spiders and bees to compare the actions from human self-reflectivity as distinctive from Nature's adaptation and evolution.

A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of the bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality (1932, p. 198)

But, of course, reflectivity can also lead to development. Signifying the differences between cognitively constructed development and adaption for survival, Naess points out that 'our severely limited knowledge' does not allow for full, absolute understandings.

Citizenship is inseparably linked to utopia and ecopedagogy, the next sub-section's focus, as Gadotti and Torres (2009) discussed:

Education for citizenship is at the same time an education for a sustainable society. Escola cidadã [(citizenship schools)] and eco-pedagogy sustain the principle that all of us, since we are children, have the fundamental right to dream, to make possible our projects, to invent. (p. 1263)

Utopian pedagogy for world-Earth sustainability

It is important to continuously problematize how language portrays environmental violence as something that 'must' continue without alternatives, coinciding with the phrase of environmental devastation as 'necessary evils', or rather language that instills possibilities for transformation. Freire (1992, 1997, 2000) was vehemently opposed to fatalistic education that ground banking education which objectifies students to silently/meekly (physically and cognitively) absorb knowledges deposited by the teachers, as well as 'appropriate' use of knowledges. Banking teaching dehumanizes students as mere objects in which they 'should' contribute no more than the classroom's chairs and desks, denying their histories, their dreams, and their ways of knowing.

Ivan Illich, frequently seen as one of the first ecopedagogues from his last chapter of *Deschooling Society* (1983), discussed how 'modern man' believes all of Nature is adaptable, without consequences, to humans' wants and needs – an untethered dominance over an ideologically separated/distanced Nature. Illich (1983) discussed how language of Development only has a single fatalistic, technocratic future.

We need research on the possible use of technology to create institutions which serve personal, creative, and autonomous interaction and the emergence of values which cannot be substantially controlled by technocrats. We need counterfoil research to current futurology. I want to raise the general question of the mutual definition of man's nature and the nature of modern institutions which characterizes our world view and language.

Illich description of futurology coincides with education for dreaming of utopic development goals. Such reliance on future technologies does not only construct a single, false utopic future doomed to fail, but also the language of such false hopes helps to sustain/intensify unsustainability. Gadotti (2008b), citing Leonardo Boff (2000), discussed how:

[w]ithout a sustainable education, Earth will continue to be considered, only as a space of our technical-technological domain that provides our sustenance, the object of researches, essays, and at times, of our contemplation[, b]ut it shall not be the space of life, of shelter, of 'care'. (Gadotti, 2008b, p. 9)

Aligned with this quote, Freire (1998a) wrote that he is not against sciences, but rather sciences without social contexts, without regard to social justice – traits grounding Sciences (Harding, 2006). Gadotti (2008b) stressed the need to problematize curricula that is too-often 'building a science and a culture that are oriented towards the degradation of the planet and of humankind?' (p. 5). In addition, utopias emergent from ecopedagogies are not based on technological miracles touting that future technologies will solve all environmental issues that helps tout unrestrained Development.

Freire (2000) discussed the humanizing need of education saturated with utopia and hope for students to critically determine what is possible for a better world, the *limit situations* that prevents achieving it, and the actions needed to overcome limit situations. Countering fatalistic education is essential for achieving sustainable development, as such necessary determinations are impossible if undisturbed essential work on futures education.

As language occurs only within the World as we perceive Nature, the cognition of what is Nature both constructs and is influenced by language (e.g. 'tree' is meaningless without social meaning of what is a 'tree'). How is 'Nature' taught and through what social meanings that lead towards or away from environmentalism are essential to problematize within ecopedagogies.

For ecolinguistics, ecopedagogical problematizing the language contextually being used and what 'should' the language be towards goals of environmental justice and sustainability (i.e. praxis) is crucial. Within Freirean terminology, teaching through problem-posing what 'is' and 'should be' through notions of utopia for self-reflectivity for praxis of overcoming 'limit situations' – the determined barriers between the two.

Freire denounced fatalism and fatalistic education through constructs of utopia and education is essential in all pedagogies, including environmental pedagogies. Ecopedagogy is inherently grounded in hope because fatalism within environmental pedagogies, including within dialogue and language, can only continue environmental injustices and unsustainability because without dreams there is no guidance for transformation (i.e. no goals to 'reach toward'). Current research on *futures education* emerged from Freire's utopia and education arguments, in which teaching for a single future is dehumanizing and, I would argue, anti-environmental.

Guilherme (2017) stated that Freire's arguments for education to denounce dehumanizing objectification through ideologies instilling that most individuals/communities are without possibilities of transformation (i.e. *finishedness*) is required for teaching of innate human subjectivity (i.e. *unfinishedness*) has inspired theories of intercultural ethics. Utilizing Freire's sense of utopia and epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2014), Guilherme and Souza (2019b) argues that 'intercultural awareness' emerged from the South, across and between languages, as opposed to 'critical cultural awareness' which 'simply rely the (post) colonial meeting of languages and cultures'. Utopia within Freirean pedagogies, including ecopedagogies, are not based on utopic 'miracles' occurring but dreams of tangible societal transformation. Freire did not frame one's utopia as fanciful and void of contextuality, but from 'complementary humanistic strategy [that] retain[ed] value in the context of concrete, local struggles and social movements where agents must articulate particular utopian visions from within their own unique life-histories' (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 29). Construction such dreams emerge from ecologies of knowledges (a lá Santos (2018)) that counter fatalistic language of epistemologies of the North.

Education saturated with utopia is necessary for environmental praxis. Dreaming allows for determining and overcoming the *limit situations* between Development realities and possibilities of development, as opposed to fatalistic pedagogies empty of such possibilities (Gadotti, 2008c; Misiaszek, 2020b). Utilizing Freire's work, Gadotti (2008c) discussed the indivisible connection between ecopedagogy and utopia.

Educating for another possible world is educating for life in networks, being capable of communicating and acting in groups and creating cooperative methods of production. The earth is our first educator. Educating for another possible world helps one find one's place in history and in the universe. It is educating for peace, for human rights, social justice and cultural diversity, and against sexism and racism. It is educating for planetary awareness and planetary conscience and helps learners to deeply feel the universe (Gadotti, 2007, 2008c, p. 26).

Fatalistic environmental teaching is dehumanizing, as the Self and the World are, as Freire termed, *finished* with a singular future pre-determined, with or without socio-environmental justice. Thus, transformation is impossible, and praxis cannot occur. In other words, fatalistic education deposits environmental information systematically discouraging praxis because our and Earth's fate is already finished.

Freire (1992, 1997, 2000) discussed how only humans have unfinishedness compared to other animals. However, some scholars shallowly read this as Freire being anti-environmental by objectifying and devaluing all other animals, as well as the rest of Nature. Although he did not fully explain it in his earlier and most famous work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), he does so in his later work (Freire, 1997, 1998a, 2004) – works that often such scholars seem to not have read. Various Freireans (Au & Apple, 2007; McLaren, 2007) have argued that these scholars misread of Freire as anti-environmental. There are many mis-readings of Freire, I will point out two connected to linguistics. The language Freire used could be problematic if viewed shallowly,

compartmentalized, and ahistorically. First, his wording of humans as having the unique ability of having histories, being able to be self-reflective, to dream, and act upon their dreams. Second, the loss of culture (and, thus, loss of language) through endless 'transformation' for development with Freire arguing that only humans are able to 'develop' because we are unfinished, while all other beings are finished but adapt without reflective transformation (e.g. evolution). Counterarguments to these and other critiques are lengthy; however, I will provide very brief ones here. The first critique ignores that human uniqueness does not equate to devaluing and dominating the rest of Nature. The second one ignores Freire arguments of contextuality and bottom-up approaches, thus transformation does not equate to all-inclusive, absolute change - far from it. This contextuality includes language, as Freire (1985) wrote how systematic devaluing of languages forms 'linguistic politics, a dimension of the politics of culture, will wind up deepening social class differences, creating an immense revolutionary contradiction' (p. 184).

It is important to end this section stressing that not all utopias are equal, Freirean (and ecopedagogical) utopias are grounded in ending oppressions (and domination of Nature) for a better world (and sustained Earth). For example, Freire discussed how neoliberalism constructs false utopias based on fabricated promises of development by ideologically instilling Development as utopic for all.

...critics now prefer, to the language of the possible, which holds fast to utopia as a possible dream, the neoliberal 'pragmatic discourse, according to which we must 'accommodate' to the facts as given-as if they could be given in no other way, as if we had no duty to fight, precisely because we are persons, to have them given differently. (Freire, 1992, p. 76)

Fatalistic education that ideologically instills Development that leads only to injustice and domination that is ideologically normalized and without alternatives.

Globalizations: reading to disrupt (neo)coloniality Development

Ecopedagogical literacy includes critically reading the politics of language constructing, d/Development, (un)sustainability, world-Earth (de-)distancing, utopianism/fatalism, and other aspects of (anti-)environmentalism. Without such literacy we become politically illiterate, as Freire discussed below, to unsustainable Development without recognizing it from sustainable development.

If we begin now to consider the problem of political 'literacy', our point of departure might be an analysis of political 'illiteracy'. From the linguistic point of view, if an illiterate is one who does not know how to read and write, a political illiterate—regardless of whether she or he knows how to read and write—is one who has an ingenuous perception of humanity in its relationships with the world. This person has a naive outlook on social reality, which for this one is a given, that is, social reality is a *fait accompli* rather than something that's still in the making. (Freire, 1985, p. 103)

Freire (1998a) described globalization as boarding a train without knowing its destination. The politics of globalizations from above essentially tells the person they must get on the train because there are no other routes and the destination is 'good' for them and everyone, even though they know its wickedness.¹²

Within environmentalism, boarding the train comes from instilled but purposely hidden ideologies touting that unsustainable environmental violence will be good, necessary, and without alternatives. Reading to decode the dominant languages, linguistics and anti-democratic communication dynamics from globalization from above that, in turn sustains/intensifies neocoloniality, is crucial in ecopedagogy (Misiaszek, 2020b). Ecopedagogical reading includes ecolinguistically deconstructing the 'dynamic' and 'global ways' to 'the idea of inter-relating a linguistic structure that is linguistic units and inter-relations of these units with environment, and here the extra-relations of language' (Derni, 2008, p. 27) for using/reinventing language for world-Earth de-distancing and recognizing environmental violence's global *within* planetary effects.

Citing Nettle and Romaine (2000), Stibbe (2012) argued that global intercultural communications ecolinguistically de/reconstructed emerges from 'not only that language and ecological destruction are linked, but that globalisation of various kinds plays a central role in linking the two' (2012, p. 2) is essential for our globalized world's very existence. There are various ways to interpret this argument, but I would coincidentally argue that our world's existence is globally hanging by a thread, needing globally-holistic collectivism for our continued existence on Earth. This also coincides with framing of ecolinguistics given by Stibbe (2012) previously, with globally hegemonic languages, especially English, increasingly abstracting and objectifying our World and the rest of Earth, as well as fatalism (citing Halliday (2001)).

'Big Talk' exemplifies this discussion. Globalization from above blocks and silences alternative voices that challenge false justification of unsustainable environmental violence, which can be seen as Big Talk – 'important, male, metonymic, serious, official, correct, objective and emphatic' (p. 1), echoing some of Halliday's criticisms of reifying scientific discourse' ((Stibbe, 2012) citing (Stott & Sullivan, 2000)). The essence of Big Talk is that it describes and teaches environmental issues that are foreign to what is actually happening locally on the ground. Such 'Big' communications coincide with the thick residue of coloniality discussed by scholars such as Memmi (1967) and Fanon (1963),¹³ and Said's (1979) Orientalism. Said's following words on the 'knowledge of the Orient' through the colonizers' language depicts the socio-historical prevalence of 'Big Talk' by the colonialist leaders Cromer and Balfour.

Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world. In Cromer's and Balfour's language_ the Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual). The point is that in each of these cases the Oriental is contained and represented by dominating frameworks. (Said, 1979, p. 40)

Said's words are telling in a later discussion on epistemologies of the South/North, but I focus here on ecopedagogical deconstruction through decoloniality of language and communications that justify unsustainable environmental violence and Development, and Freire's work to disrupt such oppressions/dominance. For example, Gadotti and Torres (2009) discussed how true democratic development in Brazil for the masses (i.e. development) has been severely hampered by the thick residue of coloniality, arguing for ecopedagogy *with* planetary citizenship.

Decoloniality includes the politics of colonial languages used in teaching and descriptions of the 'othered' (including the Self and Nature overall), as well as the methods of language teaching, especially *franca lingua* English (Jorge, 2012). Silencing the neocolonialized by language-linguistic deficient positioning which, as Freire problematizes below the power dynamics of dominant:non-dominant language selection and usage.

Language represents one of the important aspects in the process of democratization of societies. Naturally, when we speak about the vernacular, we run the risk, on the one hand, of falling into elitism and consider the linguistic expression of lower classes as something ugly and inferior, and on the other hand, we run the risk of falling into community-based sectarianism and reject the importance and the very need that the subordinate classes have in mastering the dominant language. (Freire, 1993, p. 135)

Freire (1978) debated what language, the colonialist or indigenous language, in his work, especially in Guinea-Bissau. His choice of colonial Portuguese was based on the power dynamics of its mastering that helps students to enact transformation within government/power structures, but he also recognized not teaching in the students' mother-tongue languages as the key reason for failures (Freire, 1978).

Devaluing Indigenous languages creates othering in which the "linguistic superiority" of the popular classes' (Freire, 1992, p. 91) is often silenced, oppressing both the population itself and other learning from marginalized languages. Guilherme (2017) wrote how Freire (1995) argued how Indigenous culture must be respected rather than just preserved, in that loss of knowledges and possibilities praxis for the not only the Indigenous community but globally by devaluing/extinction

of cultures and inseparable languages. Epistemicide is a blow to possibilities of socio-environmental justice and sustainability, including the extinction of Southern languages, inside and outside of their communities (Santos, 2018). Epistemologies of the North, grounded on what Santos (2018) argues as coloniality, patriarchy, and capitalism, cannot lead to justice and/or planetary citizenship. Teaching through epistemologies of the South is essential in ecopedagogy because these three socio-historical oppressive groundings can only sustain and intensify unsustainability and Nature's destruction similarly to social injustice within the anthroposphere (Misiasek, 2019, 2020b).

Disrupting the global hegemony of languages that justifies unsustainable actions is essential not only in language selection but also its specific usage and reinventions. This is highlighted by Guilherme's (2017) quote below on Freire.

...real language (implicitly the European version of the language), once recreated by the colonised, is considered as a 'creolized' dialect and therefore it is not up to aesthetic or scientific hermeneutics. This is one of the most important challenges for a theory of intercultural ethics, which has to confront and respond to imperialism, dogmatism and prejudice. (2017, p. 9)

Guilherme further argues that *franca lingua* is not oppressive so much because they are colonial languages themselves, but its recreation for hegemonic purposes. Guilherme and Souza (2019a) argues the need for *Glocal Languages* – languages 'that avoid the 'interest in global and local languages (echoing the centre-periphery distinction)' (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 6) and 'promote a critical dialogues and interplay between both on equity and reciprocity terms' (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 7) - as part of a decolonial turn to counter epistemicide (a lá de Sousa Santos).

Epistemologies, language and linguistics of the North inherently distance the othered's (e.g. neocolonialized, Indigenous) socio-environmental injustices as discussed in this section through globalizations from above, and the world from the rest of Nature. The term world-Earth distancing used throughout this article expressed both of these together.

Conclusion

Freire has given us many pedagogical tools to teach for better understanding oppressions from environmental violence and coinciding Development, including through the contested terrains of language and dialogue. Too often SDGs' teachings, language, and communications are technocratic, hierarchical, siloed (between the SDGs), and limited, as emergent 'solutions' do not frequently attempt needed disruption of oppressive but normalized societal systems, including hegemony. As an invited reviewer of UNESCO's *Education for [SDGs]: Learning objectives* (2017), my review emphasized the need for ecopedagogical foundations in SDG#4 and throughout all the SDGs, from locally inside the classroom to globalizations' impacts on how we define 'quality' education. When we speak on 'quality' is it *within* and *towards* development or Development framings? Freirean ecopedagogy teaches for radical transformation where and when needed (and literacy to recognize this), countering language and communications that limits possibilities of necessary change. Gadotti (2008b) described ecopedagogy used the metaphor that in cleaning a house, we cannot only clean one room but all the rooms. Achieving the SDGs must be holistically taught rather than siloed, including #4. Key to socio-environmental justice and planetary sustainability is recognizing there is no single, simple solution – environmental ills are wicked problems. Although the SDGs and work on the SDGs has problematic language, including that of the 'Big Five' who are agents of them, the 17 goals' diversity indicates sustainable development complexities.

Notes

1. 'Earth' is purposely de-objectified without the article 'the' and having an uppercase 'E'. As well, Nature is capitalized. The term 'initial notion' signifies the self-unfinishedness of Freire's earlier work (2000) and his later work (1992, 1998a, 2004) in which ecopedagogies more directly emerged from (see Misiasek & Torres, 2019).

2. The term “initial notion” signifies the self-unfinishedness of Freire’s earlier work (2000) and his later work (1992, 1998a, 2004) in which ecopedagogies more directly emerged from (see (Misiaszek & Torres, 2019)).
3. In this article, using ecopedagogical terminology or naming ‘Freire’ directly will not determine his influence, but rather the use of Freire’s essence.
4. The term ‘world-Earth’ indicates both the world as part of Earth and our subjective, political world affecting the rest of Nature. The latter aspect is discussed later in this article.
5. The term ‘socio-environmental’ represents the inseparable connections between environmental and social violence/injustice within the world and planetary unsustainability. It is important to note that the rest of Nature inability of self-reflectivity cannot inflict violence and injustice upon the world, as both are only emergent from humans’ will (Warren, 2000).
6. Gadotti is an expert ecopedagogue, a previous student of Freire, and the Founder and past-Director of the Instituto Paulo Freire, São Paulo.
7. The phrase ‘rest of Nature’ is used to indicate Earth outside of the world. This phrase is important to emphasize that the world is part of Earth and, thus, humans are part of Nature.
8. Falsely taught ideologies of *distancing* of environmental violence includes geographic distancing (e.g. happening ‘far away’), timewise distancing (i.e. consequences will not happen for a ‘long time’), world-Earth distancing (i.e. anthropocentric valuing only), and socio-historic othering (e.g. not affecting ‘us’ but rather the dehumanized ‘them’).
9. Globalization forms a contested terrain (i.e. globalizations (Torres, 2009)) with countering processes *from below* and *from above*. SDGs’ ‘success’ can only emerge from the former which inherently countering the latter.
10. Limit situations: “reading of the world” that enables its subject or agent to decipher, more and more critically, the “limit situation” or situations beyond which they find only “untested feasibility” (Freire, 1992, p. 90).
11. The criteria that worldviews are judged by are derived from an explicit or implicit ecological philosophy (or ecosophy). An ecosophy is informed by both a scientific understanding of how organisms (including humans) depend on interactions with other organisms and a physical environment to survive and flourish, and also an ethical framework to decide why survival and flourishing matters and whose survival and flourishing matters’ (Stibbe, 2014, p. 119).
12. The use ‘wickedness’ is specific, coinciding how Hal Lawson (2008) explained that ‘concentration effects comprise a new genus of problems called wicked problems, which stand in marked contrast to tame ones’.
13. After reading Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* (1963) Freire’ re-edited his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to reflect decoloniality using Fanon’s work (Schugurensky, 2011). He also wrote an additional fourth chapter to the publishers’ urging (Schugurensky, 2011).

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