

Global Language Justice

Edited by **Lydia H. Liu**
and **Anupama Rao**,
with **Charlotte A. Silverman**

More than 40 percent of the world's estimated 7,100+ languages are in danger of disappearing by the end of this century. As with the decline of biodiversity, language loss has been attributed to environmental degradation, developmentalism, and the destruction of Indigenous communities. This book brings together leading experts and younger scholars across the humanities and social sciences to investigate what global language justice looks like in a time of climate crisis. Examining the worldwide loss of linguistic diversity, they develop a new conception of justice to safeguard marginalized languages.

Global Language Justice explores the socioeconomic transformations that both accelerate the decline of minoritized languages and give rise to new possibilities through population movement, unexpected encounters, and technological change. It also critically examines the concepts that are typically deployed to defend linguistic diversity, including human rights, inclusiveness, and equality. Contributors take up topics such as mapping language communities in New York City or how Indigenous innovation challenges notions of linguistic purity. They demonstrate the need to reckon with linguistic diversity in order to achieve a sustainable global economic system and show how the concept of digital vitality can push language justice in new directions. Interspersed with their essays are multilingual works by world-renowned poets and artists that engage with and deepen the book's themes. Integrating ambitious theoretical exploration with concrete solutions, *Global Language Justice* offers vital new perspectives on the place of linguistic diversity in ongoing ecological crises.

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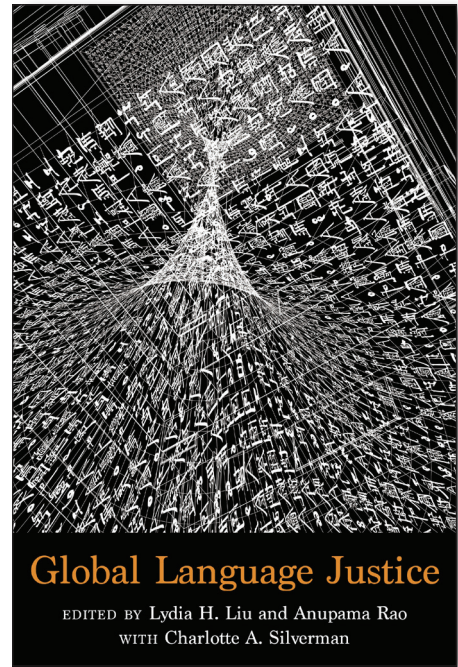
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"In a beautiful assemblage of theory and poetry, this volume addresses one of the most difficult problems of our planetary age, caught between the intensity of cultural wars and the uncertainties of the digital revolution: Which futures, rights, and institutions exist for the world's many languages, inherited from history and recreated in everyday life? It clarifies the struggle for concrete universalism with striking vigor and originality."

—Etienne Balibar, author of *On Universals*

"At a moment when there is renewed focus on the links between the right to language diversity and human rights, on what the American Bar Association calls 'language justice' and the right to translation, *Global Language Justice* comes at a particularly opportune moment. It offers experimental approaches to language extinction and digital language projects aimed at translating and preserving languages. It also defines emerging fields of public policy that draw on the rich connections between the humanities and multilingual education and art practice, especially for those committed to rethinking global language politics in relation to climate change and ecopolitical activism."

—Emily Apter, author of *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*

"In nine thoughtful chapters this collection lays out the parameters for the conversation on language justice in the twenty-first century context of the digital revolution, climate catastrophe, mass displacement, language endangerment and reclamation, the Global English industry, and economic polarization on a planetary scale. The authors question the concept of language rights as either the beginning or end point of this conversation and call for a new theorizing of equality as it pertains to languages and speakers. Readers will encounter keen new insights on such topics as digitization, scripts and Unicode; alternatives to the concept of 'language death'; the role of linguistic pluralism in new forms of political dissent; and the fraughtness of translation."

—Mary Louise Pratt, author of *Planetary Longings*

"By interspersing academic essays with multilingual poems, Liu, Rao, and Silverman have assembled a rich, stimulating kaleidoscope of global explorations of the complex entanglements of language, environment, and technology in the 21st century."

—Ingrid Piller, author of *Linguistic Diversity and Social Justice*