

Viewpoint

Languaging as a Planetary Health Ethic: Toward Linguistic Justice in Global Ecological Governance

Jeconiah Dreisbach ^{1,2} ¹ Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, 08018 Barcelona, Spain; jdreisbach@uoc.edu² Naveen Jindal Young Global Research Fellowship, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat 131001, Haryana, India; jeconiah.louis_fs@jgu.edu.in

Abstract

Planetary health scholarship increasingly recognizes the ecological, social, and health consequences of a degraded and warming planet, yet language remains a marginal concern, typically treated as a matter of communication rather than of justice. This article develops languaging, a dynamic and relational process of meaning-making rather than a fixed communicative code, as an original ethical framework for planetary health. Building on the author's earlier conceptual work on emergency language services and memory studies in public health, the article argues that the exclusion of minoritized and Indigenous languages from global health and environmental governance is not a logistical gap but a colonial structure that produces epistemic injustice, understood here through Fricker's concept of hermeneutical injustice, with tangible consequences for disaster preparedness, ecological knowledge transmission, and climate governance in the Global South. The article advances this framework through three original movements: (1) an account of how planetary health governance is structured by monolingual epistemology; (2) a theorization of the ethical temporalities of languaging as a practice bridging epistemic justice, memory, and future thinking; and (3) applied implications for multilingual disaster risk reduction and Indigenous knowledge integration in Southeast Asia. The article concludes that linguistic justice is inseparable from planetary health justice and proposes languaging as a conceptual bridge between sociolinguistics and planetary health that merits sustained empirical development.

Keywords: planetary health; linguistic justice; Global South; disaster risk reduction; Indigenous knowledge; epistemic injustice



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1. Introduction

The field of planetary health rests on a founding insight: human health is inseparable from the condition of the natural systems that sustain it [1]. That insight was meant to open the field to transdisciplinary engagement extending beyond the biomedical and ecological sciences to incorporate the social and political dimensions of planetary transformation. That promise remains only partly fulfilled. Sociolinguistic and language-focused scholarship is still largely absent from the methodological repertoire and governance vision of planetary health, despite two demographic facts that make the omission difficult to justify: most of humanity communicates multilingually as a matter of course, and the regions most heavily affected by climate and ecological change are disproportionately the linguistically diverse regions of the Global South. Closing that gap requires more than translation. It requires treating languaging, the dynamic, relational process by which communities make meaning

together rather than a fixed code they simply possess, as a planetary health ethic in its own right.

This article builds on two conceptual interventions published previously by the author. The first argued that the linguistic research is consistently neglected in the decision-making processes regarding public and planetary health, which is a result of colonial practices that neglect societies not categorized as high-income, industrialized, or English-speaking, and suggested languaging as a means of bringing decolonial multilingual discourses into public health and sustainability policy-making [2]. The second argued that the decolonial stewardship of planetary health futures requires remembering: futures thinking, in order to avoid becoming just another disembodied buzzword, must be integrated with memory studies and rooted in the historical and epistemic work of remembering how present ecological arrangements came to be [3]. Both were published as brief correspondence pieces, a journal format typically limited to roughly 1000 to 1500 words and used for short commentaries rather than full research articles, and neither developed the theoretical framework needed to make languaging more than a rhetorical device. The present article supplies that framework.

The stakes of that omission are far from theoretical. Just consider the linguistic demographics of the area that this paper will address again and again: the Philippines alone houses over 180 languages, while Indonesia houses more than 700, making Southeast Asia one of the most linguistically dense regions on earth [4]. This is also the region that hosts some of the most active typhoons, earthquakes, and volcanic systems, and its coastal and archipelagic geography places a substantial portion of its population at risk of sea-level rise and storm surge. A planetary health governance framework based on the assumption that the risks can be communicated, coordinated, and managed in one or two dominant languages is, in such a region, not a slightly flawed version of an otherwise adequate system. It is a framework designed for the population that does not exist. The mismatch between the linguistic reality of the region and the linguistic assumptions embedded in its governance structures is precisely what this paper seeks to address through languaging.

The argument put forward in this paper is part of the broader epistemological reframing currently happening within multilingualism and applied linguistics scholarship, which demands a shift from the global-North default of theorization of multilingual communication toward frameworks based in the linguistic realities and civilizational history of the Global South, where multilingualism is the demographic default rather than an exception that needs explaining [5]. Planetary health, as a developing field with the stated ambition to become transdisciplinary and globally aware, is in a good position to incorporate that reframing early on, rather than repeating the familiar pattern of a field maturing around the global-North assumptions and then having to retrofit itself much later and at great expense for the majority of the world it purports to serve. Taking languaging seriously from the very beginning is one concrete way of facilitating that incorporation.

In this paper, I ask what happens when languaging is considered not as a peripheral communicative practice, a question of translation of existing planetary health knowledge into additional languages, but a planetary health ethic in its own right: a normative commitment with implications for how planetary health knowledge is produced, whose testimony counts as evidence, how time and intergenerational responsibility are understood, and how governance institutions are designed. The remainder of the article develops this claim in three movements: it first traces how monolingual epistemology structures planetary health governance (Section 2); it then theorizes the ethical and temporal dimensions of languaging (Sections 3–5); and it closes by drawing out applied implications for multilingual disaster risk reduction in Southeast Asia (Section 6).

2. Planetary Health and the Limits of Monolingual Epistemology

The languages of public and global health institutions were not chosen in a neutral way. The infrastructure of global health science, from peer-reviewed publication to United Nations reporting systems to disaster early warning systems, developed in and through the colonial and postcolonial domination of a restricted set of European languages, with English taking the leading role. This is not merely an interesting historical fact, but a reality that structures whose observations, warnings, and knowledge claims are accessible to the institutions that decide on planetary health outcomes. According to the Study Group on Language and the United Nations, the issue of linguistic discourse is largely absent from the Sustainable Development Goals itself, which is seen as one of the factors that makes the planet vulnerable because it disempowers marginalized minoritized-language communities from participation in the frameworks that are supposed to protect them [6].

This critique should not be read as a claim that international institutions do no multilingual work at all. The United Nations, for instance, operates with six official languages and provides simultaneous interpretation for its formal proceedings, and documents produced at regional, national, and local levels are typically produced in the languages agreed upon within those jurisdictions. The argument here is narrower, and for that reason more tractable: official multilingualism among a small number of administrative languages is not equivalent to linguistic justice for the thousands of minoritized and Indigenous languages, several hundred of which may be spoken within a single country, that fall outside that small set. This article does not propose simultaneous translation into every one of the world's more than 7000 languages, a proposal nobody could implement and few would want. What it proposes instead is a shift in where linguistic labor is located: away from a model in which a handful of dominant languages are translated downward after decisions are already made, and toward a model in which community translators, regional-language media, and local governance bodies are resourced to participate in decision-making using the languaging repertoires communities already have. Section 6 develops what that shift would require in concrete institutional terms.

There are genealogical reasons for this. According to Robert Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism, the dominance of English in the global context was neither accidental nor purely economic but actively cultivated through colonial education policies and postcolonial development infrastructure that structurally privileged English-speaking institutions and knowledge systems over other institutions and knowledge systems [7]. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas further developed this critique arguing that the suppression of minority and Indigenous languages in the education systems is a form of linguistic genocide, not a neutral side-effect of national integration but an active instrument of epistemic and cultural destruction [8]. Early colonial and postcolonial public health administrations in South and Southeast Asia were constructed within the same paradigm. Disease surveillance, vital registration, and epidemiological record-keeping were conducted in the administrative language of the colonizing or centralizing state, while vernacular medical knowledge, local disease classification systems, and community health practices were treated as folklore, to be documented by outside experts rather than incorporated into the record on its own terms. Planetary health governance is constructed in the same way without much reflection. When disaster warnings, environmental impact assessments, or climate adaptation plans are produced in a dominant language and translated, if at all, after the fact, the communities that possess ecological knowledge and experience exposure relevant to the decision are structurally positioned as recipients rather than co-authors of planetary health knowledge.

In the context of this paper, the proposal by Oliver and colleagues to reframe planetary health around a safe and just operating space, a systemic concept that seeks to reconcile ecological limits with social justice rather than treat them as two separate issues [9], should

be taken one step further: it must be argued that this operating space must include linguistic space. Safe and just operating space that allows for ecological collapse in a community's territory while structurally excluding its language from the decision-making process is not, in fact, an operating space that guarantees justice but only relocates it from the ecological to the epistemic register. Monolingual planetary health epistemology is, in this sense, not a neutral technical limitation pending additional translation funding but a structuring condition that defines whose population becomes the subject of planetary health knowledge and whose population becomes its object: observed, counted, and warned, but rarely consulted in the language through which it understands its own exposure.

This is clearly demonstrated by the usual infrastructure of health and demographic data on which planetary health governance relies. Vital registration systems, morbidity and mortality surveillance, and environmental exposure monitoring in most Global South states are done and reported in one official/administrative language, thus making health and environmental events affecting minoritized-language communities recorded, if at all, in an intermediary act of translation performed by an external enumerator rather than in the language's own categories. While the death caused by a storm, flood, or heat event may be accurately recorded as to its cause, the accompanying testimony about the warning signs recognized by the community in the language's agricultural, meteorological, or oral-historical vocabulary will rarely be recorded in a way that would reach the planetary health evidence base. Thus, the resulting dataset is not only incomplete but biased towards the dominant-language categories that can record, thereby shaping in quiet but significant ways the risks that planetary health institutions learn to anticipate and not to anticipate. Section 6 returns to what closing this evidentiary gap would require in practice.

3. From Language to Linguaging: Conceptual Foundations

This distinction is key to the argument presented in this article. Gross and Crawford identify "linguaging" as a collaborative, dialogic, and dialogical activity of meaning-making and knowledge-creation in language in response to complicated problems, rather than a fixed code that speakers employ [10]. In this perspective, language is not something that individuals or communities have, but a practice that communities do together in response to the challenges they face. It follows, then, that planetary health's consideration of multilingual populations must shift from thinking of them as fragmented markets in need of translation services to understanding them as sites of dialogical, collaborative knowledge-production about the ecological and health conditions that are particular to their experience.

Positioning linguaging as a planetary health ethic also requires taking its linguistic and philosophical grounding seriously, not only its uptake within applied social science. Within cognitive and sociocultural linguistics, the term has a lineage in work on language as a tool for thought: Swain uses linguaging to describe how producing language, in speech or in writing, is itself a process of conceptualization through which speakers clarify, extend, and sometimes revise what they know, rather than a neutral channel for transmitting knowledge that already exists in finished form [11]. This is a philosophically substantive claim about what language is for, sometimes termed 'knowledging' in translanguaging scholarship to capture how meaning-making and knowledge-making are the same act rather than two separate steps [12]. It implies that grammaticality, the specific structural resources a given language makes available for marking tense, evidentiality, spatial relation, or social obligation, is not incidental to the knowledge that language can hold; grammaticality is part of how that knowledge gets built in the first place. A language that grammatically distinguishes eyewitness from reported information, for instance, encodes an epistemic distinction that a planetary health report relying on a language without that resource may

be unable to preserve, however carefully it is translated. Change and innovation in a language's vocabulary, new compounds, borrowed terms reworked to fit local categories, neologisms coined to name an unfamiliar ecological event, are, on this view, not signs of a language destabilizing under pressure but instances of languaging: evidence of a community actively building the interpretive resources it needs in real time. This linguistic and philosophical register is also where the significance of a first or mother tongue becomes clearest. Mother-tongue-based multilingual education research, and UNESCO's own advocacy for it through International Mother Language Day, rests on the finding that concept formation in a first language provides a scaffold that later languages depend on rather than simply replace [13]. Seen from a planetary health perspective, this suggests that the ecological concepts a community first acquires, and continues to elaborate, in its mother tongue are not neutrally available for later translation into a dominant language without cost; they are the cognitive and cultural foundation on which any later, translated version depends.

This dialogic perspective corresponds to translanguaging research. García and Wei define translanguaging as the deployment of a repertoire of language varieties and practices by members of bilingual and plurilingual communities in order to create new discourses in the context of problem solving [12] (pp. 71–73) and argue that translanguaging more accurately reflects the way that multilingual communities communicate than a countable-language model does. This is relevant to planetary health because the populations most vulnerable to ecological risks (migrant workers, indigenous communities, communities within linguistically plural postcolonial countries) communicate not within the bounds of a single named language that is used in census forms. Fishermen along the coast of the Philippines will be able to move seamlessly between their regional language, Filipino, and bits of English in the course of discussing a coming storm; assuming that this requires three separate translations into three separate languages ignores the dialogic reality of how this community communicates about the risk.

Empirical research on multilingual communication in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic makes this clear: international students dealing with pandemic-era health information found that their access to the guidance depended not on the presence of translated materials, but on whether the guidance accommodated the dialogic communication practices that they used. A translation-only model of language access, in other words, can satisfy the letter of multilingual inclusion while ignoring the dialogic practice through which the affected community processes and responds to risk information. The difference between translation and languaging is not only a semantic difference, then; translation implies that the body of knowledge to be transferred is complete and settled in the source language, with translation as the remaining step. Languaging, on the other hand, assumes that knowledge is always being created and refined in the process of the interchanges, and implies that a community's languaging practice is not a barrier to existing planetary health knowledge, but one of the practices by which planetary health knowledge, that is calibrated to local ecological conditions, is actually produced.

Planetary health, as a discipline, already adopts a relational rather than substance-based ontology: human health cannot be considered separately from the ecological relations that sustain it, and ecosystems are not resources to be preserved, but are interdependent systems that are constantly reproduced through relation. This argument holds that planetary health's commitment to relationality implies a corresponding linguistic shift, from the perception of language as a resource to allocate (more translators, more multilingual pamphlets) to the recognition of languaging as a relational practice that should be acknowledged and resourced as a site of ecological knowledge-production.

Taking languaging seriously means accepting that the multilingual, boundary-crossing communication practices of Global South communities are not barriers to overcome on the way to providing pre-formulated planetary health knowledge, but one of the sites where planetary health knowledge is actually produced.

The disconnect between official language categories and actual languaging practices is especially pronounced in the case of migrant and diasporic populations, whose environmental and occupational health risks are mediated through languaging repertoires that are not captured by any single census category. For instance, a Filipino domestic or construction worker in the Gulf region will navigate between their home-country language (Filipino) and a workplace lingua franca when describing a single heat-exposure incident or unsafe working condition to an employer, a clinic, or a labor attache, with the resulting report as much shaped by which languaging resources the receiving institution recognizes as by the incident itself. Official language policies in both sending and receiving states, which are organized around named and countable languages for ease of administration, are ill-equipped to receive testimony in such a way. As a result, the planetary health implication is that occupational and climate-linked exposure among mobile, multilingual labor populations is undercounted not because the exposure is rare, but because the languaging through which it would be reported does not fit the categories recognized by the receiving institution.

4. Languaging as Ethical Practice: Toward a Relational Planetary Health Ethic

If languaging represents a dialogic process of knowledge creation rather than a fixed communicative code, then the exclusion of a community's languaging practices from planetary health governance is not simply a translation logistical problem, but an epistemic injustice, in the terminology of Miranda Fricker, an offense committed against an individual as a knower [14]. According to Fricker, testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker's credibility is unfairly diminished due to a listener's prejudice towards the social group to which the speaker belongs, whereas hermeneutical injustice occurs when a gap in a community's interpretive tools leaves individuals unable to understand and communicate their experiences to others, and even to themselves. Linguistic exclusion from planetary health governance is thus hermeneutical injustice writ large: as long as disaster warning systems, environmental consultation procedures, and scientific translation pipelines are built only using dominant languages, communities whose observations about the environment are expressed in minoritized or indigenous languages are left without the interpretive resources to have their testimony recognized as planetary health data. Knowledge remains, but is rendered illegible by the epistemic framework that defines knowledge.

A decolonial theoretical framework helps to understand the origin and persistence of this architecture. Boaventura de Sousa Santos speaks of epistemicide, the destruction of knowledge and knowledge-making practices that accompanies colonial and capitalist expansion, and claims that global social sciences are built along the abyssal line of non-Western epistemologies being made invisible rather than subordinate [15]. Walter D. Mignolo's decolonial approach calls for delinking from the geopolitics of knowledge inherited from Western modernity, and viewing the dominance of certain languages and categories as historically contingent, powerful, and contestable way of defining what counts as knowledge [16]. In a similar vein, Raewyn Connell's critique of Southern Theory demonstrates how social science theory produced in the metropolis is viewed as general, whereas theory developed in the Global South is confined to the descriptive/local category [17]. Finally, Arturo Escobar's pluriversal proposition, envisions a world in which multiple worlds, each with its ontological and linguistic commitments, coexist without subordination to any one

universal frame, offers a normative framework for a truly multilingual planetary health governance [18].

The pluriversal commitment can be translated into a concrete framework. Planetary health discourse carried out only in English tends to structure the human-nature relationship through a limited repertoire of imported concepts, among them environment, sustainability, and resilience, each of which presumes some degree of separation between a human subject and a natural object that it observes, manages, or protects. Philippine relational vocabulary offers a different starting point. *Kapwa*, developed as a foundational concept of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino psychology) by Virgilio Enriquez, denotes a shared identity between self and other in which the other is not treated as separate from the self but as continuous with it [19]. *Kapwa* is not simply a synonym for community or relationship; it possibilizes a mode of ethical regard in which harm to what is nominally ‘outside’ the self is felt as a diminishment of the self, prior to any calculation of obligation or self-interest. Extended, as Filipino environmental and Indigenous scholarship has begun to do, from interpersonal relations to relations between humans and the more-than-human world, *kapwa* makes available an ecological ethic that a single translated term like environment cannot convey, because environment names a relation of observation and management, whereas *kapwa* names a relation of shared being. Bahasa Indonesia and related regional languages have similarly encoded adat-based vocabulary of customary land-and-resource relations, articulating reciprocal obligations between communities and their territories that a policy-oriented term like natural resource management, with its implicit separation of the managing subject from the managed resource, obscures. None of this is an argument that the dominant-language planetary health vocabulary should be discarded, or that concepts like *kapwa* should be deployed as decorative local color meant to lend cultural texture to an argument still organized around imported categories; the two uses are not the same, and the difference matters. Treating *kapwa* or *adat* as coexisting and equally legitimate accounts of the human-planet relationship, explained on their own conceptual terms rather than gestured at in passing, is what a pluriversal planetary health ethics requires. Treating them as ornamental substitutes for environment is a subtler version of the same monolingual epistemology this article opposes.

Fricker’s distinction between testimonial and hermeneutical injustice helps to understand another kind of harm that a languaging-based ethics should address. Even when a minoritized-language speaker’s account of an environmental or occupational health hazard is made intelligible via an interpreter or a translanguaging process, that account can still be discredited via testimonial injustice: a listener’s prejudiced attitudes towards accent, migration status, or perceived educational level can undermine the credibility of the speaker regardless of the accuracy of the statement. Migrant workers reporting heat exposure, unsafe housing, or contaminated water to employers, clinics, or labor inspectors in a second or third language frequently experience this kind of compounded discrimination: the account is both linguistically mediated and socially discounted. A planetary health ethics centered on languaging should address both of these harms at once: building the interpretive resources to make minoritized-language testimony intelligible, and addressing the identity prejudices that can discredit testimony despite its perfect intelligibility. One concrete step in this direction is the training and formal accreditation of peer or community health workers who share a minoritized language and migration background with the population they serve, since testimony delivered through a credible peer interlocutor is less easily discounted on identity grounds than the same testimony delivered through a generic institutional interpreter.

Taken together, these frameworks support a stronger claim than the one advanced in the author’s earlier work, that linguistic justice constitutes social justice, climate justice, and

planetary health justice [2]. The stronger claim is that languaging functions as an ethical practice: recognition and provision of a community's languaging is not a courtesy granted to non-English speakers, but a prerequisite for that community's ecological knowledge to be recognized as knowledge within planetary health governance. Accordingly, multilingual disaster warnings, participatory environmental consultations carried out in local languages, and incorporation of indigenous ecological vocabularies in scientific assessments are not merely accessibility accommodations added to substantive planetary health work; they are a condition of that work being done justly. A planetary health ethics built on languaging should regard epistemic pluralism—coexistence of different ways of languaging the human–planet relationship—as something to be preserved and nurtured, not a complication to be solved on the way to a single authoritative account.

5. Memory, Temporality, and Languaging Futures

Languaging also has a temporal dimension that deserves attention here. Earlier work argued that stewardship of planetary health futures requires integration of memory studies into futures thinking, because a society that tends to forget its past, whether through the fragmenting effect of social media on collective memory or the disciplinary isolation of historical and futures-thinking research, would be unable to govern long-term ecological risks [3]. There is a strong connection between these two spheres in memory studies. According to Brown et al., there is a need for overlapping and interdisciplinary memory and history studies to create an organized view of the development of a society leading to its current state as a necessary condition for any future projection [20]. Berntsen and Bohn find out that the ability to imagine a particular scenario of the future depends on the same autobiographical memory systems that are used for the reconstruction of the past, which means that futures thinking is not a separate cognitive skill but a flexible reorganization of it [21].

As one of the main mediums of both remembering and future imagination, language becomes the point where languaging returns to temporal discussion. Minoritized and Indigenous languages encode ecological memory in the form that planetary health governance in dominant languages is not able to preserve: toponyms containing the history of hydrology and seasons, agricultural and fishing vocabularies that are calibrated to decades of observations of local variations, and oral genealogies connecting current conditions of land and water with some named ancestral events. According to UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, there are thousands of vulnerable, endangered, and extinct languages in the world, most of which are Indigenous and minoritized languages of the Global South [22]. Every language disappearing from the atlas is not only a medium of communication but also an archive of environmental monitoring collected, tested, and improved over generations. Thus, language extinction can be seen as planetary forgetting with material consequences for ecological stewardship that go beyond cultural heritage to be mourned after the fact.

This temporal dimension of languaging also poses a challenge to linear temporality embedded in most planetary health governance, which is organized around targets, milestones, and deadlines from project-management temporality. Kyle Whyte's research in Indigenous climate change studies finds that Indigenous narratives about climate change often do not follow the linear path but instead are built on kinship, embedding the current ecological crisis in webs of reciprocal obligations that exist concurrently across generations rather than as a series of future milestones to be achieved or missed [23]. Whyte's related research on relational tipping points argues that determination of whether the situation is "too late" for climate justice cannot be based solely on physical thresholds because the destruction of relational properties (reciprocity, trust, accountability) that connect Indigenous

people to the land and to other societies is another tipping point that linear temporalities of dominant-language planetary health governance are unable to capture [24]. Thus, a languaging approach to planetary health futures would have to preserve multiple concurrent temporalities rather than translating every community's relationship with ecological time into a linear calendar of policy deadlines. The reflections of Rivas on post-Anthropocene stewardship make this warning against a universalized temporal frame of planetary crisis even stronger, suggesting that plural languaged futures rather than a single translation is needed [25].

Ecological calendars provide a concrete example of what is at stake in preserving temporal plurality. Among Southeast Asian and Pacific fishing and farming communities, the vocabularies for seasonal and lunar time that have been developing for generations contain detailed and locally specific knowledge about planting periods, spawning cycles, and monsoon variations, knowledge gathered through observation and correction over time that cannot be replicated by a single imported technical term like growing season or wet season [26]. When such vocabularies are preserved, they become a distributed and intergenerational record of local ecological changes and are able to detect subtle shifts in timing that may not yet have baseline data gathered over shorter periods of time by scientific monitoring. On the other hand, when these vocabularies and the languages that [27] contain them disappear, the institutions of planetary health would lose not just a cultural object but a genuine long-duration environmental database that predated formal instrumental records in many locations. Languaging preservation and revitalization as planetary health priorities rather than just a linguistic concern follows directly from recognition of this archival function of languaging.

6. Toward Applied Directions: Multilingual Governance and Disaster Communication

Disaster risk reduction is the most accessible empirical field for a test of a languaging ethic, since the health and survival consequences of linguistic exclusion are immediate and concrete rather than diffuse and hypothetical. Piller, Zhang, and Li have shown that the information needs of multilingual populations in public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic were often neglected not because of the lack of translation technology, but because the crisis communication systems were designed with a monolingual default population in mind, which was never there in the first place [28]. The notion of disaster linguicism, introduced by Uekusa and Matthewman, extends the critique by conceptualizing the structural, not just accidental, disadvantages of Indigenous, minority, and minoritized-language communities imposed by disaster risk reduction systems based on dominant languages, and pointing out that the usual solution, such as producing more translated pamphlets and making more interpreters available, is treating a structural problem as a logistical one [27]. The approach they suggest, focused on translanguaging and the development of community translators, who are part of the affected population and not parachuted in from outside, is very similar to the languaging ethic proposed here: it treats multilingual communities as active co-creators of disaster resilience, not passive recipients of translated warnings. Earlier work calling for a linguistic turn in public health emergency response stressed the importance of integrating emergency language services, multi-language disaster warnings, and the deployment of translators and interpreters as first responders, not auxiliary staff, as core public health infrastructure, not a special accommodation [29]. The implications of the languaging ethic outlined in this section can be seen in three directions. First, planetary health governance bodies, from national disaster risk reduction agencies to Sustainable Development Goal frameworks, need to integrate language justice principles into their reporting architecture, following the Study Group

on Language and the United Nations' recommendation that linguistic discourse should be made visible within, not incidentally related to, sustainability governance [6]. Second, community translators and interpreters working in disaster and climate contexts need to be resourced and professionally recognized as planetary health workers in their own right, because their languaging work makes a warning issued in a dominant language an actionable piece of knowledge within an affected community, not a neutral conduit between two pieces of knowledge. Third, early warning terminologies need to be developed in cooperation with minoritized-language and Indigenous communities, not just translated for them, so that early warning systems draw upon the ecological vocabulary, seasonal calendars, and place-based categories used by those communities, consistent with Whyte's relational accountability framework, rather than imposing translated versions of categories developed elsewhere [24].

This is particularly relevant for the Philippines and the wider Southeast Asian region introduced at the beginning of this article. A national disaster warning system serving a population spread across more than 180 language communities cannot provide languaging justice through a national-language broadcast accompanied by an English translation, no matter how good it is; the linguistic architecture of the warning system itself has to be plural and developed through collaboration with regional-language media, local government units, and community organizations that language risks in terms meaningful to their communities. Even higher linguistic diversity and exposure to seismic and volcanic hazards make Indonesia an even bigger design challenge. In both cases and in many other examples of the kind that characterize linguistic and disaster exposure conditions of a significant share of the Global South, a languaging-focused planetary health governance agenda should be seen not as an exceptional accommodation, but as the base design condition on top of which resilient and just planetary health governance can be built.

This is not a purely speculative agenda. Studies of community and Indigenous knowledge in Philippine disaster response show what languaging-based disaster resilience already looks like in practice: research on the Mamanwa indigenous peoples of Basey, Samar, following Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 documents how community elders' locally languaged knowledge of weather signs, drawn from observation of animal behavior and celestial patterns, informed evacuation decisions that state disaster risk reduction systems, organized around dominant-language broadcast warnings, did not capture or formally recognize [30]. That such knowledge already exists, and is already saving lives, while remaining largely outside the official evidence base of national disaster risk reduction and management systems, is itself evidence for the argument of this article: the obstacle is not the absence of local ecological knowledge but the absence of institutional architecture willing to receive it in the language and form in which communities already hold it. Why this integration has not already become standard practice is, in large part, an institutional and financial question: resourcing community translators and building consultation infrastructure at the scale of hundreds of language communities requires sustained investment that national disaster risk reduction budgets have not historically prioritized, alongside a professional culture in which local and Indigenous knowledge is too often treated as anecdotal color for a report rather than as data with its own claim to evidentiary status.

There is already an institutional anchor for this agenda in international disaster risk reduction policy. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction commits signatory states to people-centered, inclusive risk governance and to strengthening the use of local and Indigenous knowledge in disaster risk assessment, although it does not currently translate this commitment into specific and measurable indicators of language access or languaging inclusion [31]. A languaging-oriented planetary health agenda would require national disaster risk reduction agencies implementing this framework to report, in addition

to the existing indicators, the number and reach of minoritized languages actively served by early warning and consultation systems, and the degree to which community translators and local language risk vocabulary are integrated into, not simply layered onto, disaster response protocols. Without such indicators, commitments to inclusive, people-centered risk governance remain aspirational; with them, languaging justice becomes a measurable and auditable component of planetary health governance, not an abstract value enunciated in the framework's preamble and left undeveloped.

7. Conclusions

This article has argued that languaging, the dynamic process through which communities understand and interpret their place within the planet, needs to be understood as a planetary health ethic rather than a logistical question of communication. The monolingual epistemologies that remain embedded in colonial public health structures continue to dictate the kind of ecological knowledge that can be used as evidence within planetary health governance, thus producing hermeneutical injustice for minoritized-language and Indigenous communities in the Global South, especially in the linguistically rich, disaster-vulnerable communities in the Philippines and Indonesia. Recognizing languaging as constitutive, both ethically and temporally, of planetary health, rather than only a means through which knowledge is transmitted between languages, turns questions of multilingual disaster communication, Indigenous knowledge incorporation, and language-sensitive environmental governance into matters of justice, not of logistics.

The argument developed across this article gives theoretical substance to a claim the author has made before in briefer form, that linguistic justice sits at the heart of social justice, climate justice, and planetary health justice; the present article is what makes that claim more than an assertion. Linguistic justice is planetary health justice, because the practice of languaging through which communities recall their ecological histories, make observations about the current situation, and plan their future is the site where planetary health can either be created or undermined. This is a call for empirical development of the languaging framework itself, through indicators, case studies, and institutional pilots of the kind sketched in Section 6, not a claim that Indigenous and minoritized communities' ecological knowledge is unverified pending future research; as the Mamanwa example above illustrates, that knowledge already exists, embedded in the languaging practices this article has described. In order for the field of planetary health to uphold its commitments to transdisciplinarity and justice in the Global South, it cannot continue to think of language as a logistical issue to be dealt with after the work of science and governance is done. Instead, it needs to integrate languaging from the start into the processes of science and governance, with sufficient resources and consultation.

Recognizing languaging as an important issue will change what is measured by the planetary health institutions, who they talk to, and how success is measured. It will mean recognizing the survival of a minoritized or Indigenous language as an indicator of planetary health in its own right, alongside the other indicators of ecological and epidemiological changes, since the loss of language means the loss of an irreplaceable archive of environmental observation. It will mean building disaster and climate governance institutions where the translators and multilingual mediators have permanent positions and are adequately supported. Finally, it will mean embracing the fact that a planetary health field that is adequate to the linguistic and ecological diversity of the planet it seeks to serve will have to be a plurilingual project.

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