

PLENARY SPEECH

Localising linguistic citizenship in England

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(Received 3 May 2023; accepted 2 June 2023)

Abstract

What's the relevance of 'Linguistic Citizenship' (LC), a concept developed in southern Africa, to language education in England? LC is committed to democratic participation and voice, to linguistic diversity and the value of sociolinguistic understanding (Stroud 2001), and it provides a framework for contesting linguistic conditions in England, where vernacular multilingualism faces monolingual language education policies and an officially 'hostile environment for migrants'. In fact, LC lines up with four sources of opposition to this: civil society and small-scale community organisations cultivating heritage language multilingualism; experience of system-wide 'hospitality to diversity' in education in England in the 1970s & 1980s; c.50 years of linguistics research in Britain; and universities themselves. Drawing on LC's pedigree in sociolinguistics, we then turn to the Hub for Education & Language Diversity, a collaboration between King's and non-profit language organisations which approaches LC as a multi-dimensional programme of language development. This includes BA & MA classes; teacher training (with resonant concepts like 'diasporic local'); and efforts to broaden ideas about university 'impact'. Overall, Linguistic Citizenship invites us to reassess the lie of the land in language education, and suggests an array of practical but principled initiatives at different points of the language teaching/university interface.

1. Introduction

Over the last 20 years, the idea of linguistic citizenship (LC) developed by Christopher Stroud and colleagues has been spreading beyond southern Africa where it started, and there have been discussions about its relevance not only in South East Asia (Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka) but also Europe, in Austria, Sweden, Spain and England, as well as Israel.¹ Within these discussions, the question of localisation has to be prominent for at least two reasons. First, Stroud says that linguistic citizenship is 'an attempt at a comprehensive political stance on language' (Stroud, 2008, p. 45). If it's political, we need to reflect on its relevance to the particular political arrangements in specific places, and if it's comprehensive, we ought to consider theory AND practice, reflection AND action, across a range of settings in locations that we know fairly well. Second, Stroud and colleagues say quite emphatically that linguistic citizenship is 'a Southern and de-colonial concept', arising from the contradictions surrounding educational programmes in the geopolitical South (2018, p. 18) – so how is it going to be relevant to a rich country like England?

This talk was drafted and delivered by Rampton in a public lecture at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore on 24 February 23, but it is heavily dependent on collaboration with Cooke, Bryers, Winstanley, Leung, Tomei and Holmes. We are also very grateful to Dr Luke Lu and colleagues at the NTU Department of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies for the lecture invitation, to Dr Graeme Porte for the invitation to submit it to *Language Teaching*, and to the journal's anonymous reviewers. A video of the lecture can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MS6-K9CM8fk>

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Here's what we're going to cover in what follows:

1. Stroud et al.'s conception of linguistic citizenship
2. English multilingualism, language education and the state
3. Forces and resources contesting England's monolingualism
4. Aligning with linguistic citizenship
5. Linguistic citizenship as a multi-dimensional programme
6. Conclusions?

After describing our sense of what 'linguistic citizenship' means, we'll try to embed our interest in it in an account of language and politics in England, and go on after that to describe something of the multi-layered language development programme that linguistic citizenship seems to call for. We'll move back and forward between the abstract and empirical, offering first a bird's eye and then a worm's eye view, and it's inevitable that there'll be parts of this talk which sound parochial. The hope is, though, that readers will find points of connection in the local case we outline, and it'd be very interesting to hear what they think of the overall scope of what we're proposing.

Let's start with a definition.

2. Stroud's conception of linguistic citizenship

Stroud and colleagues begin their account of linguistic citizenship with a critique of the Linguistic Human Rights (LHR) approach to linguistic inequality. This very state-centred approach has been very influential in post-apartheid South Africa, where they're based, and in it:

- there is selective provision for a specific group, often designed to overcome historic disadvantage;
- the group's distinctive language is identified, described and introduced as an entitlement in institutional activity – in schools, in law courts, in aspects of state bureaucracy – and
- it is the courts and other bodies overseeing the nation-state that grant and monitor all this (Stroud, 2001, p. 349).

This thinking underpins the recognition of 11 official languages in South Africa, but there are also a number of problems:

- LHR promotes an essentialist view language and ethnicity; it creates artificial boundaries between ways of speaking that are actually continuous; and it overlooks mixing and hybridity. As a result,
- LHR marginalises people who use non-standard versions of the group's language, generating new socio-linguistic inequalities;
- LHR appeals to a rather top-down and managerial politics; it presupposes membership of a single state; and it neglects population mobility. It isn't well adapted to the fact that 'individuals now find themselves participating in a variety of sites in competition for resources distributed along multiple levels of scale, such as the nation, the supranation, the local and the regional' (Stroud, 2010, p. 200).

Putting it another way, the advocates of LHR, you could say, talk to government with a sociolinguistic map that rather distorts the ground that it's supposed to cover. Instead of this, says Stroud, we need an approach that is better tuned to sociolinguistic realities, and here's how Stroud characterises the linguistic citizenship perspective. The LC perspective:

- a) sees all sorts of linguistic practices – including practices that are mixed, low-status or transgressive – as potentially relevant to social and economic well-being;
- b) it accepts that it's very hard to predict any of this if you're just watching from the centre;

- c) it puts democratic participation first and emphasises cultural and political ‘voice’ rather than just language;
- d) it stresses the importance of grassroots activity on the ground, often on the margins of state control, outside formal institutions; and finally,
- e) it argues that an enhanced understanding of sociolinguistic processes should be central to emancipatory politics.

That, then, is Stroud’s theory of linguistic citizenship, developed in southern Africa. How far and in what ways can it be transferred to a rich country in the global North? Can we really appropriate it in England, and if we think that we can, what could this ‘localising’ of linguistic citizenship actually look like?

Let’s begin with a broad overview of language and language education in England. Is it all so completely different from South Africa that Stroud’s ideas are simply irrelevant?

3. English multilingualism, language education and the state

According to the latest national census, in London in 2021, 40.6% of the population was born overseas,² 57% of new babies had a non-UK born mother,³ and this diversity has spread far beyond just urban centres.⁴ It’s reckoned that about 20% of English primary school children use a language other than English at home, and to give you a more vivid picture of this, let’s take a brief look at one London secondary school’s effort to provide for this diversity with some extra Portuguese classes (Holmes, 2017; Rampton & Holmes, 2019).⁵

Here is the statement from the school’s website: ‘We also enter students for GCSE and entry level qualifications in community languages. Native speakers of Portuguese, Bengali, Arabic and Turkish, amongst many other languages, have had the opportunity to gain a qualification in their mother tongue.’

Sam Holmes took a closer look at these Portuguese classes, and he found that the situation was actually very complicated. The students in the GCSE class who had ‘Portuguese’ as a ‘mother tongue’ were mostly European Portuguese, because Brazilians at the school tended to arrive in the country at older ages and were already literate enough to pass the exam without formal study, and there was also one Polish and one Palestinian student with good language skills. In fact, when Sam carried out a survey of 58 pupils of Lusophone descent, only 10.6% actually recorded the exclusive use of ‘Portuguese’ at home. Digging a bit deeper, it soon also became clear that terms on the website like ‘community language’ and ‘native speaker’ didn’t guarantee stress-free participation in the lessons. Vinício, for example, might anticipate effortless achievement – ‘chillax total marks’ – but the experience in lessons could be rather different – ‘I can’t say it, I can’t say it’.

Questions of cultural identification also arose, as in the following exchange between Vinício and Jim, whose parents both originally came from Portugal:

Vinício: I hate people like Jim. You’re Portuguese and you say that you’re English.

Jim: I am English. I was born here.

Vinício: You’re not English, man.

Being Portuguese was contested in banter with national stereotypes – ‘Your grandma don’t even know how to make chouriço’ – and ‘Portuguese’ was itself a far from being a unified category free from division: ‘That’s why I hate Madeirans’ ... ‘Go back to your island’. There were Brazilian texts as well as European ones in the course materials, but some of the students dismissed them as ‘incorrect’: ‘No it’s Brazilian’ ... ‘No grammar!’ And there were also complaints about reductive accounts of Portuguese ‘culture’: ‘That’s a lie’ (referring to a textbook account of school in Portugal).

So clearly, there was rather a lot going on in this classroom, and the label ‘Portuguese’ actually covered a range of different ways of speaking, tangled up with all sorts of conflicting assumptions and

beliefs. Referring back to linguistic citizenship, we can say that the school's website offered a simple and rather reductive view of language and ethnicity, of the kind that Stroud and colleagues associate with the Linguistic Human Rights perspective, overlooking mixing and hybridity, potentially generating new socio-linguistic inequalities. BUT we shouldn't be too quick with criticism, because in the context of educational provision for languages and multilingualism in England more generally, these Portuguese classes are actually rather progressively heterodox.

In the words of the British Academy's 'Call for Action' (2019, p. 4):

... [t]here has been a drastic and continuing decline in the numbers studying languages at secondary school and consequently at university, especially over the past two decades ... This has produced a vicious circle in which fewer teachers are trained, with the result that provision and uptake at school are further damaged.⁶

And vis-à-vis community languages like Portuguese:

... there is a disconnect between mainstream education and community-based language learning. The language-learning that goes on in thousands of complementary (or supplementary) schools in the UK has little public visibility. It is scarcely ever connected up with the learning done by the same children in mainstream schools. (British Academy, 2019, p. 5; see also Manzoni & Rolfe, 2019, p. vi)

Turning to the provision of English teaching for people who use other languages, the situation in England is just as dismal. There's no coordinated national provision for English as an additional language in schools – no curriculum guidance and no teacher education (Hutchinson, 2018; Leung et al., 2021). For adult migrants, provision is generally very fragmented, demand for ESOL⁷ far outstrips supply, and national funding has been cut by 60% since 2010 (see Cooke et al., 2023; Rampton et al., 2020).

This doesn't mean that the British nation-state is completely indifferent to multilingualism, or indeed that it keeps language and citizenship totally separate. But the links it makes are rather different from Stroud et al.'s: immigrants need to learn English, says the government, for social cohesion and national security, and a lack of proficiency in the national language increases the threat of radicalisation and terrorism, particularly among Muslims. So, according to Theresa May, Home Secretary and then Prime Minister:

Government alone cannot defeat extremism so we need to do everything we can to build up the capacity of civil society to identify, confront and defeat extremism wherever we find it. We want to go further than ever before helping people from isolated communities to play a full and fruitful role in British life. We plan a step change in the way we help people learn English. There will be new incentives and penalties, a sharp reduction in translation services and a significant increase in the funding available for English. (May, 2015)

Returning, then, to the comparison with South Africa; yes, we've got a linguistically heterogeneous population – indeed, as many suggest, 'a South ... also exists in the global North, in the form of excluded, silenced and marginalized populations' (de Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 51). But if anything, England sounds rather less receptive to multilingualism than South Africa, and on top of that, central government is explicit about making Brexit Britain 'a hostile environment for migrants' across a range of policy areas (Liberty, 2018). So, there's a good case for saying that arguments in favour of recognising multilingualism-as-an-asset actually need to be STRONGER in England than South Africa.

So, what forces and resources, then, are there available to contest central government's entrenched and indeed aggressive monolingualism? We'll mention four⁸ and then situate linguistic citizenship among them.

4. Forces and resources contesting England's monolingualism

1. First of all, there is civil society. Undaunted over 50 years by the stances adopted by successive governments, there is still a huge array of relatively small-scale local and community organisations and initiatives dedicated to cultivating heritage language multilingualism through the arts and education. Evans and Gillan-Thomas (2015) reckon that there are about 3000–5000 supplementary schools in England (2015, p. 8; Rampton et al., 2020, §4.6), and although they generally run on very little money and have a low national profile, it's important not to underestimate them (Rampton et al., 2020, §2(a)). In the early 1970s, a report funded by community groups and supplementary school parents about the disproportionate allocation of African Caribbean children to special schools (Coard, 1971, 2005) had a major impact on the debates about multicultural education (Carby, 1982), and indeed more generally, historical experience is a second important resource for local arguments for linguistic pluralism.
2. Stroud and colleagues sometimes suggest that we'll only ever find the cultivation of heteroglossia at the margins of state provision, but a brief glance back to English state education half a century ago shows that this isn't actually true (see Rampton et al., 2018, §6 for more detail). From the 1960s to the late 1980s, schooling in England was dominated by 'progressive' pedagogies, and local authorities, teaching unions and subject associations had much more influence than central government. In language education, there was huge interest in the voice and language repertoires of pupils, and for many, this brought the politics of gender, class and ethnicity into lessons. In the late 1980s, a lot of this culminated in Language in the National Curriculum project (LINC), which ran from 1989–1992, involved 25 coordinators and more than 10,000 teachers in over 400 training courses, supported with £21 million from central government (£165 million at current values) (Carter, 1990, p. 16). This argued, for example, that:

... language and its conventions of use are permanently and unavoidably unstable and in flux. Much of the richness, pleasure and creativity of language use inheres in ... play with these conventions (Carter, 1990, p. 17);

... [b]eing more explicitly informed about the sources of attitudes to language, about its uses and misuses, about how language is used to manipulate and incapacitate, can empower pupils to see through language to the ways in which messages are mediated and ideologies encoded (Carter, 1990, p. 4);

... many bilingual children operate naturally ... switching between languages in speech or writing in response to context and audience [and teachers can] create the conditions which enable children to gain access to the whole curriculum by encouraging them to use, as appropriate, their strongest or preferring language (Savva, 1990, p. 260, 263).⁹

The similarities to the ideas in Stroud's linguistic citizenship are obvious (language mixing; the creative unpredictability of communicative practice; the value of sociolinguistic understanding).

Admittedly, the training materials that LINC produced were eventually banned, with the Conservative minister responsible asking:

Why is so much prominence given to exceptions rather than the norm – to dialects rather than standard English, for example ... Of course, language is a living force, but our central concern must be the business of teaching children how to use their language correctly. (Eggar, 1991)

Indeed, shortly after, all this educational activity was replaced by a centralised national curriculum that prioritised Standard English, and a free-market system that pushed school and college managers to concentrate on exam results. But even though central government legislation

had a massive impact on schooling, it didn't close down on a third significant resource in arguments for linguistic pluralism – academic sociolinguistics.

3. Academic research on language and post-war migration to Britain stretches back at least 50 years, and a lot of it has focused on education, often with quite a strong interest in using research to achieve practical effects. In the late 1970s, adult migrant language training provided a context for the development of John Gumperz's highly influential sociolinguistic theory (Gumperz et al., 1979), and more generally during the 1970s and 1980s there was a lot of sociolinguistic interest in linguistic diversity in schools, colleges and adult education, which was fuelled by robust and energetic debates about multiculturalism and anti-racism among academics, community activists, parents, educators, politicians and officials in local and national government. As we've already indicated, none of it chimed with Thatcherism, and in the 1990s and beyond, successive governments closed the space for working with language diversity in education. But this shift in English education policy didn't shut down academic interest in linguistic diversity, and there's now actually a very substantial literature on British multilingualism, covering among other things multilingual literacies, supplementary schools, popular culture, urban vernaculars and everyday interactions, all of it pointing to the everyday normality of mixed, heteroglossic language practice.¹⁰ In addition, there are significant lines of critical sociolinguistic work that focus on public discourse and government policy, and document, for example, racism and Islamophobia in the mass media and the (in)securitisation of British Muslims and migrants more generally.
4. The fourth resource for countering this aggressive monolingualism is the universities. Universities are expected to play a significant role in their regional economies under a government impact agenda that affects quite a substantial part of their funding, and in fact according to an OECD study of HE (higher education) in 12 countries, 'higher education institutions ... are strongly placed to interpret global issues on a local scale' (Chatterton & Goddard, 2000, p. 490). This process of regionalisation is itself potentially good news for multilingualism, because local organisations and local governments are often much better attuned to the opportunities and challenges presented by linguistic diversity than national ones, and they're potentially more responsive, especially in urban areas where sizeable proportions of the electorates are multilingual. In addition, it sounds as though HE pedagogies may also be changing 'from a linear model of transmission of knowledge based upon the classroom' to 'becoming more interactive and experiential, drawing upon, for example, project work and work-based learning' (Chatterton & Goddard, 2000, p. 480, 488). Placement opportunities and practical work outside the university setting seem to be a growing part of the higher education curriculum, and at least in principle, this increases the opportunities for students to spend time working locally in multilingual groups and institutions, bringing these experiences back into the university classroom.

So: civil society, historical experience, academic sociolinguistics and the engaged and impactful university as sources of opposition to English monolingualism. Of course, each of these is a complex field, and they don't all lead towards a unified endorsement of Stroud et al.'s conception of linguistic citizenship. In neoliberal universities, 'concepts of the "civic university" and "university social responsibility" [may] merely serv[e a] marketing agenda' (Matras, 2023, p. 6), and outreach programmes can get 'caught up in volatile processes of prioritisation and internal competition for resources' (Matras, 2023, p. 45; see below). Alternatively, the academic arguments for multilingualism may be state-centred rather than locally embedded like Stroud's. The European Union's discourse about 'plurilingual citizens' has traditionally focused on elite multilingualism, involving named standard languages with unified, codified norms of correctness embodied in grammars and national literatures (Gal, 2006; Moore, 2011),¹¹ and the British Academy maybe leans towards this top-down perspective, arguing, for example, that above all, language learning benefits British interests in security, diplomacy and international trade (Matras, 2023, pp. 3–4).¹² Even so, in the language teaching profession, there are

quite a number of signs that Stroud-like ideas about vernacular multilingualism are being taken very seriously. In recent years, notions like ‘translanguaging’ and debates about decolonisation have been prominent in conferences for schoolteachers;¹³ discussions of textbook-free ‘teaching unplugged’ and ‘teacher activism’ feature at ELT events;¹⁴ radical poets like Benjamin Zephaniah and Michael Rosen give the keynotes at British Council ELTons award ceremonies; and the Trinity College Exam Board speaks of translanguaging and bilingual assessment, issuing materials to counter the traditional bias in favour of native-speakers as well.¹⁵

So, people in England haven’t completely surrendered to English monolingualism, and although the particular values associated with Stroud’s linguistic citizenship – linguistic heterogeneity, democratic participation, voice – may not be universally accepted among the forces of resistance, they chime with a sensibility among language teachers that’s actually quite widespread. At this point, it is worth moving down one more step in our account of localising linguistic citizenship, turning to practical actions to promote it. But before doing so, we need to explain why we align more with Stroud et al. rather than, for example, the EU’s traditional version of standard language plurilingualism.

5. Aligning with linguistic citizenship

There are strong arguments that teaching works best when it starts with what people already know and with ‘where they’re at’, and democratic participation and voice are appealing political values. But our main reason for lining up behind Stroud et al. is intellectual and academic: the idea of linguistic citizenship may be shaped by debates and priorities in southern Africa,¹⁶ but it also draws on foundational theoretical and empirical work in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Yes, okay, linguistic citizenship may offer ‘a political stance’ on language, but that doesn’t cut it off from high-quality scholarship. High-quality scholarship and fair and effective political governance obviously aren’t the same thing – politicians have to reckon with a much wider set of pressures and contingencies than academics. But, in the words of Dell Hymes, one of the founding figures in contemporary linguistic anthropology, the careful comparative study of communicative repertoires and communicative practices ultimately serves the higher ethical goals of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* because it ‘prepares [sociolinguists] to speak concretely to actual inequalities’ (Hymes, 1977, pp. 204–206). Echoing this emphasis on the relevance of high-quality research much more recently, Jan Blommaert has argued that ‘no social cause is served by poor analysis. Only the best work stands a chance of making a difference’ (2010, p. 15); ‘solving [real world problems] requires the best possible work, because there is no room for errors, failures, or half-baked work – people’s fate may depend on it’ (2008, p. 200). And here it’s worth underscoring that although linguistic citizenship is a normative rather than a descriptive concept, stressing ‘what should be’ rather than ‘what is’, Stroud and colleagues are themselves very well embedded in contemporary sociolinguistic research, producing first-rate academic analyses of their own.

So, when linguistic citizenship criticises the arbitrary and reifying models of language in the Linguistic Human Rights approach, it’s building on an intellectual deconstruction of ‘named languages’ that is now very much mainstream in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Yes, there’s absolutely no doubting the ideological and emotional power and persuasiveness of the idea of a language like ‘English’, ‘German’ or ‘Bengali’, but nowadays, there is lots of research which challenges the belief that distinct languages exist as natural objects – instead, ‘English’, ‘German’ and ‘Bengali’ are cultural constructs, social and ideological constructions. Likewise, when linguistic citizenship prioritises voice rather than language, it builds on widespread agreement that named languages are actually rather shallow and restrictive constructs when it comes to understanding how people really communicate. When people talk, they use all sorts of visual and bodily signs, and they’re guided by the particularities of the genre and activity, their background knowledge, their attitudes and expectations of each other. And even if you only focus on the linguistic ingredients, you soon see that the forms that people use are associated with a host of different groups and situations – groups and situations that

range from the very local to the trans-national – and you really can't capture these associations in a single name.¹⁷

Following on from these comments about academic pedigree, we'd like to move now to our own attempts to treat the notion of linguistic citizenship as a multi-dimensional programme for language development.

6. Linguistic citizenship as a multi-dimensional programme for language development

Since 2019, we have been working up a *Hub for Education and Language Diversity* (HELD) at King's (www.kcl.ac.uk/held), collaborating closely with a non-profit adult migrant language teaching organisation, English for Action (www.efalondon.org), and you can see a family resemblance to linguistic citizenship in our three guiding principles:

1. shared language is vital to social life but linguistic diversity is also central, and both can be enhanced by education;
2. local conditions and participant perspectives really matter, and can't be taken for granted; and
3. theories and research can be powerful tools, helping people to think differently.

Principles like these have guided our work across a number of areas for quite a long time, and the activities that the Hub brings together include research, materials development (e.g. 'Our Languages'), publishing (especially through *Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies*),¹⁸ and very active links with the University of the Western Cape, the University of Pennsylvania and Monash University. But there are three elements that are maybe most relevant to the question of localisation.

First, there are ordinary classes in B.A. and M.A. programmes, where the academic pedigree of the sociolinguistics underpinning linguistic citizenship more than meets the intellectual requirements of higher education, and this can be integrated with UK universities' interest in 'service learning', project work and student internships. The Multilingual Manchester programme was the most impressive instance of this – it started as a set of practical projects for an undergraduate sociolinguistics class and it grew to become Manchester University's flagship public engagement programme (Matras, 2023). But there are other examples around the country, and at King's, we now run a module on 'Multilingualism, Migration & Diversity' which centres on linguistic citizenship and combines up-to-date sociolinguistic research papers with weekly placements in non-profit language organisations.

Teacher training is a second arena, and as we mentioned earlier, there's hardly any state support preparing language teachers to work in multilingual environments. But there are quite a lot of short courses offered by not-for-profit organisations like Learning Unlimited and English for Action, mainly for practising teachers,¹⁹ and in our partnership with the latter, we've been running a series of half-day seminars as well as a couple of summer schools with the title 'Language, education & linguistic citizenship', geared to questions like:²⁰ 'How can educators gain a better understanding of multilingual students' use of language?', 'How can they acknowledge and foster their students' linguistic repertoires and their right to be heard?', and 'What is the relationship between language education and linguistic citizenship?'

Throughout this training, we've found that the retheorisation of 'repertoire' provided by Blommaert and Backus (2011) has cut a lot of ice with teachers, and the idea of the 'Total Linguistic Fact' (TLF) – an idea formulated by Michael Silverstein, a central figure in US linguistic anthropology – has also proved extraordinarily resonant. We've presented the TLF with diagrams like Figure 1, and this does two things. First, it challenges the separation of 'structure', 'functions' and 'culture' that you often find in language teaching, and it says to teachers, okay you might CONCENTRATE on grammar and vocabulary, gradually increasing their complexity, BUT all the time you're together in class with other people, you're exposing each other to particular understandings of language-in-the-world, and all the time you're being pressured to see yourselves as particular kinds of teacher-and-students, to line up behind particular kinds of authority and so forth. Ideology's inescapable. But, second, the

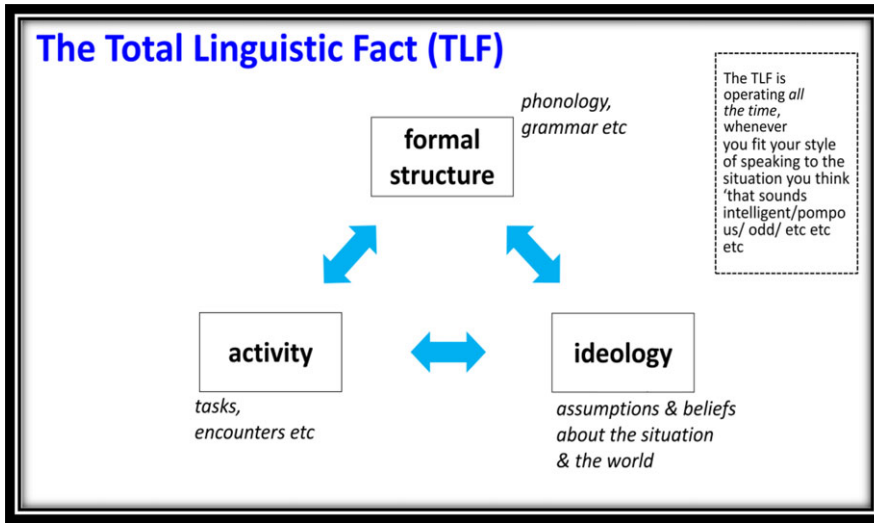


Fig. 1 - Colour online, B/W in print

Figure 1. The total linguistic fact.

two-headed arrow between activity and ideology means that values and beliefs can be reshaped by what people actually do together. So, teachers and students aren't irrevocably trapped in dominant ideologies, and there is scope for creative rearrangement in our models of the social world.

There is a vivid example of this kind of ideological refiguration in another concept that we've been working with a lot. In the last chapter of their book, *Brokering Britain*, Peutrell and Cooke (2019, p. 229) suggest that:

... [t]here is a marked difference between, on the one hand, seeing ESOL students as non-citizen outsiders, who we assist to acquire the language and cultural norms of their adopted homeland, and on the other, as *diasporic locals*, with their own linguistic, cultural, social, affective and other resources; whose very presence reshapes the locality they live in.

Indeed, it actually isn't very difficult to engage in this reorientation. In the average adult ESOL class, there are likely to be students who have been in London for ten years as well as just six months, and in fact, it's also very easy to see a lot of teachers as people with diasporic links as well. This releases classroom interaction from two ideological straightjackets – first, it releases classrooms from the equation of culture and expertise with just one language, and second, it frees them from the idea that knowing more of the language's structures-&-functions means knowing more in general. Instead, if you think about a classroom as a gathering of diasporic locals, even though it really matters, English becomes just one thread in the webs of knowledge and experience that the participants bring with them, and this frees up a far richer set of resources, links and differences for everyone to learn from.

Referring back to our Hub, the 'TLF' and 'diasporic local' are both illustrations of the principle we share with linguistic citizenship: 'theories and research can be powerful tools, helping people to think differently'. But again, like linguistic citizenship, we're also mindful of the fact that 'local conditions and participant perspectives really matter, and can't be taken for granted', and of course we ourselves experience the constraints that these impose. It's not just universities that experience the reductive influence of neoliberalism: neoliberal governance and restrictive top-down regulation exert a very powerful influence on state-funded language teaching, and in the words of an adult education teacher at one of our seminars:

... there [is] a lack of meaningful subject specific staff development opportunities ... with a top-down approach being prevalent ... The influence of policy imperatives interacting with the tick box culture ... mean[s] that nationwide, certain generic compliance ‘staff development’, usually online multiple-choice question-based courses, is prioritised (such as health and safety, ‘British Values’, safeguarding, fraud awareness etc.) at the expense of engaging dialogue-based pedagogically focussed teacher education with the potential to develop curriculum and incorporate tutor and student input. (Rampton et al., 2022, §3.1).

As a result, it tends to be non-profit, non-state third-sector organisations that are able to engage creatively with the pressures and opportunities of contemporary multilingualism, and for universities, this responsive flexibility makes third sector organisations potentially easier partners in any programme broadly oriented to linguistic citizenship.²¹ But it’s certainly not straightforward (Rampton & Cooke, 2021).

Collaboration with non-profit organisations isn’t a priority for universities and the same goes the other way round. These two sectors operate on very different funding and organisational time-scales; work with non-profit organisations isn’t well-recognised in university promotion paths; and there is seldom any workload recognition. Academics working with third sector organisations usually do so unpaid in their own time, and this leads to an over-dependence on individuals, jeopardising collaborations if they move or leave. Certainly, ‘service’ and local engagement often figure prominently in university mission statements, but they’re generally projectised and pursued in high profile/‘world-leading’ challenges and competitions that are very different in spirit from the long-term, low-key conversations which build trust and sustainability, holding collaborations together.

In fact, this adds another dimension to the linguistic citizenship programme we’re trying to develop: getting our own colleagues and managers to be more open and more grounded about links with non-profit grassroots organisations, whether or not they’re focused on language. Practical steps towards this potentially include:

- making collaboration with the non-profit sector a departmental commitment, so that it’s, for example, a standing item on agendas and needs succession planning;
- supporting long term cross-sectoral relationships that don’t depend on project funding and can be sustained with small-scale activities in grant-free periods;
- building alliances with colleagues that thematise both the benefits and challenges of collaboration at staff forums, awaydays, etc.; and
- giving value in sites of staff assessment to activities like serving as a third sector trustee, occasional consultancies, etc.

Admittedly, this is more about citizenship in general than linguistic citizenship, and in focusing on strategies for university departments like this, maybe we’re taking our account of localisation to a level of granularity that makes it irrelevant outside the UK. So, at this point, we’ll conclude with two questions, at very different scales.

7. Conclusions

First, a local question about institutional particularity: we’ve talked about promoting linguistic citizenship across at least four different sites: graduate and undergraduate university courses; teacher training; collaboration with non-profit language teaching organisations; and procedures in university departments. We’ve mostly illustrated all this with the efforts we’ve been making at King’s and English for Action, but we know for sure that in the UK we’re not the only people doing this kind of thing.²² But does this make sense, and how about the countries and institutions where readers of this text are based? Any connections, actual or potential?

Second, and more generally, it would obviously be a serious mistake to underestimate the significance of legal and state-centred definitions of citizenship. These can have a major practical impact on the everyday lives of lots of people, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers included, and as we've said, in England the British state embeds this legal status in highly restrictive ideas about language development – mono- rather than multilingualism, cohesion rather than plurality, obedience more than creativity. Set against this narrowness, we've opted for Stroud et al.'s linguistic citizenship, which is much better adapted to the complicated realities of vernacular multilingualism and which also chimes with contemporary sociolinguistics. But how does our alignment square with what Stroud et al. often say about linguistic citizenship being a transformative concept, not just correcting injustices but changing the structures that generate them?

Well, as we've suggested elsewhere (Rampton et al., 2023), it's probably harder to talk about transformation in Western Europe than South Africa, where discourses of radical change have a lot more currency. So, does that mean that the UTOPIAN qualities that Stroud and colleagues attribute to their theory of linguistic citizenship are enough for us, and that we're just enjoying its 'aesthetic or euphoric resonances', important though these can be? No, we're hoping for more. Ideas and commitments compatible with linguistic citizenship were MATERIALISED and PEDAGOGICALLY ENACTED SYSTEM-WIDE across state education in the 1970s and 1980s, and rather than, for example, dedicating this discussion to a text analysis that (romantically) reads LC ideas and aspirations into particular fragments of discourse, we've talked about linguistic citizenship as a series of quite humdrum practical measures that we've been trying to implement in the concrete conditions of our own workplaces. So, in our final act of localisation, maybe we can align our own appropriation of Stroud et al.'s linguistic citizenship with what Raymond Williams identified as the 'deepest impulse' of adult education, 'the desire to make learning part of the process of social change itself' (1983).²³ And from there, can we see linguistic citizenship as a small, unspectacular but nonetheless practical contribution to what Williams called the *The Long Revolution*:

... the rising determination, almost everywhere, that people should govern themselves' – a lengthy, difficult and complex revolution that is nonetheless a 'genuine revolution, transforming [people] and institutions; continually extended and deepened by the actions of millions, continually and variously opposed by explicit reaction and the pressure of habitual forms and ideas'. (Wainwright, 2018, p. 21, 103; Williams, 1961, p. 10)

Well, that's the intention, though really only time will tell.

Notes

- 1 For example, Aawayed-Bishara (2021), Gspanndl et al. (2023), Lim et al. (2018), and Williams et al. (2022).
- 2 See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/internationalmigrationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=London%20has%20remained%20the%20region,had%20a%20non%20DUK%20passport>.
- 3 See: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/births-by-mothers-country-of-birth-in-london#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20the%20region%20with,all%20live%20births%20in%20London>.
- 4 See: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jan/17/ethnic-segregation-in-england-and-wales-on-the-wane-research-finds?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other.
- 5 There is only space here to provide a glimpse of the situation. A fuller account can be found in Holmes (2017).
- 6 There is a new attempt to address this in the recently announced National Centre for Languages Education, being set up at UCL with c. £15 million from central government (see: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/mar/03/ministers-put-15m-towards-tackling-decline-in-language-learning-in-england> and <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2023/mar/ucl-lead-national-consortium-languages-education>).
- 7 In the UK, ESOL – English for Speakers of Languages Other than English – normally refers to adult migrant learners of English.
- 8 Although they fall outside the scope of this talk, there is a fifth in the examples of Scotland and Wales, where bilingualism is officially recognised with Gaelic, Scots and Welsh, and there is much more systematic provision for learners of English as a second/additional language (Simpson, 2019, p. 29).

- 9 For contemporary classroom efforts to maintain this approach, see *EAL Journal* at <https://naldic.org.uk/publications/eal-journal/>.
- 10 In earlier work, there was quite a strong current of ethnic absolutism, but nowadays there are detailed, anti-essentialist analyses testifying to the low-key convivial multiculturalism that Paul Gilroy has talked about – forms of unruly conviviality that signify not ‘the absence of racism [but ...] the means of racism’s overcoming’ (even though it goes ‘largely undetected by either government or media’) (Gilroy, 2006, pp. 39–40).
- 11 There are some signs, though, that this may be changing – see, for example, Council of Europe, 2022, European Commission, 2020, the CEFR on mediation (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/mediation>) and the training for multilingual classrooms provided by the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe.
- 12 See, for example: https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/199/British_Academy_report_Lost_for_words_report.pdf. In other academic quarters, there have apparently also been suggestions that there should be a government ‘Chief Linguist [placed] within GCHQ, the country’s spy agency, rather than in the departments for Education, Culture, or Communities’ (Matras, 2023, p. 45).
- 13 See, for example, the 2021 and 2022 conference programmes of the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (www.naldic.org.uk)
- 14 See, for example, the 2022 *The Future of Training* conference at International House (www.ihworld.com) and IATEFL’s 2022 *Teacher Activism in Times of Adversity* seminar.
- 15 Ben Beaumont (Head of Teacher Education, Trinity College London) 2023. *TESOL around the globe, as seen through the lens of a UK-based awarding organisation*. London TESOL Research Forum, UCL IoE, 24 January 2023.
- 16 See Heugh (2022) for an account of influences on linguistic citizenship from the global South.
- 17 cf. Blommaert (Ed.) (1999), Kroskrity (Ed.) (2000), Makoni and Pennycook (2007) and Stroud (1999, 2001).
- 18 Collections of working papers related to HELD and to linguistic citizenship can be found at <https://wpull.org/product-category/hub-for-education-language-diversity-held/> and <https://wpull.org/product-category/linguistic-citizenship/>.
- 19 See: <https://www.learningunlimited.co/training-and-cpd/>; <https://efalondon.org/esol-teacher-training/>.
- 20 We have had more than 40 participants at each of the summer schools and 50–80 at most of the seminars.
- 21 One example of this productive collaboration between universities and non-profit organisations is the Migrant English Support Hub (MESH), which runs a website for new arrivals seeking English language provision across 21 local authorities in Yorkshire & Humberside. Another is the partnership between King’s, Cambridge and the Bell Foundation, which produced assessment resources for schools working with students using English as an Additional Language – resources that were subsequently adopted by the Welsh Government.
- 22 See, for example, Lytra et al. (Eds.) (2022).
- 23 1983, cited in McIlroy and Westwood (1993, p. 257).

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