

Linguistic Justice in the Classroom: Teaching English in Diversity

Josep Soler (Stockholm University)

Abstract

This article examines the management of linguistic diversity in English-language classroom contexts from a linguistic justice viewpoint, which is concerned with the equitable and fair treatment of the multiple languages that coexist in a given social context. The analysis presented here shifts the focus from the more typical macro-level approaches in the linguistic justice literature and turns to the micro-level context of the language classroom. The aim is to develop a theoretical argument in connection to two main concerns: firstly, the incorporation (or not) of students' first languages in the English language classroom, and secondly, the incorporation (or not) of different varieties and accents of English. The article argues in favour of recognizing and incorporating students' first languages and the different accents and varieties of English in the language classroom. In addition, it argues in favour of developing an ethics of language that focuses on listening and the listening-subject position as key factors that may determine the fair and equitable treatment of the language resources in the English language classroom and beyond, for a more inclusive and just linguistic environment.

Keywords: linguistic justice; multilingual classrooms; English language classroom; schools; language ethics; listening-subject position

1. Introduction

How should schoolteachers of English and other stakeholders in education handle linguistic diversity in the language classroom? This is by now an almost classical question within educational and applied linguistics, certainly not original (cf. Cummins 2000). This article adopts a linguistic justice approach to address this question, aiming to develop a theoretical argument for treating linguistic diversity in school classrooms, with a particular focus on the subject of English where it is taught as a second or foreign language. Theories of linguistic justice intersect with language policy and normative political theory (Ricento et al. 2015). As an area of

Soler, Josep. 2026. 'Linguistic Justice in the Classroom: Teaching English in Diversity.' *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 25(1): 205–226. <https://doi.org/10.35360/njes.v25i1.63680>. Copyright (c) 2026 Josep Soler. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

research, linguistic justice is primarily concerned with the equitable and fair management of multiple languages within a national or regional context. The paper narrows this typical macro-level scope in the linguistic justice literature to the micro-level context of the classroom. Two main concerns are addressed in the article: (1) the incorporation (or not) of students' first languages in the English language classroom, and (2) the incorporation (or not) of different accents and varieties of English. In the style of political theoretical writing, the paper argues in favour of not just tolerating and recognizing, but actively incorporating students' first languages to strengthen their linguistic identity (García 2009a). Similarly, it contends that including a wide range of English accents and varieties is essential to demystify and dismantle any perceived hierarchy among them (Lindqvist and Soler 2024).

In Sections 2 and 3, the paper reviews literature from applied linguistic and sociolinguistic research that on the one hand finds support for the use and recognition of multiple languages and varieties of English in the language classroom, but on the other hand, highlights the empirical challenges such use and recognition entail. These challenges are connected to language policy and language ideological and attitudinal factors, including teachers' and students' preparation and predisposition to work with the multiple linguistic resources available in the classroom. Section 4 turns to selected linguistic justice theory, in particular Van Parijs' (2011) framework, to develop arguments that might shed new light on the empirical challenges identified in the previous sections. In addition, and importantly, it is argued that there is a need to foster ethical and linguistically responsible attitudes in multilingual encounters (Holmes 2021), such as those that might take place in English language classrooms. This involves focusing on the listening-subject position (Flores and Rosa 2015), understanding the language-political dimension of listening acts, and looking into how certain listening-subject positions can lead to prejudiced views of different forms of speech, including varied forms of English. By concentrating on the listening-subject position, teachers can uncover mechanisms to teach not only metalinguistic awareness but also the processes through which prejudiced listening practices and the unequal valorizing of voices occur. This linguistic justice interpretation aims to foster a more inclusive and just linguistic environment in classrooms, where all voices can be heard and valued equally.

2. The multilingual English language classrooms

The monolingual-multilingual tension has been historically present in educational contexts, and English-language classrooms have certainly not been an exception to it. Partly as a consequence of Krashen's (1977) input theory, the monolingual principle gained prominence as an instructional approach in the 1980s focusing on the exclusive use of the target language (TL) to enhance students' proficiency in it (Howatt 1984). Such monolingual approaches to second and foreign language teaching and their focus on linguistic proficiency would soon be questioned; for example, Kramsch (1986) indicated the need to shift the focus from language proficiency to interactional competence. Bax (2003) highlights the role of context at different levels, from the individual classroom to wider sociocultural and policy-related factors operating at the national level, in shaping suitable teaching approaches. Cummins (2007) explicitly criticized monolingual teaching strategies (such as the use of the TL only and the avoidance of translation between L1 and TL) and rebuked them for having little empirical support and lack of basis from cognitive psychological and applied linguistic theory.

Against the background of the multilingual turn in bilingual education and second-language teaching and learning (May 2014; Ortega 2013), discussions about the multilingual dimension of English language teaching became even more prominent. At the 42nd Annual Conference Convention of TESOL in New York, in 2008, a symposium was held with the topic: 'imagining multilingual TESOL'. Taylor (2009: 309) states explicitly that 'without multilingualism, TESOL would cease to exist', calling TESOL to provide leadership in connection to multilingualism and its recognition in the language classroom. Cummins (2009) insisted on the theoretical and empirical grounds supporting multilingual strategies for language teaching and learning, adding to these another layer: the importance of including students' L1 in the classroom as a way to challenge the typically subordinate role those languages take both in educational settings and in the society more generally. Cummins argued that TESOL should take an explicit position on the topic of teaching and learning multilingually; otherwise, a silence on this matter would risk being interpreted as an implicit support to the monolingual strategies historically dominant in the field. In addition, and importantly, while the 2008 symposium marked an important moment within TESOL, similar concerns regarding multilingual teachers and learners had already been

articulated earlier in other frameworks, particularly the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001), which conceptualized language users as inherently plurilingual.

In more recent years, discussions about multilingualism in classroom settings have been dominated by one key concept: translanguaging (García and Li 2014). Understood as a practical theory of language (Li 2018), translanguaging has evolved from a practice-oriented term to refer to the language teaching strategies used in bilingual education (Lewis et al. 2012) to a much broader way of understanding and explaining the fluid linguistic practices that multilingual speakers engage in as they make use of their full set of linguistic resources (Li 2018). Given this conceptual broadening, a requalification of the concept has been deemed necessary to refer to the multilingual strategies used purposefully in the language classroom: pedagogical translanguaging (Juvonen and Källkvist 2021). With reference to the English language classroom, Cenoz and Gorter (2020) place emphasis on the multilingual speaker, the whole linguistic repertoire, and the contextualized social context as key aspects that give support to a multilingual approach to language teaching and learning, opposed to the monolingual, ‘English-only’ types of approaches. In contexts where English has made significant societal inroads such as Sweden and Scandinavia more broadly (Peterson and Beers Fägersten 2024), ‘English-only’ approaches might have seemed sensible (Lundahl 2012); but even in those contexts, pedagogical translanguaging has been discussed in support of an ‘English-mainly’ approach to teaching rather than an ‘English-only’ one (Källkvist et al. 2017). Empirical evidence seems to support the benefits of using students’ multiple languages, at least when it comes to for example vocabulary acquisition in English (Gyllstad et al. 2023).

That said, multilingual approaches to language teaching and learning, in connection to English language teaching, are not without practical and ideological challenges. Broadly conceived, these challenges can be found in at least two levels: macro and micro. At a macro level of language policymaking, labels such as ‘English Language Learners (ELL)’ or ‘Limited English Proficient students (LEP)’, used by governing bodies in the United States, might carry negative, if not straightforward derogatory, connotations (García 2009b). Such policy discourses reflect broader language ideologies that construct multilingualism through deficit-oriented frameworks, thereby positioning multilingual students lower

within sociolinguistic hierarchies in education and beyond (Cushing 2021 2023; Flores and Rosa 2015). Ofelia García (2009b) suggests an alternative term, emergent bilinguals, to avoid precisely this negative undertone set by policy documents. This seems true also in the context of Sweden, where official educational policy documents have typically remained ambivalent about monolingual versus multilingual approaches in the English language classroom (Hult 2017), leaving it up to the teachers to decide how best to handle students' multiple linguistic resources (Paulsrud et al. 2023). This lack of clear guidelines for teachers leads us to the challenges at the micro level. Indeed, when it comes to teachers' reported practices and attitudes, research suggests clear tensions between, on the one hand, a positive evaluation of students' multilingual repertoires, which are normally seen as assets, and on the other hand, an absence of clear practical solutions to work with and around these multilingual resources (Paulsrud et al. 2023; Sundqvist et al. 2025).

In the United States, teachers participating in a master's course on sociolinguistics for bilingual education showed a clear stance in support of enhancing students' multilingual repertoires in the classroom (Anderson et al. 2024). At the same time, however, this supportive stance was mediated by objections that demonstrated ambivalence to fully embracing multilingual approaches in language teaching. These ambivalences revolved around two justifications: notions of success and ideologies of appropriateness (Flores and Rosa 2015). Anderson et al. (2024) conclude their study by highlighting the need to discuss more explicitly where expectations about idealized forms of English come from, and why those expectations would count more than those from the educators or students. So, language ideologies represent a key element shaping language experiences in the classroom. Indeed, and from the point of view of students themselves, studies show how aware students are of their own language practices and of the ways these practices are heard and placed against a societal linguistic hierarchy (Seltzer 2019). Seltzer calls on the importance of integrating students' metalinguistic awareness and in so doing, to rethink the ways in which teachers and educators hear students' voices.

Complementing this body of work, scholars writing from and about the Global South have long foregrounded the role of language ideologies in shaping whose voices are legitimized in educational contexts. Makoni and Pennycook (2007), for instance, challenge the very idea of bounded,

idealized languages, arguing that such constructs are ideological products that marginalize the fluid and hybrid practices of multilingual speakers, particularly in postcolonial settings. Similarly, Canagarajah (2013) documents how multilingual English-language speakers strategically negotiate dominant norms of English while drawing on their full linguistic repertoires, thereby exposing the tensions between institutional expectations and lived language practices. More recently, still moving beyond Euro-American contexts, Bauler (2021) highlights how raciolinguistic ideologies circulate in language education and silence minoritized voices, calling for pedagogies that center students' epistemic agency and multilingual knowledge. In a related vein, Meighan (2021) emphasizes the importance of listening as an ethical and political practice in multilingual classrooms, particularly in contexts marked by colonial history and inequality, where whose voices are heard cannot be taken for granted.

In sum, handling students' linguistic diversity in multilingual classrooms, including English language settings, has been historically underpinned by tensions. On the one hand, research emphasizes the importance of adopting approaches that actively incorporate and not tone down students' varied linguistic repertoires, such as pedagogical translanguaging. On the other hand, such approaches are not without challenges, both at macro and micro levels, but raising critical awareness amongst both teachers and students seems crucial to support learning experiences oriented towards a social justice and equity agenda. This latter argument is an important one for the general line of argument developed in the present article, and I return to it in the final part of it; but before that, let us address another key issue that has an impact precisely on the equity front in the English language classroom, namely: the representation and incorporation of diverse English accents and varieties in pedagogical contexts.

3. English varieties and accents in the language classroom

In addition to the diversity of students' languages, another source of sociolinguistic tension in the English language classroom has to do with the ways in which different accents and varieties of English are represented and incorporated in students' language learning experiences. Before going any further, this section will treat 'accent' and 'variety' in parallel; while it would be worthwhile, analytically, to discuss them

separately, for the sake of simplicity, readability, and given space constraints, the two categories will not be formally distinguished in the development of the argument (on accent and race in British classrooms, see for example, Cushing and Clayton 2024).

Kachru's (1985) model of three concentric circles of English paved the way for discussions around native-speakerism and native-speaker domination in the field of English language teaching (ELT), including how 'standard' English was to be defined and even who could claim a legitimate degree of ownership of the language (Widdowson 1994). Native-speaker bias in ELT has been well-documented since the early 2000s (Matsuda 2002), with discussions revolving around what principles should guide the design of teaching material that reflects the internal vast diversity of the language (Kyczkowiak 2020; Matsuda 2019; Sifakis 2014). Native-speakerism in ELT certainly goes beyond representations of different varieties in school textbooks, and a great deal of discussion has been dedicated to the position of non-native speaker teachers of English vis-à-vis native speakers (cf. Llurda and Calvet Terré 2024). However, language textbooks do provide a measure of the hierarchizing language ideologies that are present in the language classroom (Siegel 2006) and that give shape not only to forms of language teaching and learning, but also, and importantly, to the ideas and beliefs about language and culture (Curdt-Christiansen and Wenninger 2015).

Similar to what happens in the case of the management of linguistic diversity in English language classrooms, here too the representation of different accents and varieties of the English language is met with its own obstacles. In contexts both within and outside Europe, Inner Circle varieties of English, particularly British and American English, are the dominant ones (Modiano 2009; Fang and Ren 2018). Despite awareness raising efforts aimed at showing the importance of appreciating the diversity of English and its many varieties (Galloway and Rose 2018), many textbooks still continue to give more room and presence to the historically more common British and American accents. In Sweden, where the teaching of English as a foreign language has been in place since 1945 (Bolton and Meierkord 2015), Lindqvist and Soler (2024) report on a study of two commonly used textbooks in English language classrooms at upper-secondary level where British and American varieties of English predominated in terms of representation. In addition, in both textbooks there are criminals and gangster-type of characters from different

geographical backgrounds (both the US and the UK, but also from Outer and Expanding Circle countries such as Nigeria and Colombia). Quite problematically, these kinds of characters are portrayed in different ways: the characters from the US and the UK (appearing to use British and American varieties) have undergone a process of change and been reinserted into society; by contrast, characters from non-Inner Circle countries are not depicted along similar lines, but simply remain as criminals or gangsters (using non-Inner Circle varieties). Lindqvist and Soler suggest that this kind of portrayals ‘may further render an unjust picture of speakers of Outer and Expanding Circle countries and Englishes’ (2024: 137). This finding aligns with a broader literature showing that ELT materials frequently foreground Inner Circle English varieties and cultural models (e.g., Matsuda 2002; Syrbe and Rose 2018; Vettorel 2018), even when analyzed across multiple books, contexts, and national curricula. For example, comparative analyses of textbook series reveal persistent biases toward British and American norms and limited coverage of Outer and Expanding Circle varieties (Rashidi et al. 2016; Joo et al. 2019), with intercultural content often under-representing sociolinguistic diversity (Shin et al. 2011; Putra et al. 2020).

Lindqvist and Soler’s paper emerged as a continuation from a previous study by Lindqvist (2020), where the author had also conducted interviews with in-service teachers to ask them about their opinions and attitudes towards the representation of the diversity of English in language textbooks. From these interviews, Lindqvist was able to uncover that teachers do not consider this kind of representation to be important (rather, they would place more emphasis on understanding the speaker, regardless of which variety or accent they use); in addition, teachers felt ambivalent about textbooks themselves and about how useful they are to teach diverse English varieties and accents. On the one hand, they think textbooks should be more proactive when finding readings and listening exercises that go beyond the typical British or American varieties, but on the other hand, they also do not consider the dominance of these varieties to be something premeditated or planned by the textbook authors (Lindqvist 2020: 19). Much like with the use and incorporation of students’ multiple linguistic resources discussed above, here too teachers felt like they need more guidance when it comes to working actively with English varieties with the students (despite the fact that knowledge of social and dialectal variation is marked as one of the goals of the English 5 course, equivalent

to upper-secondary school level). Finally, the teachers in Lindqvist's study also found that the focus on British or American varieties is sometimes driven bottom-up, that is from the students, who either have a hard time recognizing any variety other than these two or do not have any interest in learning more about other varieties.

In other parts of the world, both in Outer and Inner Circle countries, tensions around the presence and representation of different varieties of English in the English language classroom are also evident. These tensions are normally underpinned by linguistic ideological constructs of the 'standard' or 'academic' varieties of English that are typically considered more legitimate in the school context. In a study from Singapore, for example, Tupas and Weninger (2022) show how teachers indicate in which contexts it is appropriate to use Singlish, and in which contexts it is not, suggesting an ideology of language appropriateness that perpetuates the unequal and prejudiced position of speakers of marked varieties in the society at large. In the United Kingdom, Cushing (2023) finds that educators' discourses about their worldviews and their beliefs about their pedagogical practices are strongly mediated by idealized forms of English. These forms seem to perpetuate the different hierarchical positions of speakers of different forms of English, and those with perceived 'good' English seem to be able to progress adequately in educational and professional contexts. Needless to say, these kinds of prejudiced views are connected to ideologies about social class and race, ideologies that are traced also by Baker-Bell (2020) in school contexts from the United States.

All in all, the different forms of representing and handling the diverse accents and varieties of English in the classroom have a bearing on the ways in which different voices are constructed and potentially heard: some more normative, canonical, typical, others more deviant, marked with deficit. Combined with the challenges associated to the diversity of students' multilingual repertoires, these sociolinguistic tensions have important implications for a linguistic justice agenda in school contexts.

In the next and final part of the paper, I turn to linguistic justice theories to suggest possible ways of addressing the tensions described so far in the article; even if typically in the realm of the ideal, rather than the empirical or observable, linguistic justice theories can provide useful and relevant guidance to policymakers as well as key stakeholders (for example, teachers and educators) when making decisions about language related matters.

4. Linguistic justice theory and the English language classroom

Linguistic justice is an interdisciplinary area of research that emerged primarily from within political theory and political philosophy now about two decades ago (Kymlicka and Patten 2003). One general question that theories of linguistic justice aim to address is the following: ‘what is the just political management of the presence of different language groups within a political community?’ (De Schutter and Robichaud 2015: 88). From a political philosophical and theoretical point of view, linguistic justice research offers frameworks that project ideal type of situations and examines arguments in favour and against such idealized models of language management (De Schutter 2014; Morales-Gálvez 2017). This kind of theorization has been inspirational for researchers in adjacent fields, including for applied linguists and language policy scholars, who have developed interdisciplinary efforts bridging sociolinguistic and linguistic justice literatures (e.g., Ricento et al. 2015). These combined efforts, however, have tended to focus on macro-level layers of analysis, such as institutions and governments at state or sub-state levels (e.g., Oakes and Peled 2018). However, the argument to be developed in this section of the article shifts the focus of the discussion from this typical macro-level, institutional layer, and narrows it down into the more micro-level context of the language classroom. The guiding question is thus: what theoretical principles from the linguistic justice literature could inform the management of linguistic diversity in the English language classroom?

This seems to be an important question because, as seen from the sets of literature summarized in the two sections above, previous research provides ample support for the recognition and incorporation of students’ varied linguistic resources and of the diversity of Englishes, not just for pedagogical purposes, but also for identity-related reasons. Indeed, in its philosophical underpinnings, translanguaging incorporates a social justice agenda to it, whereby the activation of the multiple linguistic resources that students bring with them into the classroom is not only a pedagogical asset to the teaching and learning experience, but it is also a way of legitimating students’ complex linguistic practices and to redress the hierarchies in classroom settings (García 2009a). Calls have also consistently been made to recognize the equal value of the different varieties and accents of English in the classroom to foster non-prejudiced views of the less-typically represented ones (Matsuda 2019). At the same time, research has also identified obstacles on both counts, as we have seen

above too, so it seems like a worthwhile effort to develop alternative arguments for handling the linguistic diversity in the classroom and in so doing, perhaps offer additional guidance to practitioners on the ground.

One of the central works in linguistic justice theory is presented by Philippe Van Parijs (2011). In his monograph, Van Parijs is supportive of the global spread of English as a lingua franca, considered to be a key agent of democratic empowerment globally. At the same time, the author also recognizes that the global spread of English comes with a set of costs and associated injustices, and he considers measures that could be applied to tone down or eliminate such injustices. Of key importance to this paper is the injustice related to parity of esteem, which is connected to people's equal dignity and respect. The core of the injustice of parity of esteem is presented by Van Parijs (2011: 3-4) like this: 'in a situation in which people's collective identities are closely linked to their native language, there arises a major threat to the recognition of an equal status to all as soon as the native language of some is given what is unquestionably a superior function'. As De Schutter and Robichaud (2015) point out, the recognition that is given to a language by a state or by others affects the self-respect and esteem of the speakers of that language. Van Parijs is concerned with addressing the disparity of esteem that emerges between different named languages and English; for example, speakers of French, Spanish, Swedish, Italian, etc., may feel their linguistic identity to be threatened by the spread of English as a global lingua franca. It does not seem far fetched to stretch the argument from an inter-linguistic parity of esteem (i.e., equal respect between speakers of different languages), to an intralinguistic parity of esteem, where the focus is on speakers of different accents and varieties of the same language; as opposed to the equitable political management of diverse language communities, 'intralinguistic justice concerns the just political treatment of internal linguistic differences within a language community, consisting of regional, class-based, or dialects existing alongside a standard language' (De Schutter 2020: 146). By definition, therefore, it seems important that measures are designed and implemented so that parity of esteem is enhanced and is an in-built part of a given context. In the case of education, parity of esteem would demand effective strategies that allow for the recognition of students' multiple languages not only for pedagogical reasons (as implied in research related to pedagogical translanguaging), but also for reasons to do with students' dignity and self-respect. As Van Parijs puts it, 'a just

society, whether national or global, is not only one whose institutions organize cooperation and distribute opportunities in a fair way, it is also a society whose members treat one another with equal respect' (Van Parijs 2011: 118).

The importance of considering identity-related and political factors in language education seriously has been present in educational linguistics for a long time already (cf. Cummins 2000). Translanguaging research has incorporated identity and political arguments from its inception (García 2009a), and over the years, these arguments have been stretched to encompass dimensions that range from the cognitive to the societal levels (García and Li 2014). The claim that a translingual approach to language education can be transformative for multilinguals at a societal level has been critiqued for being far-fetched (Jaspers 2018) and for lacking a political-economic basis that considers redistribution issues, more than just the recognition of speakers' multiple resources and their equal worth (Block 2018). Indeed, I will not argue against Jaspers' and Block's critiques of translanguaging on the grounds levelled in their respective articles. What I do wish to argue in this paper is that recognition-type of arguments are certainly important in language education contexts, and that political theoretical interpretations drawing inspiration from the linguistic justice theory can provide enhanced support to the work that should take place in schools to foster a more just treatment of students' multilingual realities. In my view, this kind of work should concentrate on one issue in particular: the dismantling of the linguistic hierarchies (especially of an intralinguistic kind) in education and beyond.

In that regard, one crucial aspect that affects parity of esteem is to do with the linguistic hierarchies that are in place both in the society at large and in the context of education more specifically. Concerned with macro-level relations between named languages and states, Van Parijs proposes a strong implementation of the principle of linguistic territoriality to address the problem with hierarchies, whereby states can enforce strong policies for the protection and promotion of their designated official language. However, a different type of approach seems necessary in the narrower context of the language classroom. Indeed, the way people's voices are constructed and heard, via linguistic ideological constructs of deficiency or creativity, can have an important bearing on their sense of self-worth. Undoing linguistic hierarchies, in education and beyond, would demand us to focus on the listening-subject position, that is, the

sociological position from where ideas about speakerhood and about types of speaker are ideologically constructed (Flores and Rosa 2015). Considering listening as a political act (Bassel 2017), it seems important to focus on how listening and speaking positions are formed, and to understand the underlying processes that explain who gets to be put in a listening position more frequently and who gets to occupy speaker subject positions more often (Soler 2024). In other words, it is key to unpack who listens to whom and how, focusing in this way on the prejudiced interpreting filters that might be in place in a given social context. Indeed, the act and the conditions of listening are a power game. As political theorist Mary Scudder explains: ‘not listening is itself an exercise of power. Perhaps, then our aim should be to encourage dominant segments of society to listen, while empowering others to tune out their voices’ (Scudder 2020: 527). Following Scudder’s line of argument, fostering an ethico-political responsibility among the societally dominant groups is important. Applied to the English language classroom, this would entail fostering hearing practices that are not biased against other-accented voices and not prejudiced against less commonly represented varieties (whether globally, for example varieties other than British or American, or locally: for example, in Sweden, non-Swedish sounding English voices). So, it is crucial to continue monitoring and finding out more about the processes and practices underpinning language ideological constructions in English education contexts (Bergström et al. 2024). Put differently, listening to non-dominant voices presupposes the creation of safe spaces through supportive institutional policies and classroom practices that authorize participation beyond dominant linguistic norms. The creation of such safe spaces is something that future applied-oriented research might address in order to suggest practical applications for teachers and administrators on the ground.

Building on the above line of argument, the notion of the listening-subject position invites a shift from an exclusive focus on speakers’ linguistic production to a critical examination of evaluative regimes that shape interpretation itself. Rather than treating understanding as neutral or automatic, this perspective foregrounds how listeners’ expectations, racialized and classed imaginaries, and normative ideas about language mediate what is heard as intelligible, what is deemed credible, or valuable. In educational settings, this means recognizing that students may be positioned as deficient not because of what they say, but because of how

their speech is received through historically and socially sedimented ideological filters. Attending to the listening-subject position therefore opens up possibilities for pedagogical intervention that target interpretive practices, encouraging reflexivity among listeners (teachers and students alike) about their own role in reproducing or contesting linguistic hierarchies. In this sense, parity of esteem is not only a matter of diversifying voices and giving all speakers a sense of pride for their variety, but of transforming the conditions under which those voices are listened to and made meaningful.

5. Conclusions

How should schoolteachers of English and other stakeholders in education handle linguistic diversity in the language classroom? This is the question that opened this article. At the start, I also noted that this is by now one of the classical questions in educational and applied linguistic research, and it probably is such a perennial question because, as seen throughout the above sections, it points to an issue of high complexity that escapes easy solutions or ways out. In the paper, I have summarized sociolinguistic and applied linguistic literature on two broad issues connected to linguistic diversity in the English language classroom: first, the management of students' multiple languages, and second, the incorporation and recognition of the different varieties and accents of English for teaching and learning. Arguments in favour of these two projects have been noted, but at the same time, challenges seem clear as well in the literature. These challenges appear mainly connected with language policy and language ideological factors, including teachers' and students' lack of interest or guidance in relation to working with diversity in the English language classroom. I have then turned to theories of linguistic justice to develop arguments that may not only provide further strength to the empirical evidence in favour of an active recognition of the diversity in the classroom, but also shed new light to the linguistic dilemmas and tensions experienced on the ground.

From the linguistic justice literature, one key concept seems to stand out as potentially useful for the discussion in this paper: parity of esteem, or the equal dignity and respect that people should have for one another. Van Parijs usefully highlights the important role language plays in that regard; the fact that more and more people in the world have become fluent in a common language like English does not preclude the need to develop

measures that address the potential inequality in terms of parity of esteem felt by speakers of other languages. There are normative arguments that may support the existence and implementation of these measures, which can be designed at a macro level. At the micro level of the school classroom, teachers and other educational stakeholders should be aware of the importance of incorporating students' multiple languages not only for teaching and learning purposes (as highlighted by pedagogical translanguaging literature), but also for identity reasons. Here again, it seems important to emphasize the practical challenges of this kind of work. Teaching is a tough job, and if in addition to handling all the complexities in the classroom and the school context, teachers are asked to incorporate a linguistic justice agenda in their practice, it is not surprising that previous research (e.g., Paulsrud et al. 2023) has identified a lack of interest or lack of guidance for teachers precisely on these matters. So, more work is needed to find out more about these challenges and the possible ways to overcome them.

But more important than the incorporation and recognition of the multiple linguistic resources that students bring to the classroom is the need to address those that operate in social contexts (including language classrooms) and that are at the basis of the prejudiced ways in which speakers' voices are heard and constructed. On this point, a focus on listening as a political act, and on listening-subject positions as ideologically mediated seems of particular relevance if we are to make a difference on transforming schools from places where stereotyped views of types of speaker are constructed to contexts where critically aware citizens can be empowered.

One important caveat that needs to be taken into account in connection to the argument made in this paper is that the summarized studies from the empirical literature presented in Sections 2 and 3 come from a wide variety of countries, including those where English is the dominant societal language (for example, the US or the UK) and those where it is typically considered a second or a foreign language (for example, Sweden). The ways in which the prejudiced listening filters in connection to English specifically may be slightly different and may operate through different channels. However, that is an empirical question for further studies to address, which leave the core of the argument (the existence of linguistic hierarchies mediated via listening-subject positions) essentially untouched.

References

- Anderson, Kate, Chris Chang-Bacon, and Maria Guzmán Antelo. 2024. Navigating monolingual language ideologies: Educators' 'Yes, BUT' objections to linguistically sustaining pedagogies in the classroom. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 28(4): 618–634. doi:10.1177/13670069241236682.
- Baker-Bell, April. 2020. *Linguistic justice. Black language, literacy, identity, and pedagogy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bassel, Leah. 2017. *The politics of listening: Possibilities and challenges for democratic life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bauler, Clara Vaz. 2021. 'Flipgrid netiquette': unearthing language ideologies in the remote learning era. *English in Education* 55: 251–264. doi: 10.1080/04250494.2021.1927698.
- Bax, Stephen. 2003. The end of CLT: A context approach to language teaching. *ELT Journal* 57(3): 278–287. doi:10.1093/elt/57.3.278
- Bergström, Jenny, Carla Jonsson, and Annika Norlund Shaswar. 2024. 'English is not really a subject': Language ideologies and language learning in an introduction program. *TESOL Quarterly*. doi:10.1002/tesq.3355.
- Block, David. 2018. The political economy of language education research (or lack thereof): Nancy Fraser and the case of translanguaging. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* 15(4): 237–257. doi:10.1080/15427587.2018.1466300.
- Bolton, Kingsley and Christiane Meierkord. 2015. English in contemporary Sweden: Perceptions, policies, and narrated practices. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 17(1): 93–117. doi:10.1111/josl.12014.
- Canagarajah, Suresh. 2013. *Translingual practice. Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Cenoz, Jasone and Durk Gorter. 2020. Teaching English through pedagogical translanguaging. *World Englishes* 39(2): 300–311. doi:10.1111/weng.12462.
- Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*. Strasbourg: Language Policy Unit. <http://www.coe.int/lang-CEFR>.
- Cummins, Jim. 2009. Multilingualism in the English-language classroom: Pedagogical considerations. *TESOL Quarterly* 43(2): 317–321. doi: 10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00171.x.

- Cummins, Jim. 2007. Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 10(2): 221–240. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/CJAL/article/view/19743>.
- Cummins, Jim. 2000. *Language, power and pedagogy. Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Curdt-Christiansen, Xiao Lan and Csilla Weninger. 2015. Ideology and the politics of language textbooks. In *Language, ideology and education: The politics of textbooks in language education*, edited by Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen and Csilla Weninger, 1–8. London: Routledge.
- Cushing, Ian. 2023. Policy mechanisms of the standard language ideology in England's education system. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* 22(3): 279–293. doi: 10.1080/15348458.2021.1877542.
- Cushing, Ian. 2021. 'Say it like the Queen': The standard language ideology and language policy making in English primary schools. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 34(3): 321–336.
- Cushing, Ian, and Dan Clayton. 2024. Teachers challenging language discrimination in England's schools: A typology of resistance. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2024.2354478>.
- De Schutter, Helder. 2020. Intralinguistic justice. In *Language ethics*, edited by Yael Peled and Daniel Weinstock, 146–177. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- De Schutter, Helder. 2014. Testing for linguistic justice: Territoriality and pluralism. *Nationalities Papers* 42(6): 1034–1052. doi:10.1080/00905992.2014.954989.
- De Schutter, Helder, and David Robichaud. 2015. Van Parijsian linguistic justice – context, analysis and critiques. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 18(2): 87–112. doi:10.1080/13698230.2015.1023627.
- Fang, Fan, and Wei Ren. 2018. Developing students' awareness of global Englishes. *ELT Journal* 72(4): 384–394. doi:10.1093/elt/ccy012.
- Flores, Nelson, and Jonathan Rosa. 2015. Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review* 85(2): 149–171. doi:10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149.

- Galloway, Nicola, and Heath Rose. 2018. Incorporating Global Englishes in the ELT classroom. *ELT Journal* 72(1): 3–14. doi:10.1093/elt/ccx010
- García, Ofelia. 2009a. *Bilingual education in the 21st century*. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell.
- García, Ofelia. 2009b. Emergent bilinguals in TESOL – What’s in a name? *TESOL Quarterly* 43(2): 322–326. doi:10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00172.x.
- García, Ofelia and Li Wei. 2014. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. London: Palgrave Pivot.
- Gyllstad, Henrik, Pia Sundqvist, Erica Sandlund, and Marie Källkvist. 2023. Effects of word definitions on meaning recall: A multisite intervention in language-diverse second language English classrooms. *Language Learning* 73(2): 403–444. doi:10.1111/lang.12527.
- Holmes, Luke. 2021. Language, hospitality, and internationalisation: Exploring university life with the ethical and political acts of university administrators. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 24(1): 42–59. doi:10.1080/14664208.2021.2013061.
- Howatt, Anthony. 1984. *A history of English language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hult, Francis. 2017. More than a lingua franca: Functions of English in a globalized educational policy. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 30(3): 265–282. doi:10.1080/07908318.2017.1321008.
- Jaspers, Jürgen. 2018. The transformative limits of translanguaging. *Language & Communication* 58: 1–10. doi:10.1016/j.langcom.2017.12.001.
- Joo, Sun Jung, Alice Chik, and Emilia Djonov. 2019. The construal of English as a global language in Korean EFL textbooks for primary school children. *Asian Englishes*, 22(1): 1–17. doi: 10.1080/13488678.2019.1627636.
- Juvonen, Päivi, and Marie Källkvist (eds.). 2021. *Pedagogical translanguaging: Theoretical, methodological and empirical perspectives*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Kachru, Braj. 2005. Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the Outer Circle. In *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures*, edited by Randolph Quirk, and Henry G. Widdowson, 11–30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Kramsch, Claire. 1986. From language proficiency to interactional competence. *The Modern Language Journal* 70(4): 366–372. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05291.x.
- Krashen, Stephen. 1977. ‘Some issues relating to the monitor model’. In *Teaching and learning English as a Second Language: Trends in Research and Practice: On TESOL ’77: Selected Papers from the Eleventh Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Miami, Florida, April 26–May 1, 1977*, edited by H. Douglas Brown, Carlos A. Yorio, and Ruth Crymes, 144–158. Washington, DC: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Kyczkowiak, Marek. 2020. Seven principles for writing materials for English as a lingua franca. *ELT Journal* 74(1): 1–9. doi:10.1093/elt/ccz042.
- Kymlicka, Will, and Alan Patten (eds.). 2003. *Language rights and political theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Källkvist, Marie, Henrik Gyllstad, Erica Sandlund, and Pia Sundqvist. 2017. English only in multilingual classrooms? *Lingua* 4: 27–31.
- Lewis, Gwyn, Bryn Jones, and Colin Baker. 2012. Translanguaging: origins and development from school to street and beyond. *Educational Research and Evaluation* 18(7): 641–654. doi:10.1080/13803611.2012.718488.
- Li, Wei. 2018. Translanguaging as a practical theory of language. *Applied Linguistics* 39(1): 9–30. doi:10.1093/applin/amx039.
- Lindqvist, Nellie. 2020. Linguistic variation in Swedish EFL-textbooks: A content analytical study of the representations of Englishes in Swedish upper-secondary school materials. Master thesis, Stockholm University.
- Lindqvist, Nellie, and Josep Soler. 2024. World Englishes in ELT textbooks in Swedish upper secondary schools. *World Englishes*, 43(1): 91–118. doi:10.1111/weng.12599.
- Llurda, Enric, and Júlia Calvet-Terré. 2024. Native-speakerism and non-native second language teachers: A research agenda. *Language Teaching* 57(2): 229–245. doi:10.1017/S0261444822000271.
- Lundahl, Bo. 2012. *Engelsk språkdidaktik: Texter, kommunikation, språkutveckling*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Makoni, Sinfree, and Alastair Pennycook (eds.). 2007. *Disinventing and reconstructing languages*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

- Matsuda, Aya. 2002. Representations of uses and users of English in Beginning Japanese EFL textbooks. *JALT Journal* 24(2): 182–200. doi:10.37546/JALTJJ24.2-5.
- Matsuda, Aya. 2019. World Englishes in English language teaching: Kachru's six fallacies and the TEIL paradigm. *World Englishes* 38(1/2): 144–154. doi:10.1111/weng.12368.
- May, Stephen (ed.). 2014. *The multilingual turn. Implications for SLA, TESOL and Bilingual Education*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Meighan, Paul J. 2021. Decolonizing English: a proposal for implementing alterantive ways of knowing and being in education. *Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education* 15(2): 77–83. doi: 10.1080/15595692.2020.1783228.
- Modiano, Marko. 2009. EIL, native-speakerism and the failure of European ELT. In *English as an International Language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues*, edited by Farzad Sharifian, 58–77. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Morales-Gálvez, Sergi. 2017. Living together as equals: Linguistic justice and sharing the public sphere in multilingual settings. *Ethnicities* 17(5): 646–666. doi:10.1177/1468796816667143.
- Oakes, Leigh, and Yael Peled. 2018. *Normative language policy. Ethics, politics, principles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ortega, Lourdes. 2013. SLA for the 21st century: Disciplinary progress, transdisciplinary relevance, and the bi/multilingual turn. *Language Learning* 63(1): 1–24. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00735.x.
- Paulsrud, BethAnne, Päivi Juvonen, and Andrea Schalley. 2023. Attitudes and beliefs on multilingualism in education: Voices from Sweden. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 20(1): 68–85. doi:10.1080/14790718.2022.2153851.
- Peterson, Elizabeth, and Kristy Beers Fägersten (eds.). 2024. *English in the Nordic countries: Connections, tensions, and everyday realities*. New York: Routledge.
- Putra, Tomy K., Dewi Rochsantiningsih, and Slamet Supriyadi. 2020. Cultural representation and intercultural interaction in textbooks of English as an international language. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language* 10(1): 163–184. doi:10.23971/jeft.v10i1.1766.

- Rashidi, Naser, Hussein Meihami, and Kris Gritter. 2016. Hidden curriculum: An analysis of cultural content of the ELT textbooks in inner, outer, and expanding circle countries. *Cogent Education* 3(1): 1–17. doi: 10.1080/2331186X.2016.1212455.
- Ricento, Thomas, Yael Peled, and Peter Ives (eds.). 2015. *Language policy and political theory. Building bridges, assessing breaches*. Springer.
- Scudder, Mary. 2020. The ideal of uptake in democratic deliberation. *Political Studies* 68(2): 504–522. doi:10.1177/0032321719858270.
- Seltzer, Kate. 2019. Reconceptualizing ‘home’ and ‘school’ language: Taking a critical translingual approach in the English classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* 53(4): 986–1007. doi:10.1002/tesq.530.
- Shin, Jeeyoung, Zohreh R. Eslami, and Wen-Chun Chen. 2011. Presentation of local and international culture in current international English-language teaching textbooks. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 24(3): 253–268. doi:10.1080/07908318.2011.614694.
- Siegel, Jeff. 2006. Language ideologies and the education of speakers of marginalized language varieties: Adopting a critical awareness approach. *Linguistics and Education* 17(2): 157–174. doi:10.1016/j.linged.2006.08.002.
- Sifakis, Nicos. 2014. ELF awareness as an opportunity for change: A transformative perspective for ESOL teacher education. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 3(2): 317–335. doi:10.1515/jelf-2014-0019.
- Soler, Josep. 2024. Linguistic justice in English-medium instruction contexts: A theoretical argument. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 13(1): 11–28. doi:10.1515/jelf-2024-2003.
- Syrbe, Mona, and Heath Rose. (2018). An evaluation of the global orientation of English textbooks in Germany. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 12(2): 152–163. doi: 10.1080/17501229.2015.1120736.
- Sundqvist, Pia, Henrik Gyllstad, Marie Källkvist, and Erica Sandlund. 2025. Teachers’ reported beliefs and practices about multilingualism: A questionnaire study among secondary-school L2 English teachers in Sweden. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 22(3): 1845–1866. doi:10.1080/14790718.2025.2470466.
- Taylor, Shelley K. 2009. Paving the way to a more multilingual TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly* 43(2): 309–313. doi: 10.1080/14790718.2025.2470466.

- Tupas, Ruanni, and Csilla Weninger. 2022. Mapping out unequal Englishes in English-medium classrooms. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* 21(5): 347–361. doi:10.1080/15348458.2020.1795863.
- Van Parijs, Philippe. 2011. *Linguistic justice for Europe and for the world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vettorel, Paola. 2018. ELF and communication strategies: are they taken into account in ELT materials? *RELC Journal* 49(1): 58–73. doi:10.1177/0033688217746204.
- Widdowson, Henry G. 1994. The ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly* 28(2): 377–389. doi:10.2307/3587438.