

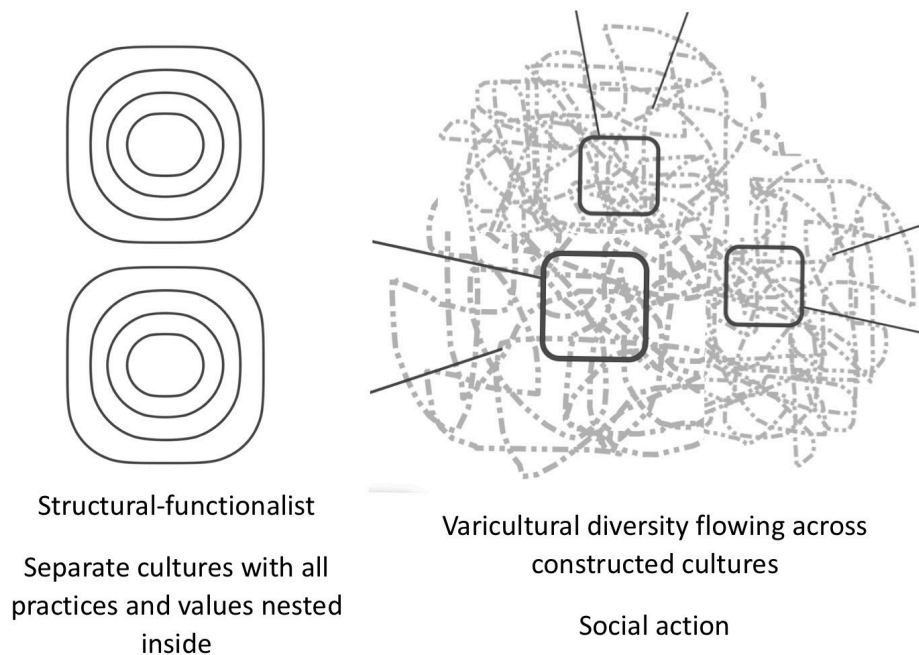
Language and cultural identity

The ideas expressed here are discussed further in Holliday (2021)

Three basic social theories

- Emile Durkheim, structural-functionalism (1893/1964)
- Max Weber, social action (1922/1964)
- Karl Marx, political ideology, and the possibility of false consciousness (Engels 1934)

Figure 1: Competing models



Structural-functionalist

- All the parts function in synchrony with the whole
 - Families, classrooms, businesses, friendship groups (small cultures), language and behaviours, have the same practices and values as the whole
- **Hybridity** is a new blurring of boundaries caused by globalisation (Kramsch & Uryu 2020)
- **Positivist** - beginning with established description and finding examples
- Continues to be influential
 - Simplicity and usefulness - prediction, comparison, explanation
 - Concepts such as dysfunctional and deviance
 - **Easy** positivism and apparent science of national cultural profiling (e.g. individualism vs. collectivism, low-context vs. high-context) (Bolten 2014; Hofstede 2003; Lewis 2005; Triandis 2006)
 - **Methodological nationalism** (Beck & Sznaider 2006; Delanty 2006; Schneider 2018)

- C19th European nationalism - one nation, one culture, one language Language = national or civilisational culture - L2=C2
- Learning English mean losing or adding to own culture (Atay & Ece 2009)
- **Native-Speakerism**
 - The belief that only so-labelled 'native speakers' possess the (critical, self-directed, individualist, autonomous, Western) 'culture' of English and are therefore the best people to teach it (Holliday 2005, 2015, 2018)
 - **Linguistic imperialism** (Phillipson 1992)

Seamless varicultural flows between constructed cultures

- English is located everywhere - i.e., not belonging to one place and then found problematically everywhere else (Saraceni 2009).
- English is **hybrid** (Schneider 2016)
 - Hybridity as the normal original state (Bhabha 1994: 56; Hall 1996: 619)
 - Not imperfect and 'in-between'
- Precolonial multilingual environments (Canagarajah 2018)

I heard people speak Venetian, Frankish, Saxon, Greek, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, Hebrew, and several other dialects I couldn't even distinguish. Despite their seemingly endless differences, all of these people gave off a similar air of incompleteness, of the works in progress that they were, each an unfinished masterwork. (Elif Shafak 2010: 109)

- 'Languages' are political constructions (Li 2018)
 - **Translanguaging**
- We are so-labelled 'native speakers' of whatever repertoire of languages we are competent in (Rajagopalan 2012)

'A knotty question: what language do I claim to be a 'native-speaker' of? ... leaves open the possibility that there is no single real native speaker who completely represents any real linguistic community; ultimately, every speaker represents only himself or herself (the "idiolect").' (Amritavalli 2012: 54)

Stamping identity on English

Ethnographic research - what students do with new language out of sight of their teachers

- Sri Lankan secondary school students write their own references to local and Western cultural realities into the margins of their American textbook, and recast characters in so-called authentic American texts as Tamil film stars (Canagarajah 1993; 1999: 88-90)
- University students in Kuwait engage in sophisticated play with English among their friends (Kamal 2015)
- Secondary and primary school students across China say they want to communicate with the world about identity (Gong & Holliday 2013)

- UK inner-London secondary school students from a variety of language backgrounds play with each other's languages and expressions (Rampton 2007)
- Mexican university students talk about how they stamp their identity on English by using it to express post-colonial sentiments (Clemente & Higgins 2008)
- Students have the right to learn any sort of English they like no matter how difficult - critique of simplified English as a lingua franca (Kuo 2006)

Multiple cultural realities

Literary fiction, media and personal experience

- 'Did you come out well this morning?' (Adichie 2007: 423)
- 'Your place will be empty'; the English we speak with Syrian friends
- Syrian university student returning from the US changing to Syrian English
- Dubbed Netflix dramas and movies
 - Talking about similar things with similar issues, with different forms of expression, in different cultural environments

Linguaculture and discourses

When I as a Dane move around the world, I tend to build on my Danish linguaculture, when I speak English, French or German. I therefore contribute to the flow of Danish linguaculture across languages. (Risager 2022: 118)

We need at least two different concepts in the interface between language and culture: linguaculture ... and discourse (always expressed in a language, but potentially moving across languages). (Risager 2020: 114)

- Discourses - sexist, racist, corporate
 - 'Students as customers'

Two key texts

Lost in translation (Eva Hoffman 1998)

- Dominant reading - cannot really adapt to US because lost meanings without Polish
- Alternative reading - essentialist imagination that 'Polish' concepts cannot be expressed in English

Americanah (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie 2013)

- Advocate of Nigerian English vs popular belief that it isn't 'real English'
- When living in the US, initially pressurised by Black communities to use 'American English'
 - After many years there has the confidence to return to Nigerian English

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