I want to explore today issues of localism, nationalism and globalization in relation to language policy. What is striking about most discussions along these lines is the dichotomies that so often attend them. On the one hand, are advocates of local or national languages, arguing for their primacy in the local context. On the other hand, are advocates of globalization or internationalism, arguing for the importance of the current lingua mundi, or world language, English and the need to connect with developments beyond national borders – particularly, advances in technologies and communication.

Both positions are clearly evident in the Malaysian context. Following independence, Bahasa Malay was elevated to the national language, at the expense of the previous privileged position of English, as a central component of forging a postcolonial national identity. The Razak Education Commission's 1956 recommendation of a National Education Policy entrenched this by making Bahasa Malay the language of instruction in schools, although, as I understand it, the policy of nationalizing Bahasa Malay was a gradual and graduated one, taking

some 26 years to establish the language from primary school through to university level (1958-1983).
I also note that the Universiti Kebangsaan (National University of Malaysia) was established in 1970 as a specific part of this vernacularization of higher education here in Malaysia.

But the 1990s, and more recently, developments over the last 5 years, have seen the re-emergence of English within both schools and universities here. These developments, most clearly articulated by your former Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir, are most clearly illustrated by the establishment of private English-medium universities in the 1990s, despite fierce opposition to wider moves to re-introduce English at the time. The last five years, as I understand it, have also seen the establishment of English-medium instruction at school (2003) and university (2005) levels, particularly for science and technology subjects, along with major funding for overseas universities to train foreign language teachers of English.

Advocates have framed these developments as essential if Malaysia is to compete in an increasingly globalized

market. They are also based on a closely related concern that Malay-medium education does not provide students with a sufficient level of English at or for the university level – what Asmah (1987) describes as a 'linguistic deficit' in English. As Saran Kaur Gill notes, it's almost as if Malaysia has come full circle (back to English)! And as Mandal (2001) argues, English is perhaps once again the pre-eminent language of all Malaysians (that is, that English is no longer seen as the preserve of one ethnic group but rather of bangsa Malaysia).

I apologise for rehearsing information with which you are obviously far more familiar than me. My key point here is simply to highlight that these debates are highly salient here in Malaysia, as they are elsewhere.

What I want to argue today is that although these two positions on languages – nationalism versus globalization – are *apparently* at odds, they actually share many similar features. Both are socially and politically constructed positions; both are unidirectional, constructing language development as progression *towards* modernity / postmodernity and away from 'local' knowledge; both use

education as a key vehicle for achieving their aims and, finally, both militate against the recognition and valuing of complex, multilingual identities – the reality for many of us as we negotiate a range of languages on a daily basis. In order to explore these connections, I want to begin with nationalism, the nation-state, and the advent of national languages. Because while there is much talk these days about the effects and impact of globalization – as we can clearly see in relation to debates here in Malaysia – and a related presumption that the nation-state, as we know it, is now past its sell-by date, last time I looked, at least, the nation-state was still very much alive and well! In short, nation-states remain the primary social, political, *and linguistic* frame of reference for our everyday public lives.

While the parameters and influence of nation-states may well have changed, as a result of increasing globalization, the nation-state still remains the principal actor in the social and political world. As the social psychologist, Michael Billig, argues, in response to postmodernist writers who have already dismissed the relevance of nation-states:

> There is a sense of 'as if' in some versions of the postmodern thesis. It is as if the nation-state has already withered away; as if

> people's national commitments have been flattened to the level of consumer choice; as if millions of children in the world's most powerful nation [the USA] do not daily salute one, and only one, style of flag; as if, at this moment around the globe, vast armies are not practising their battle manoeuvres beneath national colours. (1995: 139)

Why then are nation-states so significant (and resilient)? After all they have only been around, in their current form, for a few centuries – most commentators date the advent of nationalism to the 17/18th centuries, particularly the French Revolution. What makes them so durable then and why have they come to so shape how we view language(s)?

To answer these questions, we need to unpack the advent of modern nation-states, only a few hundred years ago, and the role of language in their establishment. In order to do this, we also need to take a specifically diachronic, or critical historical, view of the advent of national languages.

This is important because, too often, discussions of language policy, and linguistics more generally, occur only in the present – devoid of a recognition of the historical, social and political contexts that contribute to, even shape, current conditions. This is particularly

evident in the ahistorical, apolitical approach that is so often adopted by politicians, educators and policy makers when discussing national language and education policies.

Underpinning these discussions is an almost unquestioned legitimacy ascribed to national languages, and the similarly unquestioned acceptance of their dominant social and political position and function – their normative ascendancy – within modern nation-states. National languages, it seems, are just *there*, to be learnt by all, and as quickly as possible. No questions asked; end of story.

Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist and social anthropologist, was a fierce critic of this tendency towards what he described as a synchronic or 'presentist' approach to the study of language, of examining language in isolation from the social and political conditions in which it is used. As Bourdieu comments ironically of this process:

> bracketing out the social ... allows language or any other symbolic object to be treated like an end in itself, [this] contributed considerably to the success of structural linguistics, for it endowed the "pure" exercises that characterize a purely

> internal and formal analysis with the charm of a game devoid of consequences' (1991: 34).

Bourdieu (1991: 45) goes on to observe:

> To speak of *the* language, without further specification, as linguists do, is tacitly to accept the *official* definition of the *official* language of a political unit…. this state language becomes the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured.

So, let's look more closely at the key precepts of nationalism and how they have shaped our view of the primacy of so-called national languages. This is crucial because, as Bourdieu argues, what we have as a result is certainly **not** a game devoid of consequences – it has very specific, and often highly unequal / inequitable, social and political effects – particularly for multilingual speakers.

And this is the key point – prior to nationalism and the nation-state, multilingualism was not only the norm for individual speakers (as it still is for the majority of the world's population today), it was also, crucially, the norm in relation to social and political organization. For example, empires were quite happy about maintaining, or at least leaving unmolested, the local cultures and

languages subsumed within them – as long as taxes were paid, all was well! The Greek and Roman Empires are obvious examples here, while 'New World' examples include the Aztec and Inca Empires of Central and South America respectively.
More recent historical examples include the Austro-Hungarian Empire's overtly multilingual policy. But perhaps the clearest example is that of the Ottoman Empire which actually established a formal system of 'millets' (nations) in order to accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity of peoples within its borders.

The advent of nationalism, and its political organizational structure, the nation-state, was to change all this. A key principle of nationalism, and its political manifestation in the modern nation-state, is its emphasis on cultural and linguistic homogeneity, particularly in the public realm. This can be summarized by the philosophy of **one state, one culture, one language** (and the order is important here - note what comes first– it is the *state* that establishes the *national* culture, *via* a national language).

This process begins with the selection of a particular language variety as the national language – usually that of the dominant ethnic/social/political group; then the extension of that language, as a requirement of citizenship, for all others in the national territory, *irrespective* of the other language(s) they may speak.

France is often discussed as the archetypal example of this process. At the time of the French Revolution, there were at least 8 major languages spoken in what we now know as France: Langue d'Oïl in the North; Langue d'Oc (Occitan) in the South; Franco-provençal in parts of central and eastern France. Basque in the south-west, Breton in Brittany, Flemish around Lille, German in Alsace-Lorraine, Catalan in Perpignan, and Corsican in Corsica.

In addition, Latin was the administrative language, at least until the sixteenth century, although it was as such largely confined to the church, the university and the royal administration.

After the Revolution, however, the Jacobins very quickly came to regard these regional languages as parochial

vestiges of the ancien régime, the sooner forgotten the better. On this basis, they also constructed these language varieties – now derogatorily termed 'patois' – as a direct threat to the newly established state. This is most clearly illustrated by the well-known quote from Barère in 1794:

> La fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton; l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand; la contre-révolution parle l'italien, et le fanatisme parle le basque. Cassons ces instruments de dommage et d'erreur.
>
> [Federalism and superstition speak Breton; emigration and hatred of the Republic speak German; counter-revolution speaks Italian, and fanaticism speaks Basque. Let us destroy these instruments of damage and error.] (1794; quoted in de Certeau et al., 1975; 299)

In contrast to these so-called dialects or patois, the selection of the Parisien dialect of the L'angue D'öil, ironically the language of the former King's Court, as the putative national language, which we now know as *French*, came to be seen as the embodiment of civilization and progress; an essential foundation for the new Republic and its advocacy of égalité. Bourdieu, comments that this perceived imperative 'was not only a question of communication but of gaining recognition for a new *language of authority*, with its new political vocabulary, its

terms of address and reference, its metaphors, its euphemisms and the representation of the social world which it conveys' (1991: 48; my emphasis).

But it is one thing to select a language variety as a national language, quite another to establish or entrench it successfully. For this, two other processes are needed: legitimation and institutionalization.

By legitimation, I mean the formal recognition accorded to the language by the nation-state – usually, by the constitutional and/or legislative benediction of official status. Accordingly, as Bourdieu observes, 'la langue officielle a partie liée avec l'État' (Bourdieu, 1982: 27) – the legitimate (or standard) language becomes an arm of the state (although, ironically, in many states, including France until recently, this formal recognition is not often considered necessary).

In this respect, it is the second dimension, institutionalization, which is far more important. Institutionalization refers to the process by which the

language comes to be accepted, or 'taken for granted' in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal. The establishment of a mass education system in the chosen language variety is particularly important here. Certainly in France, as elsewhere, education was often central to the success of the nationalizing project. This is illustrated, poignantly, by a prefect in the Department of Finistère in Brittany who, in 1845, formally exhorted teachers: 'Above all remember, gentleman, that your sole function is to kill the Breton language' .

And this also highlights another key dimension of nationalism – as we can see with France, the establishment of a chosen 'national' language usually always involved an often-punitive process of 'minoritizing or 'dialectalizing' potentially competing language varieties (patois, in the French case). These latter language varieties were, in effect, specifically *(re)positioned* as languages of lesser political worth and value.

Consequently, and this is the point I want to return to today when I look at globalization, national languages came to be intrinsically associated with modernity and

modernization – with progress – while their less fortunate counterparts were associated (conveniently) with tradition and obsolescence. More often than not, the latter were also specifically constructed as *obstacles* to the political project of nation-building – as threats to the 'unity' of the state.

The inevitable consequence of this nationalist political imperative is the effective banishment from the public realm of minority languages and cultures.

Certainly, this was the case in France. While as late as 1863, only a quarter of the country's population, including half its children, still spoke no French, now less than 2% of the current French population continue to speak any language other than French. The victory of French, it seems, is complete and it is the other historically associated languages of the region that have paid for it.

As Nancy Dorian summarizes it: 'it is the concept of the nation-state coupled with its official standard language … that has in modern times posed the keenest threat to both the identities and the languages of small [minority]

communities' (1998: 18). Florian Coulmas observes, even more succinctly, that 'the nation-state as it has evolved since the French Revolution is the natural enemy of minorities' (1998: 67).

Now, I have concentrated here on France as a key example, but as we know, this form of linguistic nationalism did not limit itself to European nation-states but was soon exported around the world. Postcolonial contexts, such as Malaysia, have also broadly followed the same principles outlined here.

Bahasa Malay, the language of the dominant ethnic/social group (as well as the language of wider communication) was 'chosen' as the official language post-independence. It was entrenched via education, replacing the urban English-medium schools over a period of 26 years (1958-1983), even though English remained an official language for the first decade.

In order for the language to operate successfully in new language domains from which it had previously been

excluded, such as technology and science, the language was also developed via language planning processes, alongside its instantiation as a medium of instruction in education. As I understand it, the establishment of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka was crucial here for extending the use of Malay for academic and scientific purposes, particularly with respect to corpus development.

So, in Malaysia, as elsewhere, there was nothing 'natural' about this process of creating a 'national' language. It is a highly constructed, deeply political, and intentional, act, and also deeply imbued within wider power relations (e.g. vis-à-vis the relative power of the various ethnic groups here). And it was also argued, widely and vocally, on the basis not only of national identity but also in specific relation to modernization and progress.

In other words, national languages, such as French or Bahasa Malay, are actually 'created' out of the politics of state-making, not – as we often assume – the other way around (Billig, 1995).

Which brings me to globalization and the role of English as the current world language. I said at the start that the arguments about the merits of national languages vis-à-vis a global language like English – that is, nationalism versus globalization, writ large - are often seen as oppositional, and yet they are, ironically, based on almost exactly the same premises. It is just the level, or more accurately, the *scale* that has changed.

So, let's unpack now some of the rhetoric of globalization and its related implications for language, specifically the role of English.

At its worst, critics of globalization see it as simply western hegemony in disguise. The view here is that globalization is really simply globalism, or what Latouche (1996) calls the Westernization of the world and what Ritzer (1998), even more evocatively, calls its McDonaldization.

Specifically, this involves the spreading and normalization of neo-liberalism, late capitalism and the 'free' market, with the US and other western countries as its champions.

Crucially, such a view of globalization also emphasizes its pressure for increasing uniformity, of progress towards a shared (global) identity – a new transnational universalism (much like its predecessor, nationalism, argued in relation to a 'universal' national identity). In this sense the discourse of globalism actually also constructs its own reality – as Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001) argue, neo-liberal discourse is now so pervasive that it is 'endowed with a performative power to bring into being the very realities it claims to describe'.

Following from this sceptical view of globalization comes a view of English as a, perhaps *the* killer language – encroaching on the scope of other languages and the rights of their speakers. This is most clearly seen in the work of, e.g. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson and their notions of linguicide and linguistic imperialism, respectively.

So that's globalization at its worst. What about at its best? At its best, globalization is constructed as the apogee, the height, of cosmopolitanism and of hybridity – connecting us, usually via multimodal forms of communication, to

the rest of the world. In short, globalization brings the world to us and we to it.

In this view, English is the great, emancipatory, language – the world language that can provide us with access to every opportunity, but particularly to the worlds of business, science and technology in these times of late capitalism (and despite the apparent current economic crisis!).

Globalization thus connects us to technoscapes, flows of technology, mediascapes, flows of information, ideoscapes, flows of ideas, and, of course, financescapes, or flows of money.
It also prepares us to work better, so the argument goes, in increasingly deregulated and hyper competitive post-industrial countries – the new work order, or what is often referred to simply (and simplistically) as the 'knowledge economy'.

From this perspective then, language – specifically, the English language – is transformed into a commodity, a neutral language, used instrumentally, and one that has

little, if anything, to do with national identity. If English is commodified in this way, then the emphasis or priority is also invariably placed on extending access to it – particularly, in key domains like science and technology, as well as in education and the wider work place. English is needed now for all other language speakers 'in order to make their way in the world' and thus debates on English-language education provision also often take centre stage.

On this view then, English is absolutely essential for economic and wider social mobility; as with national languages in the past, it comes to be linked ineluctably with modernity and progress, although this time it is not territorially located but, rather, specifically *deterritorialized*.

Meanwhile, national languages are constructed in much the same terms as they themselves previously constructed other competing language varieties, or minority languages – as important for identity purposes, perhaps, but not necessarily of much wider value or use.

We see this position increasingly articulated in the Malaysian context, as elsewhere. The advent of English-

medium private universities, and the return to English-medium schooling and tertiary options, particularly in science and technology, reflect this stress on internationalism and opportunity.

Dr Mahathir argued this position forcefully throughout the 1990s and early 2000s – that competence in English is necessary:

- For Malaysia to remain internationally competitive
- To prevent the skill levels of Malaysians from falling behind other countries
- Because corpus development in Bahasa Malay cannot keep pace with developments in science and technology, which is increasingly conducted in, and mediated through, English

His whole notion of Bangsa Malaysia, in fact, was an attempt to extend the idea of language use in Malaysia to once again include a prominent and *neutral* space for English and to include all ethnic groups in this process, while at the same time reassuring sceptics of the ongoing importance / significance of Bahasa Malay as the national language.

The goals of this change in language policy were also couched in quite explicitly technicist and economic terms, particularly via Vision 2020 – to create technologically literate and English competent graduates, fit for the 21st century (Ridge 2004). As Gill observes of this: 'Malaysia's about turn with regard to English has become a necessity in order to compete and survive … We may be left out of the international loop of science and technology'…

These sentiments are reflected, more broadly, and contra to Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, by sociolinguistic commentators such as Janina Brutt-Griffler and John Edwards, who support this position of English as an essential commodity in a globalized world and as the principal means of economic and social mobility.

Brutt Griffler (2002) argues, e.g., that even in colonial times, English was never 'unilaterally imposed on passive subjects, but wrested from an unwilling imperial authority as part of the struggle by them against colonialism'. Following from this, she argues, continuing to promote minority languages in the face of the power and reach of

English is not only pointless, but often goes directly against the wishes of these other language speakers themselves, who obviously want to gain access to English if and where they can.

So which of these two positions on globalization is right? Neither, actually – although that should, perhaps, come as no surprise. (I'm always reminded here of that famous quote: for every question, there is always a simple answer, and it is always wrong!)

In conclusion, let me sketch out my response to both positions on globalization and, in so doing, raise, but not necessarily resolve, some key issues and concerns that need to be considered in these ongoing debates.

There are five key issues that I want to highlight briefly here.

1. Addressing inequalities

The first is that, like nationalism and national languages, we cannot, indeed we *must* not, ignore the inequalities that inevitably underpin processes of globalization. Like nationalism, globalization, at least in its hyper-globalist (one world) form, presents itself as universal and its language (English, in this case) as simply neutral or value free. And yet, this is clearly not true. Some are clearly advantaged by processes of globalization and others are specifically disadvantaged (think of the global production of goods, and how the East makes them cheaply for the West). As Jan Blommaert (2006: 564; emphasis in original) argues, drawing on the Marxist sociologist, Immanuel Wallerstein's critique of globalization, '[*i*]*nequality, not uniformity organizes the flows* across the 'globe'.'

And as with national languages, the current primacy of English has everything to do with history and politics and needs to be recognized as such, with a diachronic, critical historical approach. This is all the more important, given that public, political and policy discussions so often fail to address the *situated* context of English here – presenting it, rather, as simply a better, or even the 'best' language.

History of English: New York Senate (Magna Carta); Jesus
Industrial revolution; 20th century wars; US hegemony

2. From language to language varieties

In many of the debates about the 'value' of English in the globalized world, there is an implicit, sometimes explicit assumption that we know what this language English actually is. And yet, there are many different varieties of English, used for widely varied purposes, not to mention the significant differences often between 1st 2nd and foreign language speakers of English.

This complicates the idea that English is universal and that its acquisition will always result in upward mobility.

After all, the English acquired by urban Africans may offer them considerable purchase and prestige for their middle class identities in African towns, but the same English may well be treated quite differently if they moved to London, identifying them as stigmatized, migrants, and from the lower class (Blommaert, 2006). Context (and use) in relation to language varieties is everything.

As Jan Blommaert (2006: 561) argues:

> What is globalized is not an abstract Language, but specific speech forms, genres, styles, forms of literacy practice. And the way in which such globalized varieties enter into local environments is by a reordering [of] the locally available repertoires and the relative hierarchical relations between ingredients in the hierarchy.

This requires us to attend much more closely than we have in the past to the specific *ethnographic* dimensions of (multiple) language use in our own contexts, and the hierarchies attendant upon them.

3. Interrogating language and mobility

We also need to cast a much more sceptical eye over the claims that knowledge of and/or acquisition of English = immediate social mobility. This is not always the case, as we've just seen in the point about context that I've just made. It is also refuted by demographics.

For example, a leitmotif of the English-only movement in the US, promoting English as an official language, while railing against the ongoing use of Spanish, argues vociferously that Spanish speakers are consigning themselves to the ghetto, deliberately foreclosing the opportunities for upward social mobility.

Two striking examples of this position are as follows. One is a US English (the key English Only organization) advertisement in 1998: 'Deprive a child of an education. Handicap a young life outside the classroom. Restrict social mobility. If it came at the hand of a parent it would be called child abuse. At the hand of our schools … it's called "bilingual education"' (see Dicker, 2000: 53).

Another is the ruling of a judge in Amarillo Texas who, in a 1995 child custody court case, ordered a mother, as a condition for her retaining custody, not to speak Spanish to her child at home on the grounds that this was equivalent to a form of 'child abuse' :

> If she starts [school] with the other children and cannot even speak the language that the teachers and others speak, and she's a full-blooded American citizen, you're abusing that child ... Now get this straight: you start speaking English to that child, because if she doesn't do good in school, then I can remove her because it's not in her best interests to be ignorant. (cited in de Varennes, 1996: 165-166)

Apart from their general idiocy – only in America! – both are just plain wrong. In relation to the absolute presumption of mobility, African Americans have been speaking English for two hundred years in the USA and yet many still find themselves relegated to urban ghettos (Macedo, 1994). Racism and discrimination are far more salient factors here than language use (including the pejorative construction of AAVE, or Ebonics, as a mere dialect).

Likewise English is almost as inoperative with respect to Latino social mobility in the USA as it is with respect to black social mobility.

Twenty five per cent of Latinos currently live at or below the poverty line, a rate that is *at least twice as high* as the proportion of Latinos who are not English-speaking (Garcia, 1995; San Miguel and Valencia, 1998). Even when language *is* a factor, it may have as much, or more to do with the linguistic intolerance of the state, judiciary, or the workplace, than with the individuals concerned – as seen, for example, with our judge in Amarillo Texas.

Meanwhile, bilingual education, contra to the US English advertisement, is the *most* effective way of educating bilingual students successfully, as research over 40 years, and over 150 major studies, has consistently found.
In contrast, the same research reveals that English-only approaches, particularly, when this is a student's second language are consistently the *least* effective educational approach (see Baker, 2006; May, 2008).

4. Languages of instruction

And this brings me to the fourth issue. While no one, least of all me, is denying the importance of gaining access to English, we need to consider extremely carefully, and take very seriously, the research which highlights which

pedagogical approaches are best suited to achieving high level proficiency in English, especially for those for whom it is not a first language.

And this is where the unqualified insertion of English language instruction in education becomes problematic. When it is established as an *alternative* to one's first language(s) – that is, where schooling does not draw on the students' existing linguistic repertoires in the teaching and learning process, it is actually counterproductive to the aim of achieving effective bilingual proficiency and, more importantly, biliteracy – the key indicator of long term academic success.

Key research has shown this for years – particularly, Cummins' pivotal notion of linguistic interdependence – where working from the stronger language is the best means of becoming proficient in an additional language.

We also know that foreign language education is far less effective than bilingual education in achieving bilingualism and biliteracy (only 1 in 20 become

functionally bilingual/biliterate as a result of foreign language instruction).

And finally, the actual English language competencies of teachers are crucial if appropriate models of English – or, at least, the academic English language varieties required to fulfil the rhetoric associated with globalization – are to be taught effectively. This is an issue of concern that Brian Ridge recently highlighted (2004) specifically in relation to the Bangsa Malaysia language policy of recent years.

All of this suggests that simple assertions for more English medium instruction as 'the answer' to the demands of globalization need to be critically assessed and evaluated far more carefully than they often (still) are.

5. Multilingual public identities

And finally, I want to argue that the unidirectional construction of both nationalism and globalization – moving *from* the local *to* the *national* an, by extension, then *from* the national *to* the global – directly militates against the *public* recognition and valuing of *multiple* linguistic identities.

After all, as multilingual speakers, we are constantly negotiating language choices, making decisions about what language varieties to use with whom and in what context(s). We also shift easily between various language identities. Why then, when it comes to the public realm, do we suddenly have to renounce one linguistic identity for another – or trade in a supposedly 'narrower' language identity for a supposedly 'broader' one? Linguistic identities – and social and cultural identities more broadly – need not be constructed as irredeemably oppositional.

On this view, maintaining one's multilingual linguistic repertoire rather than simply 'trading up' to a more dominant language actually avoids 'freezing' the development of particular languages in the roles they have historically, or perhaps still currently, occupy. Equally importantly, it questions and discards the requirement of a singular and/or replacement approach to the issue of other linguistic identities which has been for too long the pernicious basis of nationalism and, increasingly, some discourses of globalization.

And this brings me to my final point. Any discussions of language policy in relation to national and international contexts *must* explicitly value both the local *and* the global.

In his excellent recent edited volume, *Reclaiming the Local in Language Policy and Practice*, Suresh Canagarajah (2005) highlights the importance of maintaining these crucial interconnections between the local and the global. But Canagarajah does more than that – he also argues that we need to specifically *reclaim* the local in light of the wider discourses of modernity and progress, which, as I have talked about today, have previously located such progress *only* in and through more dominant languages. This is simply local knowledge – knowledge of a particular national language, or of English – masquerading as if it were universal. It is *not*. And we need to understand this central point in any ongoing critical engagement with language policy and language education.

Canagarajah (2005: 15) argues it thus:

> Celebrating local knowledge should not lead to ghettoizing minority communities, or [force] them into an ostrich-like intellectual existence. A clear grounding in our location gives us the confidence to engage with knowledge from other

> locations as we deconstruct and reconstruct them for our own purposes…. In a sense, such an epistemological practice would lead us beyond the global and local dichotomy.

There's a phrase often used in the political arena – all politics is local. What I want to leave you with today is this: all languages are local (and all languages are political).

Our challenge in light of this is to negotiate those multiple local languages, and contest their associated hierarchies, in the particular contexts in which we live and work, much more consistently and critically than we have until now.

Then perhaps, just perhaps, we might finally begin to develop more just, equitable, inclusive, and *multilingual* public language policies fit for this new century and quite different from the ones that have so shaped our past.