Going local in language education
Cities as sites for cross-sectoral connection

Saturday 28 March 2026. 10.30-17.00 at UCL East Marshgate

Cities are multilingual, and people learn, switch & blend languages and ways of speaking at home, at work, in community life and across a range of media, in both routine and creative ways. But can we do more in education to cultivate and capitalise on this linguistic energy and expertise? We can't ignore rising xenophobia and hostility to difference, alongside declining provision in modern languages, massive underfunding in ESOL, overwhelming neglect in EAL and heritage/community languages, and the siloed fragmentation of language education more generally. Even so, we have 'Cities of Languages' in the UK, and the DfE's Curriculum & Assessment Report calls on "local authorities, multi-academy trusts and schools to explore the potential benefits of a coordinated approach in their local areas". So in what ways can cities serve as sites for regenerating language education?

This one-day symposium brings people together from schools, universities, adult education, community organisations and policy spaces to consider how cities can act as spaces for language development and cross-sector collaboration. Through case studies, structured discussions and cross-sector dialogue, we will look at what it means to organise locally for languages, exploring the principles emerging for locally driven, inclusive and critically informed strategies for language.

10.30	**Coffee and registration** Room 118 foyer
11.00	**Welcome and introduction** Room 118
11.20	**Going local in language education: Case studies** Room 118

Link to Padlet

What does 'going local in language education' actually mean? How? Why? Where? With what and whom? With what successes, against what odds, and what lessons for others? Varying in their sites, sectors and scale, we'll hear six 15-minute presentations in this session.

1. MAKING AN IMPACT AT GRASSROOTS: NEWCASTLE CITY OF LANGUAGES AND THE NORTH-EAST FESTIVAL. Steven Fawkes Newcastle City of Languages
2. MODERN COCKNEY; A BLUEPRINT FOR NON-STANDARD ENGLISHES. Andy Green: Modern Cockney
3. FROM STRATFORD TO SHEFFIELD (AND BACK AGAIN...). Clare Allison: NCLE Language Networks
4. INTEGRATED LANGUAGE PLANNING THROUGH CONVENING: THE CASE OF CAMBRIDGE HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP. Yongcan Liu & Anke Friedrich: CRiCLE & Cambridge Bilingual Groups
5. ESOL CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS IN TOWER HAMLETS. Becky Winstanley, English for Action
6. ARTS-BASED AND COMMUNITY-CENTRED INITIATIVES EXPLORING THE MFL AND HHCL INTERFACE. Jelena Ćalić, Eszter Tarsoly (Platform for Linguistic and Epistemic Justice, PLEJ), Ramona Gönczöl (PROLang), UCL, SSEES.

Chair: Mike Chick (CLE; University of South Wales) & Melanie Cooke (CLE; King's College London)

13.00   **Lunch and networking** Senior Common Room

13.45   **Q&A for the morning presentations** Room 118
Chair: Viktoria Magne (CLE; University of West London)

14.30   **Breakout group discussion of the possibilities for going local in our own work**
Rooms 118, 303 or 304 (see your name badge)
Suggestions for the discussion:
● *introduce yourselves, and agree on someone to write down your key questions/comments for the panel after tea*
Then you could consider questions like:
● *what have you taken from the discussions so far, and how could you work with it?*
● *what kinds of support might you need, or offer to others?*
● *what collaborations?*
● *how far and in what ways can/do professional associations engage with 'going local'?*
Towards the end,
● *decide on 1-3 questions you'd like to put to the panel coming up*

Link to Padlet

15.30   **Break**

15.45   **Panel discussion of questions, comments and issues emerging**
Room 118
● Yaron Matras (Aston University; Manchester City of Languages)
● Liz Black (Association for Language Learning)
● Zaina Aljumma (Open University)
● Vicky Gough (London City of Languages; British Council)
● Sophia Smith-Galer (London Language Map)

Chair: Dermot Bryers (English for Action)

16.45   **Next steps** Room 118
Chair: Ben Rampton (CLE; King's College London)

17.00   **Close**

Link to feedback

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