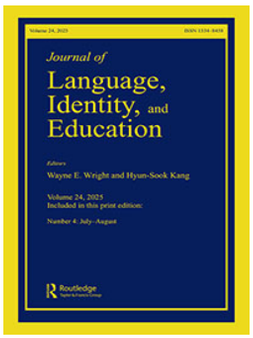

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Reinventing the Legitimate Speaker of Suburban Swedish: Negotiating Boundaries Through Linguistic Citizenship in a Swedish Classroom

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ABSTRACT

While scholarship in the Global South has underscored the notion of *linguistic citizenship* as involved with the struggle for marginalized epistemologies of language, little research has focused on similar situations in the context of the Global North, such as Sweden. Drawing on linguistic ethnography to highlight emic perspectives, the study builds on a classroom interaction in which four female students at an upper secondary school in a suburb of Gothenburg engage in dialogue with their teacher concerning the (in) authenticity of the Swedish rapper *Dogge Doggelito* as a legitimate speaker of Suburban Swedish. By doing so, the students engage in an act of linguistic citizenship to resist dominant conceptualizations of Suburban Swedish and reinvent ideological boundaries of language following their own experiences of multilingualism in the suburbs. Thus, the study aims to explore the potential of linguistic citizenship as a tool for creating spaces for marginalized epistemologies of language in Swedish education.

KEYWORDS

Legitimate speaker; linguistic citizenship; linguistic ethnography; multilingual youth; Suburban Swedish; upper secondary school

Introduction

The qualitative study presented in this article explores a negotiation between four students and their teacher about the *legitimate speaker* (Bourdieu, 1977) of Suburban Swedish (Bijvoet & Fraurud, 2016). By exploring the ways in which the students engage in processes of authentication/denaturalization and adequation/distinction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) to redefine the identity of the legitimate speaker, the study draws on the concept of *linguistic citizenship* (Stroud, 2001) as decolonial lenses apt to capture voices from the margins in moments of contestation and reinvention of language boundaries. While scholarship in the Global South has underscored acts of linguistic citizenship as involved with the struggle for marginalized epistemologies of language (see Williams et al., 2022 for an overview), little research has focused on similar situations in the contexts of the Global North, such as Sweden. Santos (2012) argues for the South and the North to be conceptualized as epistemological positions rather than solely geographical areas, since those perceived as inhabiting the Global South are "the excluded, silenced and marginalized populations, such as undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia and racism" (Santos, 2012, p. 51). With this logic, which makes the Global South a relative condition that can be virtually found anywhere, southern struggles are situations in which individuals in a position of marginality are disallowed from having their experiences co-exist with dominant perspectives. This North-South distinction is based on an axis of dominance-marginality, which resonates in Milani's (2017) conceptualizations of *margins* as a useful metaphor that "inherently points us towards what at a particular moment is (viewed as) non-central and non-dominant" (p. 175). Being a discursive position "in

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constant flux and … the object of continual negotiations and contestation" (Milani, 2017, p. 175), the concept of marginality thus lowers the risk of falling into the essentialist trap of understanding North and South as static positions, aiding instead the understanding of them as necessarily entangled and mobile (Kerfoot & Hyltenstam, 2017). Considering this entangled aspect, it has recently been argued that linguistic citizenship is a useful notion for understanding experiences of multilingualism even in the Swedish context (Milani & Jonsson, 2018). Then, as linguistic citizenship has been observed to be constituted of acts that destabilize dominant conceptualizations of language in the Global South, a relevant question to further explore is whether it can achieve similar results when employed in a Swedish classroom environment (cf. Årman, 2021; Milani & Jonsson, 2018).

In light of this, the aim of the current study is to explore the potential of acts of linguistic citizenship in the Swedish classroom for negotiations of language boundaries. To do so, this study further engages with a concept that encapsulates the North-South distinction as epistemological, namely, that of the *abyssal line*, which refers to an imaginary divide that constructs dominant knowledge as universal and centered while positioning marginalized knowledge as "not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being" (Santos, 2007, p. 45). In Santos (2007) terms, those "on this side of the line" are seen as creators of knowledge and carriers of dominant and universalist perspectives, often stemming from Western scholarship, while those "on the other side of the line" have their realities seen as non-existent, irrelevant, and incomprehensible. For example, deficit perspectives on language in education are a common way to maintain the abyssal line, as multilingual students' experiences and understandings of language have been marginalized or ignored in classroom environments in numerous contexts (García et al., 2021). As a result, educational practices grounded in essentialist views of language (Ortega, 2018; Wee, 2018) have contributed to the disallowing of a diversity of voices, creating oppressive and inequitable situations for multilingual youth (Femia, 2024). Through the concept of marginality, which according to Milani (2017) focuses on the "particular moment" (p. 175), the abyssal line can then be understood as negotiable in certain situations through processes of resistance (García et al., 2021). Thus, while the main characteristic of the abyssal line is, according to Santos (2007), the impossibility of co-existence of both sides, this condition is not fully static. Therefore, when employing linguistic citizenship in a northern context, it becomes crucial to ask how those acts can be understood as tools to undo the abyssal line in the classroom. This article is divided into five sections: first, a brief overview of research on Suburban Swedish is provided; second, the theoretical concepts employed are presented; third, the data and the participants are described, and the methodological approach is outlined; fourth, an analysis of the negotiation of ideological boundaries of language in a classroom interaction is performed in three phases; and last, a conclusion that summarizes the study and points toward the pedagogical implications of linguistic citizenship in Sweden is presented.

Suburban Swedish

In Sweden, similar to other European contexts, increased migration has led to a broader linguistic and cultural diversity over the last few decades. As noted by Dahlstedt and Ekholm (2019), immigrant populations in Sweden have been segregated and pushed toward suburban areas, which have been portrayed as "areas of exclusion" (p. 2) and "sites of otherness" (p. 3). In turn, this process has led to the stigmatization of languaging styles associated with these environments (Bijvoet & Senter, 2021; Milani & Jonsson, 2018). Swedish scholars have shown a distinct interest in marginalized languaging styles, mirroring similar research in other Western contexts (see Jonsson et al., 2019 for an overview). Even though Källström (2011) notes that "there is no generally accepted Swedish designation for multiethnic youth language, and the concept itself is ideologically loaded" (p. 130), both researchers and laypeople have been referring to this languaging style in various ways in the last few decades. Examples of this multiplicity of naming are the less recent *Rinkebysvenska* (Kotsinas, 1988), which is strongly connected to the Stockholm suburb of Rinkeby, and more recent labels such as *multiethnic youth language* (Fraurud & Bijvoet, 2004), which focuses on the association with youth, and

Ortensvenska (Botsis et al., 2022), which is associated with the suburb as a more general place. As these labels have been used to conflate different ways of languaging associated with youth and migration, Bijvoet and Fraurud (2016) note that there is a need to distinguish between *Förortssvenska* (Suburban Swedish) and *Förortsslang* (Suburban slang); while Suburban slang is seen as group language "primarily spoken by adolescents … in multiethnic neighbourhoods" (p. 21), Suburban Swedish is "a way of speaking Swedish that merely indicates that the speaker has grown up in a multiethnic neighbourhood—without implying that he/she is a second language user or of a certain age" (p. 21). Following Rampton (2015), *Förortssvenska* (Suburban Swedish) has thus been described as a *contemporary urban vernacular* (hereafter, CUV) (Årman, 2018; Bijvoet & Fraurud, 2016; Jonsson et al., 2019), which is argued to be a useful label for languaging styles that are perceived as the opposite of standard while encapsulating a historical and spatial perspective without necessarily linking to a specific age group. As Suburban Swedish is often described in distinct contrast with standard Swedish and is strongly associated with non-Swedishness (Milani & Jonsson, 2018), employing the concept of CUV becomes relevant for this study to highlight spatial and temporal aspects, which can be found throughout the negotiation process.

The extensive body of scholarly work on Suburban Swedish has mostly focused on young men, with a distinct absence of representations of young women's voices about language practices connected to the suburbs (Bijvoet & Senter, 2021). Consequently, the labelling and description of Suburban Swedish in research may have further contributed to constructing multilingual youth as problematic and are associated mainly with masculinity and crime, which has recently been lamented by several scholars (Jonsson et al., 2019; Milani & Jonsson, 2018). This study contributes to redressing this imbalance, as it focuses on the engagement of female students in everyday language negotiations. Connected to these phenomena of linguistic practices in Sweden in relation to suburban spaces, an important figure that has been conceptualized as an *icon* (Blommaert & Varis, 2013) of Suburban Swedish is Dogge Doggelito. Dogge is a male rapper of Venezuelan origin who is considered a pioneer for having introduced Suburban Swedish to mainstream music in the early '90s, covering themes such as racism and exclusion. He has therefore for a long time been portrayed in mainstream societal discourse as an expert on Suburban Swedish through lived experiences and as someone who represents the people from the suburbs and their ways of being and speaking. As an example of this, Stroud (2004) shows how Dogge is positioned in media discourse as a linguistic authority for Suburban Swedish, a position that has been strengthened among other things through his work with the linguist Ulla-Britt Kotsinas in a book on Suburban slang (Kotsinas & Doggelito, 2004). In the current study, Dogge has a central position, since he becomes the focus of the discussion the participants engage in, which relates to his supposed position as the legitimate speaker.

Theoretical framework

In this section, the main theoretical concepts for this study will be outlined. First, the concept of linguistic citizenship, its underlying assumptions and transformative potential, and the current debates in the field will be accounted for. Second, the focus will be on the concept of the legitimate speaker and the different criteria required for the construction of authenticity.

Linguistic citizenship

The construction and invention of language boundaries are ideologically charged processes (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020; Wee, 2022) and, by negotiating their nature and significance, boundaries can be moved, expanded, restricted, deconstructed, and reinvented. By understanding these boundaries as mobile, different aspects of language ideologies can be adjusted and reinvented to make sense to speakers affected by them. A theoretical concept that addresses the negotiation of marginality in language is that of *linguistic citizenship*, proposed by Stroud (2001) as a decolonial perspective that criticizes essentialist views and practices of language. As noted by Milani (2017), this concept (a)

acknowledges the unpredictability and messiness of multilingualism, (b) underscores the fluidity inscribed in negotiations of identity, and (c) captures micro-occurrences of linguistic resistance at the margins. While having been introduced as a critique to approaches of linguistic human rights in African education, linguistic citizenship as a theoretical lens has been employed in disparate post-colonial environments and applied to many different forms of resistance (Williams et al., 2022). In the way it has been conceptualized by different scholars, linguistic citizenship can be seen as a very broad theoretical notion that encompasses all situations in which "speakers themselves exercise control over their language, deciding *what* languages are, and what they may *mean*, and where language issues (especially in educational sites) are discursively tied to a range of social issues" (Stroud, 2001, p. 353).

Thus, Stroud (2001) presents linguistic citizenship as a transformative process, stating that it has the potential to lead to societal change and a reversion of social inequities. By staying at the margins and focusing on postcolonial contexts (Heugh, 2022), this notion has always been involved in the exploration of messy and dynamic understandings of multilingualism (Wee, 2022) in line with the goals of decolonial and southern scholarship (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). Acts of linguistic citizenship are then seen as transformative actions that include a utopian ideal of erasing social inequities and epistemic injustice (Stroud, 2015; Stroud & Williams, 2017). In the spaces created by these acts, new beneficial identities can be negotiated, and voices from the margins can be heard and included in societal discourses. Thus, acts of linguistic citizenship, whether embedded in institutional practices or orthogonal to them, allow the creation of spaces where speakers on the ground have access to define the ideological boundaries of language based on their own lived experiences. In this way, marginalized epistemologies of language can be made visible, as people engage in "respectful and deconstructive negotiations around language forms and practices … for a mutuality and susceptibility to alternative forms of being-together-in-difference" (Stroud, 2018, p. 37). In sum, linguistic citizenship is a notion that builds on southern perspectives on multilingualism as crucial for conviviality and agency at the margins while highlighting voice and experience connected to marginalized linguistic repertoires as ways to reach the democratic participation of otherwise silenced individuals or groups.

Processes of linguistic citizenship have mostly been explored in a South African context (e.g., Bock et al., 2019; Hiss & Peck, 2022) but have recently been adopted by scholars in different geopolitical areas and away from postcolonial spaces (Årman, 2021; Awayed-Bishara et al., 2022; Milani & Jonsson, 2018; Rampton et al., 2022; Windle et al., 2023). Consistent with the focus on educational arenas initially highlighted by Stroud (2001), many of these recent contributions have focused on inequities of language in education and marginal perspectives on language in classroom interactions. An example of such educational focus is shown in Rampton et al. (2022), in which the authors describe how approaches that resonate with linguistic citizenship have been involved in several educational measures in the British context, arguing for the centering of linguistic citizenship as a plausible and desirable move. Stroud (2022) indicates the need for acts of linguistic citizenship to remain at the margins, at the risk of losing their radical edge if they were to be inscribed in institutional policies and practices. Similarly, Milani and Jonsson (2018) also worry about the consequences of taking the marginality out of linguistic citizenship, by noting that for linguistic citizenship to be able to inform top-down policies, there needs to be long-term communication with local stakeholders, such as teachers. This study contributes to these recent discussions by further attempting to inscribe linguistic citizenship as a theoretical concept in a northern context, underscoring its usefulness as an approach that can inform educational decisions, while pointing toward acts of resistance at the margins of institutional environments.

The legitimate speaker

The figure of the *legitimate speaker* was introduced by Bourdieu (1977) and has since been a well-employed concept in multilingualism research (Kramsch, 2012; Norton, 2013). Bourdieu argues that if a speaker does not use a language that is considered appropriate or belonging to them in relation to their context, they cannot qualify as a legitimate speaker and are labelled by others as an impostor.

Bourdieu identifies specific conditions for legitimate discourse, which crucially include language forms and social properties of the speaker as central components. In contrast to legitimacy, Kramsch (2012) further describes imposture as the "feeling of (in)adequation or (il)legitimacy experienced by the self or ascribed to others, when one's 'idealized self' does or does not match one's perception of 'the real' in discourse" (p. 488). Although Kramsch (2012) focuses mostly on imposture ascribed to the self, in this study, the impostor is someone who is positioned as a wannabe or fake by others (Årman, 2018; Blommaert & Varis, 2013; Jonsson, 2007).

By this logic, the legitimate speaker should be seen as inherently entangled with other identity positions. This point is further strengthened by conditions for identity construction pointed out by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and Blommaert and Varis (2013). Bucholtz and Hall (2005) highlight the relationality principle in their framework, namely, arguing that identity should always be understood in relation to other identity positions, and negotiations of identity as characterized by different but connected processes, which include adequation/distinction and authentication/denaturalization, which are central to the negotiation seen in this study. Within this framework, individuals are constructed to be authentic when they are seen as genuine and "sufficiently similar" (p. 599) by the speakers involved in the interaction, while engaging in the opposite end of these axes constructs an identity through suppression of similarities and a focus on false or crafted features. Similarly, Blommaert and Varis (2013) point toward the concept of *enoughness* as a condition for an identity to be considered authentic, which assumes an orientation toward certain features that reflect authenticity. They further emphasize the recognizability of authenticity, pointing toward the tendency of incorporating the features of the legitimate speaker in "a recognizable cultural icon or style guru" (p. 147). Thus, it should be clear that the legitimate speaker, which is constructed through a dynamic process of authentication (Bucholtz, 2003) that necessarily involves "conflict and contestation" (Blommaert & Varis, 2013, p. 147), is a highly mobile figure that would be difficult to describe without considering different perspectives and the possibilities of adjusting and reinventing the criteria necessary for its authentication. To clarify these dynamic aspects, this study offers an example of how contestation of language is achieved and how students engage in processes that position someone as the impostor.

Methods and materials

The material presented in the current study is drawn from ethnographic fieldwork in an upper secondary school located in a suburb of Gothenburg, Sweden. The fieldwork mainly focused on a class of adolescents with a multilingual and multicultural background enrolled in a vocational program in the transition between their first year and their second year. This research has been conducted according to the guidelines offered by the Swedish Research Council and was granted ethical approval (2022–05414–01). All participants have provided informed written consent.

In this school environment, multilingualism is often treated as the norm, and multilingual practices are rarely policed against and are almost seen as unmarked. Despite this, based on the observations made during the fieldwork, a variety of perspectives on multilingualism can be found throughout the participant group. To capture these emic differences, the methodological approach employed is inspired by linguistic ethnography (Rampton et al., 2015; Tusting & Maybin, 2007). Linguistic ethnography is a framework that incorporates perspectives from different fields with sociolinguistic interests by looking critically at the impact of language in social processes (Copland & Creese, 2018) and has been argued to allow for a non-essentialist approach that foregrounds emic perspectives on language (Rampton, 2007; Tusting & Maybin, 2007). Furthermore, linguistic ethnography has been used productively in school contexts (Barwell, 2020) and to investigate CUVs in Sweden (Jonsson et al., 2019). Within the framework of linguistic ethnography, language is then seen as constructed (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020) in the social interaction among different actors, which is noted to potentially allow for a decolonial approach to multilingualism that deconstructs the boundaries of language categories (Rampton, 2007).

While all labels restrict and fix different linguistic phenomena (Rampton, 2015), focusing on emic labels has the potential to shed light on the participants' perspectives and give voice to their experiences. This linguistic ethnographic approach is central to understanding the analysis, which implies a strong focus on emic labels and perspectives from the margins. Thus, I chose to use the label Suburban Swedish following the participants' conceptualization of their ways of languaging. The choice of a linguistic ethnography approach to this study further resonates with the focus on non-essentialist assumptions made through a framework of linguistic citizenship, within which multilingualism is seen as governed by "disorder, contingency and unpredictability" (Wee, 2022, p. 20). Thus, this methodological approach offers tools to capture the complexity of social processes on the ground and at the margins.

The material was collected through participant observation and audio recordings both in and outside the classroom, as well as semi-structured interviews with teachers and students either individually or in groups. Field notes were used not only to support the recordings but also to keep track of informal talks with teachers and students *post factum* when writing in a notebook was considered too invasive and unnatural at the time of interaction. The selected excerpts in this article are derived from a single classroom recording (51 minutes) of the school subject Swedish as a second language. The theme for this class was youth language and language variation connected to the suburbs. The whole class was recorded and transcribed in its entirety. The key participants that appear in this article are a teacher and four female students, Jasmine, Isabella, Ayan, and Samira, who have daily experiences of living in the suburbs and encountering multilingual youth. All participant names are pseudonyms.

Analysis

The following analysis is centered around three phases. In the first phase, the students are presented with the theme of the class, namely, youth language. For several weeks, language in society was the overarching theme for the Swedish classes. Here, the teacher talks about linguistic variation in the suburbs and shows a video involving Dogge Doggelito. In the second phase, the students and teacher enter a dialogue following the contestation of the authenticity of the perspectives presented by the teacher. In the third phase, the students give new examples in an attempt to reinvent the boundaries of Suburban Swedish, showing another video that they consider more authentic. The observed events are presented chronologically to explain how the interaction among the participants unfolds in the classroom, consistently pointing to the criteria for the legitimate speaker (Blommaert & Varis, 2013; Kramsch, 2012) and the processes through which they are addressed (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) within an act of linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2018).

Defining boundaries and the unrecognizability of dominant perspectives

In Excerpt 1, the teacher introduces Dogge Doggelito to the students. While she expects the students to perceive Dogge as a "recognizable icon" (Blommaert & Varis, 2013) as underscored by her saying "of course" (line 03), the students consider Dogge unrecognizable. By assuming the students' experiences a priori, the teacher positions her understanding as central to this exchange. According to Blommaert and Varis (2013), authenticity is constructed through "discursive orientations towards sets of features

Excerpt 1

01	Teacher:	Does no one recognize him?
02	Ayan:	No (.) who is that?
03	Teacher:	It is of course (.) Dogge Doggelito (.) we will also meet him in a
04		video here soon where he gets interviewed about language (.) so
05		then Dogge Doggelito, is there someone that recognizes that
06		name?
07	Ayan:	No.
08	Jasmine:	No clue who he is.

that are seen (or can be seen) as emblematic of particular identities" (p. 146). This resonates with Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) principle of authentication, which is seen "as a social process played out in discourse" (p. 601) and in connection with the inherent importance of recognizability as a main feature in constructing an authentic identity (Blommaert & Varis, 2013; Kramsch, 2012). Then, in Excerpt 1, what becomes visible is that the teacher orientates toward Dogge as an obvious carrier of emblematic qualities that identify him as a speaker of Suburban Swedish (Stroud, 2004), while the students orientate toward a different set of features. By openly not recognizing Dogge as the legitimate speaker in the classroom, the students orientate toward what "is non-central and non-dominant" (Milani, 2017, p. 175) in this situation and engage in an embedded act of linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2018). While within the institutional practices of the classroom, this act allows the students to engage in making differences visible in the classroom context (Stroud, 2018) and thus begin a resistance toward being disallowed to participate in defining language boundaries.

In Excerpt 2, the teacher further defines what is considered Suburban Swedish by conceptualizing it as inherently connected to the suburbs as a place, which is a main feature in CUVs (Rampton, 2015). While she uses well-known labels such as Rinkeby Swedish and Suburban Swedish to point out this connection with the suburbs, the teacher also uses the term "Birchgrove Swedish." This pseudonym relates to the area in which the school is located and shows the teacher's attempted acknowledgment of local perspectives (Chimbutane, 2020). In this way, the teacher engages in a process of *authentication* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), in which she highlights the similarities between the identities and ways of languaging in different suburban spaces, which she presents as also connected to the students' experiences. In this way, the teacher points toward a tension between a normative perspective on language in lines 05–06 and a perspective focusing on creativity in lines 03–04, which shows an understanding of different views on multilingualism that circulate in societal discourses.

Excerpt 2

01	Teacher:	We mentioned this with that multi-ethnic youth language or as
02		some say Rinkeby Swedish or Birchgrove Swedish, Suburban
03		Swedish, that that some say that as a linguistic creativity that it is
04		an exciting part of language, where a lot happens while others
05		maybe think the opposite that they like (.) can you not speak
06		properly, right? You have probably heard and seen these the
07		different comments.

After giving a short explanation of Suburban Swedish, the teacher continues the presentation of the theme and definitions of these linguistic phenomena by showing a video interview with Dogge, in which he discusses Suburban slang (Bijvoet & Fraurud, 2016). In Excerpt 3, Dogge describes language through a perspective that conflates it with nationality (Rosa & Flores, 2017) while talking about Suburban slang as something innovative and new among all the "old cultural languages from different countries" (line 07). By using the interview as a tool in the process of *adequation*, the teacher constructs ways of languaging as described by her and Dogge as "sufficiently similar" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599) to the experiences of the students.

Excerpt 3

01	Dogge:	I don't know how many nationalities that are represented in
02		Botkyrka, but I can imagine that there are a hundred and sixty
03		different nationalities. Like a hundred and sixty different
04		languages move around here and all of them go round round and
05		then mix in Swedish and words are borrowed back and forth (.)
06		And there this Suburban slang that we have is created (.) a new
07		language between all these old cultural languages from different
08		countries in a new language that we can meet and that becomes the
09		Suburban slang.

In this first part of the class, which consists of a presentation on the topic of Suburban Swedish, the students are given a dominant representation of Suburban Swedish and Suburban slang as dynamic languaging styles that they should recognize and align with and of Dogge as a "recognizable cultural icon" (Blommaert & Varis, 2013) that they should consider a legitimate speaker. By positioning Dogge as a "recognizable icon" in relation to the students, the teacher maintains a discourse of identity-as-heritage (Blommaert & Varis, 2013), in which a "particular configuration of features reflects and emanates images of unbroken, trans-generational transmission … of timeless essentials" (p. 147). Despite her expectations, there seems to be a mismatch of cultural references between the students and the teacher. Already in this phase, the position of "style guru" (Blommaert & Varis, 2013) given to Dogge by the teacher is not recognized by the students. In sum, in this phase, the teacher is positioned on this side of the abyssal line, being the carrier of knowledge, while the students find themselves on the other side of the line, as they align with marginal perspectives when attempting to resist dominant ideologies of language (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). The following section focuses on the students' contestation of Dogge and how they further manage to position him and his language as illegitimate.

Contestation of the (il)legitimate speaker for a lack of "enoughness"

Excerpt 4 portrays a quick comment that happens in a small gap between the interview part and a short message from Dogge at the end of the video. This comment is quickly given by Jasmine and is unprompted, since the teacher does not ask for any feedback at this point, continuing the process of deconstructing Dogge as the legitimate speaker. In contrast to the teacher's attempt of authentication, Jasmine enters a process of *distinction*, which according to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), is characterized by a "suppression of similarities" (p. 600). Furthermore, by ascribing an Indian origin to Dogge, Samira participates in the process of distinction, which positions Dogge as different from them, and thus not sufficiently similar. Kramsch (2012) points out the necessity of an identifiable origin for a legitimate speaker, and further constructs the difference between him and the students by ascribing the identity as not-from-the-suburbs to Dogge. Thus, at this stage, the students do not consider Dogge as the appropriate person (Bourdieu, 1977) in relation to Suburban Swedish and the experiences of the suburbs.

Excerpt 4

01	Jasmine:	Ok, that one is absolutely not from the suburbs I would say.
02	Samira:	From India or something.
03	Ayan:	(giggles)

In Excerpt 5, Jasmine is leading her point of Dogge as a wannabe (Jonsson, 2007), positioning him as the *impostor* (Kramsch, 2012). Jasmine engages in a process of *denaturalization* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), in which she points out Dogge's features that she perceives to be false or problematic. In this case, the issue seems to be that Dogge is not from Gothenburg, and, more importantly, not from the suburbs. Similar to previous discussions of appropriation of Suburban Swedish (Årman, 2018; Jonsson, 2007), the impostor in this specific moment is seen as trying to position themselves within a group they are not considered part of. Against this backdrop, it is observable how perceptions of linguistic ownership and legitimacy (Dewaele et al., 2021), which construct the speakers of Suburban Swedish as a homogenous group, are challenged by the participants of the current study. In contrast, the teacher asks who has the authority to make decisions about legitimacy (line 04) in a genuine, non-accusatory manner. Through this question, the teacher seems to allow the classroom to become a space

Excerpt 5

01	Teacher:	There were some comments on the video we watched.
02	Samira:	Weird.
03	Jasmine:	I think he is not from the suburbs.
04	Teacher:	Like who eh who decides who is [from the suburbs]?
05	Samira:	[He is fr]om Stockholm.
06	Jasmine:	Like I think more that he (.)
07	Ayan:	Excuses.
08	Jasmine:	He tries kinda.
09	Samira:	Can we not watch from Gothenburg?
10	Jasmine:	He tries but he is not.
11	Samira:	Is there one from Gothenburg?
12	Ayan:	He wants to be.

of linguistic citizenship in which the students can participate (Williams et al., 2022). Blommaert and Varis (2013) highlight that "[c]ompetence … often revolves around *the capacity to make adequate judgment calls on enoughness*" (p. 148). Thus, by formulating arguments for Dogge not being from the suburbs, the information given to the students seems to be enough to position him as the impostor (Kramsch, 2012) and a wannabe (Jonsson, 2007), and therefore, they construct his identity as inauthentic based on a lack of enoughness. Place as a component of the identifiable origin (Kramsch, 2012) becomes a crucial requirement for judgment on Dogge's enoughness in this context. As the students focus on Gothenburg in their negotiation of Suburban Swedish, the local becomes centered, which also highlights the problematic aspect of talking about Suburban Swedish as a unified languaging style across suburban areas in Sweden.

In Excerpt 6, the discussion about Dogge continues. The focus is moved from a spatial dimension to a temporal dimension. While the teacher attempts to connect their differences in languaging with age, Jasmine temporally conceptualizes the difference, while leaving age out. This understanding of Suburban Swedish resonates well with Bijvoet and Fraurud's (2016) description. Additionally, it highlights a beneficial aspect of CUVs, which are described as entailing a historical component, by being contemporary, while avoiding a restriction of its use to young people (Rampton, 2015). Furthermore, Jasmine positions Suburban Swedish as a different phenomenon than Suburban slang (Bijvoet & Fraurud, 2016) and focuses instead on these ways of languaging as inherently different. From Jasmine's perspective, slang is connected to older speakers in the suburbs, while the CUV recognizable by the "accent" is connected to current speakers in the suburbs. Having an accent here is not portrayed as problematic (Milani & Jonsson, 2018) and is rather perceived as a realistic way of explaining the language practices of multilingual youth. Moreover, slang is portrayed as non-contemporary and as a distant phenomenon in the students' everyday imagination of language.

Excerpt 6

01	Teacher:	Or it could be different generations?
02		[He is an adult now right but he] (.) eh he is from the suburbs.
03	Jasmine:	[Yeah could be like that] (.) I think there is a big difference
04		between how it was then and how it is now.
05	Teacher:	Yes, it is surely like that. What would you say are like the
06		biggest changes?
07	Jasmine:	Like (.) the words.
08	Teacher:	What eh (.) are there some specific words you are thinking about?
09		(long silence)
10	Jasmine:	So, look (.) then it was more like that they spoke pretty Swedish
11		and then put in some slang (.) now it is more that they have an
12		accent when they speak (.) you know what I mean (.) so it so that
13		is a bit what is different.

Although the definition Jasmine gives is neither unambiguous nor non-essentialist, it is nonetheless voiced as a resistance to Dogge as the legitimate speaker and based on her own experiences of languaging in the suburbs. If Jasmine considers the contemporary way to speak appropriate, then Dogge's language practices are not legitimate to her or at least not legitimate anymore. This understanding of authenticity resonates well with another point made by Blommaert and Varis (2013), meaning that "enoughness is a floating, unfixed norm" (p. 149). In this sense, the requirements for the legitimate speaker are always in motion, thus potentially being not enough today despite being enough earlier.

In this second phase, the students overtly contest Dogge as the legitimate speaker of Suburban Swedish, managing to make him not only unrecognizable as an icon (Blommaert & Varis, 2013), as shown in the previous section, but also to position him as illegitimate according to different criteria that rely on his ascribed identity and language practices (Kramsch, 2012; Norton, 2013). Through this dialogue, the students enjoy their linguistic citizenship by being able to negotiate and decide "*what* languages are, and what they may *mean*" (Stroud, 2001, p. 353). By negotiating language boundaries that are relevant to their daily experiences of multilingualism in the suburbs, the students attempt to center their understandings in the classroom (Romero, 2017). By engaging in an act of linguistic citizenship, the students take the position of competent and thus have the opportunity to define language on their own terms (Stroud, 2018). In sum, through an act of linguistic citizenship, they try to include non-dominant perspectives in the classroom, thus blurring the abyssal line (Santos, 2007) in this particular moment. In the next section, I indicate the ways in which the students propose new boundaries and new grounds for authenticity while they continue to insist on removing the label of the legitimate speaker from the impostor.

Reinventing ideological boundaries of authenticity

In Excerpt 7, following Samira's earlier request to see an example from Gothenburg, the students propose watching a video about the suburbs, pointing out that the teacher will see many differences (line 06). The video they refer to is a short film, telling the story of two young men that become involved in criminal activities in a suburban setting outside of Gothenburg. The students offer an alternative perspective that contradicts the dominant perspective, positioning their experience as increasingly centered in the classroom environment. Regarding the importance of the local place for this negotiation, as noted above, by showing the video mentioned in Excerpt 7, they further center their context as relevant for categorizations of language.

Excerpt 7

01	Jasmine:	Like if you watch now if you put on a short film.
02	Teacher:	Mm.
03	Jasmine:	From Gothenburg, for example Asme's I don't know Asme's
04		short film.
05	Samira:	Could you put that?
06	Jasmine:	Yes, you will see a lot of difference (.) start that.

In Excerpt 8, the students make fun of Dogge by describing the Suburban Swedish in the video as authentic compared to the performance in Dogge's languaging style. On line 03, Jasmine makes fun of his way of speaking by making a stylization of his voice, which Coupland (2004) describes as "bounded moments when others' voices are, in a somewhat more literal sense, displayed and framed for local, creative, sociolinguistic effect" (p. 249), thus creating a hyperbolic representation of Dogge (Stroud, 2004). Jasmine comments that no one in the new video is a rapper like Dogge, which she imitates,

Excerpt 8

01	Jasmine:	You will see difference
02	Teacher:	Nice to see some ads here.
03	Jasmine:	On how they speak (.) like no one is a street rapper papapao like
04		(.) like Dogge Dogge does.
05	Isabella:	Doggy Doggy (laughs)
06	Jasmine:	(laughs) Doggy dog-

constructing him as ridiculous, which continues to denaturalize Dogge (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). As in Excerpt 5, Jasmine points out that Dogge is being fake, making up his connection to the suburbs by performing a certain identity, and she overexaggerates the emblematic features of the suburban speaker.

In Excerpt 9, Jasmine tries to explain the way she perceives the characters' ways of languaging in the short movie. Here, she continues to point toward Suburban Swedish as a CUV, clearly connecting it to the suburbs, while she does not mention any specific age group. By asking the students questions and maintaining the dialogue shown in Excerpt 9, the teacher keeps an open space of linguistic citizenship (Williams et al., 2022) and engages with the *decenter*, namely, what is otherwise marginal or invisible in the classroom (Romero, 2017). In this section, the students position the video they chose as closer to reality compared to Dogge, engaging in *authentication* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), as they point out which features are enough and proper for a speaker of Suburban Swedish. By doing so, they further emphasize their "perception of 'the real' in discourse" (Kramsch, 2012, p. 488). Thus, even though all iterations of a language should be perceived as invented or fake (Källström, 2011; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020), the participants in the current study seem to categorize only Dogge's linguistic performance as such, discursively aligning themselves toward a different set of emblematic features (Blommaert & Varis, 2013) than initially assumed by the teacher.

Excerpt 9

01	Teacher:	Is that language-
02	Jasmine:	The accent, don't you hear?
03	Teacher:	Yes, but expand a little bit then.
04	Jasmine:	So maybe you don't hear in now that much (.) they maybe have
05		adjusted it a bit now that it is a short movie (.) but like when you
06		are out mm you hear suburb guys- or in general the suburb has
07		more accent when they speak.

In Excerpt 10, the teacher evokes once more a spatial dimension, attributing the difference to different suburbs in Stockholm and Gothenburg. Place becomes once again a central point in the positioning of the legitimate speaker, as has been shown in previous research (e.g., Senter, 2022). Jasmine focuses instead on Dogge being "fake," repositioning herself (and her classmates) as from-the-suburbs. By saying that "we from the suburbs are already like they are" (lines 09–10), she ultimately moves the ideological boundaries of the legitimate speaker of Suburban Swedish away from Dogge and re-establishes them more in accordance with her perspectives and experiences and those of the other students, positioning them as sufficiently similar and suppressing similarities with Dogge (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Here, the main distinction becomes once again that of Stockholm against Gothenburg, which further highlights the importance of place for the participants' categorization of language. The excerpt ends with the teacher questioning the point about being fake by pointing out that maybe people are imitating Dogge, to which the students once again refer to Dogge as lacking recognizability (Blommaert & Varis, 2013).

Excerpt 10

01	Teacher:	But what would you say then eh more about the actual language?
02		You say that he speaks but do- does he speak nicer? Like is that
03		not just dialect as well, he is from a suburb in Stockholm, right?
04	Jasmine:	It just feels like he is fake (.) do you understand what I mean?
05	Samira:	Stockholm speaks like that.
06	Jasmine:	I don't know how Stockholm speaks but it just feels like he is ma-
07	Isabella:	He has like made his [personality so to be] ghetto in Sweden.
08	Jasmine:	[Yeah that he like made his personality] (.)
09		that he tries to be suburb so that (.) while we eh from the suburbs
10		already are like they are, do you understand what I mean? But he
11		like tries (.) makes it up.
12	Teacher:	But think it was him that like eh coined is it not everyone else
13		that imitates him then and they are not just as [inaudible]?
14	Jasmine:	I have never heard of him.
15	Teacher:	No (laughs)
16	Samira:	Me neither actually if I have to be honest.

In this final phase, the students focus on the reinvention of the legitimate speaker as a way to center their own experiences in the classroom, creating a space in which multiple epistemologies of language can co-exist. This process draws on the transformative action and utopian characteristics inscribed in processes of linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2015). Thus, by engaging in an act of linguistic citizenship, the students in these examples point toward a way of thinking otherwise in relation to language (Stroud, 2018), while they create respectful ways to talk about their marginalized experiences of language in a joint effort with the teacher.

Concluding remarks

By engaging in an act of linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2018) in the classroom, the students manage to note different criteria that Dogge does not fulfil, making him unable to inhabit the identity of the legitimate speaker (Kramsch, 2012). By doing this, the participants manage to create a space in which more than one epistemological perspective on Suburban Swedish is allowed by negotiating dominant perspectives to reinvent them. Through the excerpts shown in this article, the dialogue between the students and the teacher points toward the main characteristics of linguistic citizenship, since it engages with micro-occurrences of resistance and shows the unpredictability of language and the fluidity of identity (Milani, 2017). As García et al. (2021) indicate the need for a post-abyssal thinking in education, which allows marginal experiences of language to be voiced in a meaningful way, this study demonstrates that acts of linguistic citizenship have the potential to allow a provisional erasure of the abyssal line. Different voices and multiple perspectives on language are thus allowed to co-exist in the same space at that particular moment. The post-abyssal imaginary for the students in this study may then reside in the potential "to draw and redraw boundaries altogether" (Kramsch, 2012, p. 497), not only constructing new borders for the legitimate speaker, but also reinventing the discourse of authenticity, escaping an essentialist perspective on belonging and identity.

As "[w]e must wade through this messiness to not only find what discourses and experiences are centered, or acknowledged, in our classrooms, but also those discourses and experiences that make up the decenter" (Romero, 2017, p. 325), linguistic citizenship becomes a tool to engage in discussions about language that allow differences to be taken seriously. Against this backdrop, it becomes clear that "[a]ttention to complexities and subtleties of language practices … can initiate and sustain state remedies for more encompassing and inclusive forms of citizenship agency and participation" (Stroud, 2018, p. 22). In light of this, it would be beneficial for Swedish education to be guided by linguistic citizenship when addressing students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including

students identifying as monolingual and monocultural. This would allow all students to be involved in constructing the role of language in their own education, which would give them access to being potentially treated as epistemic equals. In sum, as argued elsewhere (e.g., Femia, 2024), linguistic citizenship seems to be a concept that can guide education toward a deconstruction of essentialist perspectives on language while allowing the students to take a more agentive role in the learning process as the authorities on what concerns them in their daily linguistic struggles. Future research about linguistic citizenship in northern contexts could continue to focus on situations in which multilingual youth claim their right to speak and negotiate language in educational environments. This kind of focus will allow a further exploration of acts of linguistic citizenship and a clearer definition of the limits for its theoretical viability.

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