**The end of innocence: Applied linguistics and boundary-drawing in the new age of nationalism**

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The major political story of our time is that of the resurgence of nationalism. During her presidential campaign in France, Marine Le Pen asserted that ‘the divide is no longer between the left and the right, but between the patriots and the globalists’. This state of affairs exists in marked contrast to prevailing trends in applied linguistics research, where for a number of years the ‘national’ has been de-emphasized in favour of various ‘trans-‘ or post-national perspectives: superdiversity and translanguaging, to name but two. These are interesting times, and it is an opportune moment to consider what it means to be doing research in applied linguistics. In particular, what are some of the assumptions – about the nature of language, and about the relationship between language and groups – that are often made, even as we attempt to go beyond simplistic national or group boundaries? In this paper I will trace the connections between the linguistic and the socio-political by exploring the concept of the boundary or frontier in the study of language. By taking both a historical and a contemporary perspective on boundary-drawing and naming processes, I draw attention to the persistence of the ‘national’ or ‘group’ orientation in applied linguistics, even in approaches that appear to be transnational or otherwise aligned with the global *zeitgeist*. To some extent this may be inevitable, for we are all members of groups. But by investigating what Hiddleston (2005) ‘the persistence of the notion of the cultural or linguistic frontier in contemporary thought’, we may learn more about the possibilities that are open to us in the new age of nationalism.