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Table ronde 3

États démocratiques et reconnaissance de la diversité. Analyse comparée du renouvellement du pluralisme politique.

Session 3

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Ne pas citer sans l'autorisation de l'auteur

Democracy and accommodation of linguistic diversity

My presentation addresses a relatively new topic within normative literature: language equity or linguistic justice; the link between language claims, language rights, a common language and democracy.

Although France is one of the most striking examples of a consistent language rationalization (from the 16th century to the 1994 Constitutional revision, French policy makers have always aimed at creating, rationalizing and maintaining the French language as a symbol of common belonging, as a means of effective administration, as a key element of republican identity and as a sign of equal citizenship), French social scientists pay very little attention to the linguistic dimension of democracy, most of them stick to a classical approach -sociolinguistics and language anthropology – and celebrate language diversity, or adopt a sociological stance and hence denounce class related speech differences. Despite the ubiquity of language conflicts, normative literature has not paid much attention to language either. Post-Rawlsian political theory has been discussing every single culture or identity-related topic, but has barely considered language. Neither liberals nor liberal-culturalists, nor communitarians have really addressed language equity. It is only in the 90's that comparative politics [Laitin, 1994] and economy scholars [Pool, 1991a, 1991b, Grin, 2004,] have begun toying with language issues; almost all of them generated sophisticated game theory models, that unfortunately do not always apply to real world problems.

I will begin looking at language diversity and different proposals concerning global language rationalization (I), I will then take a look at the global language constellation (II) before commenting on three different models drawn from recent research (III). I will conclude by submitting two proposals for a fairer linguistic accommodation in the EU.

I. Looking at language diversity: is politics in the vernacular?

What is new then in recent scholarship? Debating about linguistic diversity and linguistic justice very rapidly lead to a wider discussion on the usefulness and the threats of a common language, a *lingua franca* (in Europe but also in multilingual societies, and sometimes even

on a global level). The founding idea being that somehow a healthy democracy depends on a common tool of communication. One can also argue of course that it is, on the contrary, acknowledgement of individual (or collective) claims to language *diversity* that enhance the democratic quality of politics, as every speaker or linguistic community is fully and equally respected in his/her linguistic identity (the liberal-culturalist claim). But the path taken by recent normative scholarship is an attempt to reconcile the polity's systemic capacity alongside the citizen's effectiveness (or voice) as Robert Dahl would put it [Dahl & Taffe, 1974]. The « deliberative turn » of the 90's and the following "talk-centric" theories of democracy [Dryzec, 1990] indeed focused on communication and debating rather than voting, but without mentioning the precondition of a successful civic discussion: a common language. The discussion on such a common language as a necessary condition of a more substantial democracy has been particularly vivid in Europe and poses the following questions: do we need a common language for a healthy democracy? Would social mobility and employability be enhanced if we all spoke the same language? Does a common language create a more substantial democracy (local, national, global) in order to discuss global concerns (such as environmental issues)? Would a common language avoid brain drain (if it were English for instance?) If we chose a natural language, is it fair – and under what conditions - that everybody learns it?

There are different ways of linking these questions to political theory and language policies within normative literature. I will comment on three models I have drawn from recent research. 1. The *identity model* that argues for *restorative justice* after centuries of nation building and linguistic rationalization: the claim for diversity is morally relevant, and the state must acknowledge those claims. 2. The *procedural model* that is not outcome oriented: people should fairly discuss the language choices of their polity. 3. The *economy* or *utility* model that has at least three components: (a) what are the costs and benefits of learning/spreading a *lingua franca*? (b) If we assume that English is the proper common language, are there means to guarantee speaker's individual language choices *and* their chances of social mobility? (c) And how should we fairly compensate the Anglophone's "mother tongue blessing" vis-à-vis those who have to learn English?

Lingua franca

The discussion about the usefulness of a *lingua franca* (for Europe for instance) stages almost all the issues addressed within the models mentioned above. It is about identity, as we have to choose a single common language while respecting all the other ones. It is about identity because the choice of the common language, if it is a natural one, depends on the social representations of that particular language (English denotes American cultural imperialism or hegemony, but is viewed, at the same time, as the most useful tool to get along in a globalized world). It is about deliberation and democratic procedure, as we have to commonly agree on a *lingua franca*; it would be unfair to choose a language without debating, especially if the choice is compelling once it has been made. It is about utility because the choice of a *lingua franca* is outcome oriented: global communication, employability and social mobility are supposed to be enhanced by a common language, by English in particular, and brain drain is supposed to be avoided if Europe's common language (especially within research, academia and business) became English [Van Parijs, 2004].

But when we think about identity, we do not necessarily think about utility. On the contrary, identity and utility are generally mutually exclusive. Identity claims might be strategic, but they are barely framed economically useful. When we talk about a fair linguistic setting as a result of a procedural discussion, we do not necessarily have a single common language in mind, and we are generally convinced that identity is negotiable. And when we

address the question of the usefulness of a language, identity and fairness are of little interest as we are talking about fostering social mobility and connecting as many as possible speakers [Busekist, 2004].

The *lingua franca* discussion tests the validity of all those concerns.

A few words about History beforehand. Namely about the difference between imperial languages and a new *lingua franca* for Europe. Imperial ‘common’ languages such as Latin or French differ from modern national languages that are the result of rationalizing and homogenizing policies: imperial languages or languages of diplomacy were not considered as identity markers, and diglossia was the rule: the centre and the imperial or royal administrators spoke the high language, the vast majority spoke their dialects, and the intermediary powers were generally bilingual. National policies, nation building and nationalism then launched a well known homogenizing process: a single compelling national or official language achieved nationwide literacy, communication, etc. These policies were also strongly linked to democracy, as citizenship and participation had to take place in a common language, and language was a means to integrate widely.

Some claim that we are at the eve of a new era today: linguistic differences are an obstacle to global communication and to global democracy. The need for horizontal communication (much alike the horizontal solidarity within the nation-state, as opposed to the vertical organization of societies in the ancient settings) allegedly needs a single common language.

The questions then are: a) should the adoption of a *lingua franca* follow the national model (a process of rationalizing around one official language), or do we have to invent something else? b) Should we adopt an artificial or a natural language, and which one? What are the benefits of a common language? Do the economic/democratic benefits of a common language exceed the costs (material and symbolic) of learning a new language? Is it morally justifiable that we all learn the same language? Are the citizens of Europe willing to participate more if they can all speak, write and understand the language of European politics, if they were able to share the language of those who govern? Would a European *Demos* be born?

Esperanto

Why not Esperanto? Wouldn't that be the fairest solution of all? Esperanto is artificial. It is no one's mother tongue and therefore fair to choose Esperanto, because everybody would have to learn it. Unfortunately, it is not very likely that Esperanto becomes a world language; it would need too sophisticated a coordination to be spread widely. Esperanto has a stable number of speakers (0,002% – 0,005% [Piron, 1989]) since a physician called Zamenhof has invented it in the 1880's. Zamenhof's mother tongue was Yiddish, he was born in a Baltic province of the Russian Empire, and invented Esperanto because he was convinced that a common language would be the true condition of equality and effective communication in a single idiom liberated from nationalism, chauvinist culture and the ghetto¹. But languages have to live, and it is precisely life (and speakers' motivation) that Esperanto lacks. There are indeed two sociolinguistic wisdoms: (1) learning motivation is rewarded only if a sufficient number of other speakers engage in learning (which is the only way to actually practice and speak a language), in other words, the utility of a language is a function of the number of its speakers [Greenberg, 1956]; (2) once a language reaches a take-off or tipping point (Pool, 1991b), its spread is self-sufficient. Esperanto has never reached that tipping point.

Has English reached such a take-off point? Either English becoming a global language is inevitable (its spread is hence independent from any kind of collective will and depends on individual aggregate choices that have nothing to do with policy choices). Or we consider that

¹ Interestingly, Ben Yehouda (re-)invented Hebrew to unite international Jewry at the exact same time, and Zamenhof also wrote the first Yiddish grammar.

coordinate political strategies can still avoid that English becomes a hegemonic language, but we then need collective political will and strategy and common European public policies. But isn't there a moral dilemma regarding future generations? According to another sociolinguistic truth, all universal languages have at one point ceased to be universal. If our generation decides to adopt English as *lingua franca*, and engages into public policies of language training that indeed spread English as the sole European common language, we oblige future generations, which will be unable to make the same linguistic choices we are able to make. We might, in other words, create that tipping point ourselves.

Have we reached the "end of linguistic history" or are we able to design common European linguistic policies – and under which conditions? In order to answer these questions, I will now address the issue of the language constellation as a whole the way it is discussed within one particular mode of the economy-utility framework and I will discuss the 3 models I mentioned afterwards.

II. The language constellation

In his *Words of the World*, Abram de Swaan [Swaan, 2001] claims that an economic approach of languages, or at least an analogy between economic theory of collective goods and communication can help explain not only the *utility* and the *communicative value* of languages to speakers, but also the commitment to smaller and apparently less useful languages (via "collective cultural capital" for example accessible only through those specific languages), without having to rely on 'identity' claims only while explaining linguistic preferences. Languages, in de Swaan's model are *tools*; they are useful to connect people. Certain languages enhance upward social mobility, connect more people than others, some languages are more useful than others, and learning of some languages is more beneficial than others [Swaan, 2000]. The world's language constellation is a result of past or present power relations (linguistic normalization, rationalization, creation of official languages and killing of dialects etc.).

Languages as networks and collective goods

If one takes a synoptic look at the world language system, it can be described as a constellation, a hierarchical order, or a planetary system with a sun and its moons. A huge amount of languages (98%) is spoken by a very small percentage of mankind (10%): these are *peripheral* languages. They gravitate around about one hundred *central* languages (foremost national, written ones: "archive languages"), spoken by a vast majority of mankind. This second group is then connected – through its multilingual speakers - to a dozen *supercentral* languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, English, Spanish, Swahili, Hindi, Japanese, Russian, Portuguese, Malay, all of them spoken by more than a hundred Million speakers (except Swahili). The Hypercentral language that holds the entire system is English: "the centre of the twelve solar systems" [Swaan, 2001, 31].

We then need to look at individual speakers or groups of speakers, i.e. the combinations of micro-decisions to actually learn a language, practice a language, and maintain a language. The assumption here is that these decisions are not random: they are dependent on the global constellation mentioned above because a) people learn languages upwards (from the little to the bigger language, from the poorer to the richer group of speakers), and b) the choice of learning one specific language depends on the perceptions and the expectations concerning other speakers language acquisition. One can explain this through 2 characteristics of languages: languages are networks and languages are collective goods.

Languages are Networks because there is a strategic interaction between users of languages. Languages are networks much like transport or communication networks. People commit to such networks because they expect a benefit from doing so, and they are loyal as long as the next best option is too expensive or too time consuming. Joining a network enhances the global utility of that specific network. Applied to languages this means that every new user/speaker enhances the benefit or the utility for all, and hence the global value of the specific network or language. This is well known to economists as ‘external network effects’: every newcomer adds value to the whole. Languages are also public goods, they are even *hypercollective* goods because languages are networks of a special kind; they are free goods, “open societies”. Even if there is an entrance fee (the time spent learning a new language), they are not created or owned by anyone in particular, they are *non-excludable*. It is impossible to exclude anyone from enjoying a collective good. No one has a *veto* on the survival of a language: languages need a significant amount of speakers, but the defection of one or some does not jeopardize a language. The efforts of one individual, on the other hand are not sufficient to guarantee language maintenance: no one can create or salvage a language on his own. And, most important: a collective good does not diminish in value as new users join in. The specificity of languages as collective goods is that their value actually *increases* with each added speaker, that’s why de Swaan calls them hypercollective goods [Swaan, 2001, 38 sq.]².

The utility and the communication potential of one language are derived from the number of speakers, and namely the multilingual speakers of one language or one language repertoire. The advantage of this perspective in my sense is that it can account for language acquisition preferences, concerning “useful” languages but it can also account for the desire of language maintenance (of vulnerable languages); hence circumvent the ‘identity’ variable as sole explanatory factor. But how to evaluate the economic or intellectual “value” of a language? In order to answer this heterodox question, at least to those who assume languages have intrinsic value, one can make three claims: 1. People learn languages to enhance their communication potential, 2. The larger the number of speakers, the more attractive the language, 3. The more languages, the more English (this is especially true concerning Europe). De Swaan calls *Q-value* a rough indicator to calculate the perceived value of a language within the overall constellation.

Q-value

The Q-value of a language is calculated through its prevalence and its centrality within the overall language constellation. The prevalence purports to the proportion of native speakers in a particular repertoire. Say blue. The group of blue speakers is connected to other groups and speakers through their multilingual speakers, i.e. those who speak blue but also yellow, red or white. Hence the proportion of speakers that can *directly* be contacted in a given repertoire. The centrality indicates the number of connections, or multilingual speakers, that link the languages in this repertoire with all others, as a proportion of all connections between languages in the constellation. Hence the proportion of *indirect* communication. Say red as a non-native language. All blue, white and yellow speakers are connected with each other through red.

English for instance has a poor prevalence in Europe (there are fewer British than Germans or Polish), but a very high centrality as many more Europeans speak English than any other language. English hence connects more multilingual individuals than any other language.

² Scholars have even shown that the increase of 1% of English speakers increases by 3,6% the people attracted to English in non English speaking countries (the figures are 2,2 for French and 1,8 for German) [Fidrmuc, Ginsburgh, Weber, 2004, 50].

How is this related to the *lingua franca* issue? As English already is the European *lingua franca*, English should be officially adopted as such. People learn English because they anticipate the European language dynamics, the European language constellation with English at the center of its planetary language system. “Anticipated probability and profitability” or “opportunity sensitive learning” [Van Parijs, 2004] hence produces a wide consensus concerning language training in English.

Lets take an example: Hungary. Hungary is fascinating not only because of the recent nationwide adoption of English, but because of its incredible *rapidity*: within 15 years, English completely ruled out Russian (the former compulsory foreign language); the next victim being German which has been vanquished in less than five years. The extent of anticipated probability and profitability totally shifted the language repertoire of Hungarians. Self strengthening process and self-fulfilling prophecy go hand in hand and offer a micro-illustration of the expansion of English as *lingua franca* - which need not be at the cost of language death, neither for Hungarian, nor for any other language, as languages are generally protected locally (by territorialism) [Dörnyei *et al.*, 2006, Hartkamp, 2007]. The problem here being that the value of the independent variable becomes dependent on the value of the dependent variable (English is hypercentral because it is hypercentral).

One unfortunately cannot quantify “language love”. It would explain the defection from Russian in Hungary, and raises the difficult problem of integrating micro-sociological and micro-economic decisions difficult to gather in most places (David Latin did so for Ghana with surprising and interesting results [Laitin, 1994]) but probably very much linked not only to anticipated profitability, but also to political and ideological representations of languages, especially colonial ones, as cultural vehicles.

In short, the *Q-value* is a rough and ready measure for the communication value of a language in a given constellation. A simpler measure (straight figures for the number of speakers would do no justice to the *dynamics* of the constellation). The *Q-value* also purports to reconstruct the value that speakers themselves attribute to language, an evaluation that guides their choices of foreign languages to learn [Swaan, 2001, 39sq.]. But it doesn't tell us if whether language policies we ought to implement are fair.

And this is the background to the discussion about language democracy. Let's now look into the models I mentioned.

III. Identity, procedure, efficiency and fairness

1. Identity

The identity model is straightforward and, at least at first sight, the simplest one. It has several components: identity as equality (the classical/antique democratic model); identity as value: my identity is valuable in itself and should not be compromised by any political regime, (but a good regime should accommodate all kinds of different identities and not forcefully assimilate everyone into the same mould), and identity in a more nationalistic and exclusive sense. In this model, language is culture, we value our culture expressed by our mother tongue. Hence language is part of our identity; attempts to change that identity, to impose another language, another culture, to rationalize language diversity *via* one official language in a multilingual setting is anti-democratic and unfair especially to those who belong to a linguistic minority or a linguistically vulnerable community. This is the normative liberal-culturalist argument [Kymlicka, 1995, 2001, 2003].

The problem with the identity model is that it blends different kinds of arguments. Normative and historical. The *historical* argument (the language situation yesterday) is used

to implement language justice today [May, 2001]. Languages have disappeared in the course of history, but not all of them die of a natural death, most languages have disappeared in the nation-building process and the periphery has forcefully adopted the linguistic norms of the center. Nations indeed eat up languages and peu à peu destroy vernaculars. We now have to either a) actively protect the languages that have escaped oblivion; b) apply restorative justice and positively discriminate speakers of languages that have suffered, or c) revitalize dead or dying languages, by all means - even illiberal ones. Languages in other words have “intrinsic value”, and the state has a moral obligation to sustain them and to recognize them [Réaume, 2003]. Every language should be recognized and every individual speaker should have access to full “societal culture” (that offers significant means of mobility and equal symbolic recognition) [Kymlicka, 2001] in his own language. *A priori* this is a generous way of putting things. What’s wrong then with the “identity” model?

I believe there are four challenges one can summarize through four questions: whom should we recognize and how? Diversity or democracy? Diversity or mobility? Languages or species ?

Recognize whom and how? Recognition of individual speakers by the state poses no problem in liberal democracies. A liberal democratic state indeed does so, but only in the private sphere. There are private vernaculars, and one or more official language of the state. The state may also recognize language communities, as long as the rules are clearly established and as long as we are in a language territorialization framework. Collective rights by virtue of belonging to a language group on the other hand are far more complicated to justify, as linguistic cleavages alone are rarely taken into consideration. Canada grants Eskimo’s collective rights, Australia Aborigines, but not (only) because of their language specificities; both are considered as *historical nations* and as such qualify for restorative justice.

So how do states acknowledge language diversity? Either by different kinds of federal arrangements as in Canada, Belgium, India or South Africa, or by recognizing that minorities have some kind of autonomy in linguistic matters as in Israel, the Baltic states or Hungary. Liberal *benign neglect* as in religious matters cannot apply to languages because states “speak”: no state is mute. Mainly two legal solutions exist that handle language diversity and positively engage the state: the *personality* principle (wherever I am I should be able to speak my own language and the state’s institutions have an obligation to respond in that language), and the *territorial* principle (every language has its own territory and its own boundaries, as in Belgium, with some degree of *official* bilingualism for federal civil servants. If I am a blue speaker, I use blue in the blue territory, if I move to a red speaking area, I have to learn red, my children go to red schools, etc. The philosophy of the personality principle would be that we don’t need a common language to get along, *individual linguistic choice and freedom is more important than an official compulsory language*. Whereas the supporters of the territoriality principle would argue that this principle is the *best way of protecting vulnerable languages* (security and stability). They are not less liberal than the others as they argue that *democratic policies are far more plausible and efficient if we all speak the same language* [Busekist, 2006, 2007].

The problem is that most of the “identity” scholars claim that language identity *ipso facto* opens the path to collective rights because of a common linguistic identity. And most of the time, democracy is not their problem [Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, Philippon, 1994, Nettle et Romaine, 2000].

Diversity or democracy? They indeed submit the question of the political regime to the question of diversity: diversity champions democracy in their view. They also neglect communication potential. “N” language communities without a common language (which

they refuse in the same way they condemn national rationalization) would make communication between citizens virtually impossible.

Diversity or mobility? They also neglect to take social mobility into account.

We all know that belonging to the wrong linguistic community handicaps social mobility. Language alone is not sufficient to explain social handicaps of course, racism, and social representations about immigrants, etc. are as important. But it is true that if you don't speak correct French, English or Italian, you won't get very far professionally. And Immigrants have understood that very well. The third generation generally doesn't speak the homeland's language anymore (linguists talk about "language shift"); which is indeed a loss (some work hard not to lose contact with their mother tongue, but not at the cost of not learning the hostland's official language. Others don't: another challenge to the identity model. Secondly, maintaining diversity might be truly illiberal. If people choose to learn the official language of their hostland and decide to abandon their mother tongue, we might find that regrettable, but we can justify our regrets only morally.

Languages or species?

Some indeed think we have to salvage languages, regardless of the people's will to do so. The favorite comparison or metaphor of these scholars is *biodiversity*, and their favorite notion is "sustainable linguistics". The map of endangered species and endangered languages is similar; hence languages are exactly like endangered species. Our task is to save them from linguistic within a global language zoo [Swaan, 2004].

But languages are not lions. To salvage Lions, if they were endangered, one just has to leave them alone, languages on the other hand are maintained by their speakers, and they die of a natural death if one doesn't give them the right care. In order to care though one has to very actively engage in their survival. And the only institution with the sufficient power to do so is the state. But public policies would have to be profoundly illiberal to impose language maintenance if their speakers rather abandon their local or peripheral language (to be upwardly mobile, etc.) and it would be forced salvation.

Language *zoology* (Lamarck's "philosophie zoologique") and language *sentimentalism* is not only a special feature of recent academia, it is also a powerful policy initiated by associations such as *Terralingua* or international organizations such as the UNESCO.

Hannah Arendt once said that the difference about philosophy and politics is precisely about Lions: philosophy is about Man (singular: *zoon politikon*), and philosophical arguments (in ancient philosophy at least) would remain true even if there were only one man, or maybe two identical ones. That's why, in her view, philosophy has never been able to truly answer the question: what is politics? If philosophy is about *the* Man, in the same way zoology is about *the* Lion, the plurality of Lions is of interest only to Lions [Arendt, 1995, 15]. And the plurality of languages would be of interest only to linguists. Language zoology can hence only be about juxtaposition of languages and not about language constellations or language policy.

In short: if policies of diversity can turn out to be illiberal, is there another solution? A liberal one? What if people had the choice to commonly agree on their language?

That is precisely what the supporters of the procedural model wish.

2. Procedure

The second model is deliberative or procedural. It is the exact contrary of the identity model and its specificity is that it is not outcome oriented (Laitin, Reich, 2003). The main idea is the following: we should let the people commonly decide on which language or languages they wish to speak, whether they ought to be protected by the state or not and whether minority language training ought to be funded by the state or not, etc. The only thing

we look at here is whether the democratic procedure has been respected. There is no moral *a priori* about the linguistic interests of citizens: abandoning a language or building a new language community is morally neutral.

The state should be minimalist and leave it to the citizens to discuss their linguistic disputes; it should avoid attaching any kind of symbolic meaning to one specific language, and decisions should be revisable [Weinstock, 2004].

On the one hand politics can only be democratic and efficient if people indeed appropriate the political language (“politics in the vernacular” says Kymlicka, [2001]), on the other hand language is just a matter of public discussion and barely related to identity [Laitin, Reich, 2003]. Is this liberal and abstract version of public discussion in linguistic matters convincing though? One can certainly imagine that people are willing to abandon their mother tongue, but wouldn’t they demand a counterpart, some kind of *compensation* for doing so? This is what the supporters of my third model believe.

3. Economy: efficiency and fairness

The economy model is related to justice and fairness. The economic view of language equity (one particular string of language economics) I will comment on below relates to compensatory justice. Scholars discuss the ways and means of implementing a *lingua franca* in Europe and the fair compensation for the learning costs involved.

Who pays for whom and why? If we chose English as a *lingua franca*, what would the consequences be considering justice and equality among speakers? Considering a fair distribution of costs and efforts regarding communication benefits?

English natives have an undeniable advantage. But that advantage is completely arbitrary: it’s the blessing of the mother tongue. Is there a way of remedying this arbitrariness? Is there a way of fairly distributing the burdens of language acquisition by the non-natives? Philippe van Parijs [2000, 2003, 2004, 2006] believes there is³.

Given two (or more) linguistic communities, a dominant (red) and a dominated (blue) one, what are the comparative benefits and costs of learning each other’s language?

Lets say the per capita gross cost of learning the other communities’ language is the same. The dominant community has X speakers, the dominated one X- 1000, or minus 1.000.000. Learning the other’s language represents a benefit equal to the number of speakers one is able to communicate with after learning that language. The learning is worth doing so only if the total benefit of one of the two communities learning the other’s community language exceeds the total cost. In order to compensate the learning costs of the member of the dominated community (blue), from which the members of the red community will benefit, one has to introduce taxes (for the red), and subsidies (for the blue). That way, everybody is made better off without anybody becoming worse off. In comparison to a situation where nobody learns, this solution is beneficial for all as *benefits are calculated regarding network externalities*: every speaker benefits from any other rejoinder of the network.

Is this a fair situation? Yes, but only if the gross benefit derived from the learning by each person (and hence by each group) is proportional to his/her contribution to its cost, namely the gross cost of learning minus the subsidy for the blue speakers (the dominated community), and the tax for the red speakers (the dominant one). The key factual assumption that generates that result is that the communication links opened up through a language learner’s toil are *symmetrically valued*, and hence that proportionality to benefit requires the set of all those who become able to communicate with the learner to jointly foot the bill. Whenever a language is the object of asymmetric bilingualism (as English in the EU), the linguistic group

³ The following is a summary from Van Parijs latest writings, namely 2003 and 2004.

who's mother tongue it is must pay half the cost of the learning, in a comprehensive sense that should cover both the explicit cost of language tuition and the huge implicit opportunity cost of having to learn a language rather than devoting time to other activities. This is a feature of cooperative justice in the sense that the equal ratio of costs and benefits apply to all speakers: no one can benefit without participating in the costs (free riding) [Van Parijs, 2003].

Is this a reasonable idea? A realistic one? I very much doubt that the English or the American would subsidize English language training and share the costs, even if network externalities are a strong case. They simply don't have to as states generally subsidize language training anyway through their educational system; and people are ready to invest in language training because they anticipate profitability. This is rational from the states and from the individual's point of view: both seek to enhance the *Q-value* of their repertoire.

The assumption that people would readily abandon their mother tongue if there were compensations seems unrealistic too and underestimates *amor linguae*.

IV. Proposals

My proposal would be the twofold, considering that translation costs in the EU are about 65,1 million Euros/year/member state/language (including Malta and Luxemburg!):

1. European member states should decide if they wish to utilize the Commissions translation budget to translate into their respective languages, or if they accept the official texts in English (and/or French and German) and use the money for other purposes (including active and efficient language training) for a determined period of time (10 years for example). This could be an efficient and fair justification for an English *lingua franca* arrangement in the EU⁴.

2. Alternatively one can argue that there is no need to acknowledge English domination or an English *lingua franca* arrangement: Europeans should engage in coordinate language policies to maintain language diversity *and* efficient communication.

What would the solutions look like in that case?

I suggest we copy the Indian system and adopt a 3 +/- 1 language model: the official plus the majority language {Hindi + English} (3-1=2), plus the language of the specific state of the federation (=3), plus the protected minority language within the state (= 3+1)⁵.

Given that the traditional European communication and translation languages are English, French (relevant for the Roman countries) and German (relevant for Eastern Europe), that all classical documents exist in those languages, that they need only a modest translation budget, shouldn't the Europeans (while caring for diversity through territorialization, symbolic recognition etc.) acknowledge that these languages are the most practical (and the cheapest ones), and that a combination of three or more languages would probably mean a fairer and more efficient solution for the European language constellation ?

What would the 'Indian' setting mean for Europe?

Europeans would know their mother tongue (1), plus English, French and German (1+3). But the British, French and German natives would be in a 3-1 configuration, while the other natives would have a 3+1 language repertoire. This configuration is then satisfying only if one accepts an asymmetric and hence unfair language repertoire. If we are in a strict egalitarian setting, the 3-1 clause is unfair.

An alternative solution would be that the natives of neither of the 3 classical European communication languages pick 2 among the three classical ones which would result in a 1+2=3 setting, while the natives of the three classical languages would have to learn the two

⁴ A similar proposal in Fidrmuc, Ginsburgh, Weber, 2004.

⁵ David Laitin suggests we adapt the 'Indian' model for Africa [1994].

other ones. But that is still a second best option as there wouldn't be any incentives to learn other European languages, and it wouldn't be possible to connect the European languages to extra-European repertoires which might become tomorrows *linguae francae*: Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, etc. ?

The only fair configuration in my sense is that the English/French/German natives learn another European language: a classical one plus another one and/or an extra-European language.

An English native would learn French or German, plus any other EU language (2+1=3) or French and German plus an extra-European language. This solution would a) enable the Europeans to train translators, b) encourage linguistic transversality, c) create linguistic dynamics in which not everybody learns English exclusively, d) in which English is not the only dominating and connecting language among Europeans and e) in which English is not the only connecting language between Europeans and non-Europeans. A Frenchman could learn German plus another EU language and/or an extra-European language instead of English, and still be connected. The real risk is intra-European: the communication between Europeans who learn German and those who learn French would probably take place in English. But that risk has to be taken: English would probably remain a dominant and central language, but the equilibrium and the circulation between the other languages would be fairer and coordination policies more efficient.

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