



EUROPEANISATION TRENDS AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY : LANGUAGE PLANNING AND LANGUAGE POLICIES PERSPECTIVES

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The European Year of Languages 2001 has had a significant international response and so much the better for Europeanisation is too often read in a strictly economic or political sense. But the changing patterns of sociolinguistic divisions and hierarchies in Europe demand its consideration also as a sociolinguistic and communication phenomenon which implies not only the geographical stretching-out of social relations (Massey 1993), but, to use the power-geometry terminology of the sociologist Anthony Giddins (1984), sociolinguistic "distanciation" as well. Some of the main manifestations of the latter within the European context could be traced along the following trends:

1. The trend towards a worldwide economy and consequently towards a worldwide market of information, communications and culture, which disrupts the spheres of interrelation and the forms of interaction that guarantee the internal cohesion of language communities and results in "distanciation" of their members (e.g. the changing sociolinguistics of close-knit communities in Europe).
2. Different sociolinguistic groups, different individuals and their languages are being placed in very distinct ways in relation to European flows and interconnections. Some sociolinguistic groupings and cultures may be highly advantaged by it, while others may be seriously penalized or even condemned to extinction (e.g. the changing social configuration of minority language use in Europe).
3. Under the conditions of what I call "euroglossia and eurolingualism" (cf. Pachev 2001) where the new modes of interaction cannot but affect communicative practices within the emerging trend toward the European "Community of Practice" (see the concept 'Community of Practice' as presented by Lave and Wenger 1991 and by Wenger 1998):
 - a) the sociolinguistic changes diffuse at different rates and speakers of the same languages may find themselves 'distanced' by deep cultural gaps, while others who speak grammatically distinct languages share the same culture where the 'linguistic habitus' and the 'linguistic market' (Bourdieu 1991) compete to define one's speech community membership and social and other identities are negotiated through practice.
 - b) communication within the context of institutionalized European environments and communities of practice (groups whose joint engagement in some activity or enterprise is sufficiently intensive to give rise over time to a repertoire of shared practices) leads to the creation of particular linguistic practices and linguistically distinct modes of talk which are the ultimate sources of linguistic and cultural relativity considered to be a special type of a sociolinguistic 'distanciation' trend.

Against this background the challenges facing the management of linguistic diversity in order to ensure the maintenance of this diversity and to prevent tensions and conflicts related to the use of different languages, and at the same time to ensure that the gradual integration of the host society will be carried



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out through the medium of the autochthonous language(s) of this society, could be traced along various perspectives. Let's consider, for instance, the large urban centers as major arenas of changing patterns of sociolinguistic divisions and hierarchies in Europe. As the analysis of the dynamics of minority language use in urban Europe shows, the minority language groups are being transformed in two opposite directions. On the one hand, they are weakened by the further impetus of information, communication and mobility processes. No matter how much they seek to preserve their ethnolinguistic and cultural heritage and identity, the urban situation in which they find themselves inevitably brings them into close communication with the surrounding world. In post-modern culturally diverse societies cultural identity must, as Turner, in a recent discussion of multiculturalism (1993) points out, be asserted and defended within a supralocal arena. To make themselves heard group members are forced to enter into or react to the debates of a Habermasian public sphere (Habermas 1989) and as Urban (1993) has recently argued, this sphere has a supralocal culture of its own. Following Gumperz (memo) we could add that it also has its own distinct communicative practices, 'distanced' from those of the 'local' cultures.

But on the other hand, the decline in the importance of the nation-state may possibly bring about increasing opportunities to enhance the importance on the local urban scale of minority sociolinguistic identity under the favorable conditions of euroglossia and eurolingualism where multilingualism and code switching strategies become common. Linguistic diffusion begins to level pre-existing grammatical and lexical differences. While the old language names are maintained, new speaking genres develop which may range from Creole like formations, to ways of speaking (ethnolects) that differ to varying degrees from the pre-existing languages. As grammatical and semantic distinctions attenuate, linguistic and cultural boundaries within the communicating urban regions of Europe become blurred. Viewed against this European background the assumption that our social world comes segmented into discrete internally homogeneous language/culture areas has become increasingly problematic. Cultures are no longer homogenous and language divisions have become more and more permeable. Thus the group boundaries are rapidly changing and less sharply marked. We can no longer assume that language and culture are co-extensive and shared understandings cannot be taken for granted even more so within the context of institutionalized environments where communication leads to the creation of linguistically distinct modes of talk. Over time and depending on sociolinguistic forces, such linguistic markers become conventionalized in the form of genres via Schutziian processes of habituation and typifications like those described by Hanks (1996). Yet it can be argued that institutionalized discursive and interpretive practices that over time have become conventionalized through habituation and typification and grammaticalization are the ultimate sources of linguistic and cultural relativity. Such practices inevitably 'distance' the minority speakers from their original linguistic 'habitus' communities.

The resulting communicative environments, on the one side, have made it possible for minority language groups to move from their permanent state of defensiveness typical of recent decades to a new agenda that values the advantages of multilingualism and multiglossia enjoyed by minority groups. But, on the other side, such communicative environments, especially in urban centers, are hardly conducive to produce learning. The social and economic conditions of their existence, particularly when, as frequently happens, they are compounded by miscommunication may create access barriers that prevent learning opportunities and maintain sociolinguistic 'distanciation'. This could lead to hegemonic practices that perpetuate established relations of power and domination.

In short, the challenges facing urban linguistic diversity management should be considered against the background of the convergence and interaction of a wide range of factors of "a political and legal, ideological and historical, demographic and territorial, economic and social, cultural, linguistic and sociolinguistic, interlinguistic and subjective nature" (cf. Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights 1996). There has been little sociolinguistic research in this area and such research will be difficult, because sociolinguistic resources are very diversified and take on different meanings in particular socio-cultural contexts. Nonetheless, only in this way is it possible to show how the various groups have responded to changes and to explain the persistence of certain traditional sociolinguistic institutions as well as the emergence of new patterns of sociolinguistic differentiation and 'distanciation'.

Against the background of the foregoing considerations language planning and language policies become a vital issue in the overall control of sociolinguistic resources and opportunities as well as in the coordination of individual's everyday life. By borrowing concepts from political economists, we may identify three agencies which are central to the contemporary sociolinguistic structures and which seem to have important implications for language planning and language diversity management in multilingual



and multicultural societies. These three key agencies are: linguistic market, sociolinguistic hierarchy, and sociolinguistic network.

The concept of the linguistic market derives from P. Bourdieu's wider sociological program where the total social universe is seen to comprise of a range of overlapping and interrelated markets. Bourdieu speaks of a linguistic market in which linguistic competence (like any other cultural competence) functions as a capital. Languages are always spoken in a particular market and the characteristics of these markets accord them a certain value. If we apply Bourdieu's concept to the linguistic situation in Europe, we can see societal multilingualism as the market where different speech communities, or competitors, negotiate and exchange their own languages as the linguistic capital. As Li Wei (2000: 145) argues, language planning can be seen as 'auctioneering', which does not fix the 'market price' (in this case the conventions of language use), but declares what these conventions are and encourages the competition. The concept of the linguistic market provides an illuminating way of examining the role of the language policy of the state. Just as the state can use a range of legal, monetary, financial and other measures to change the structure of the economic market, so it can in the linguistic market. Language policy can affect the European linguistic market, the national linguistic market and the internal market of the minority language and have real economic and political effects 'such as the appropriation of positions and economic advantages reserved for holders of the legitimate competence, or the symbolic profits associated with the possession of a prestigious, or at least unstigmatized, social identity' (Bourdieu 1991: 259).

Although the market is a key component of modern society, sociolinguistic groups and their members working in a highly competitive linguistic market framework have to organize their activities internally and this is likely to be done in a manner that evokes the attributes of a sociolinguistic hierarchy in one way or another. What is particularly important is that language planning and management can be more effective when hierarchies are utilized. The various levels of sociolinguistic structure of society (linguistic communities and their communicative resources, the domains and situations of language use and the language management agencies like language traditions, language planning, language policies, etc.) (cf. Pachev 1997), on the one hand, and the various levels of social structure, professional organization, school, neighborhood, family, etc. - on the other hand, all have to be co-ordinated. This implies not only identifying the influential agencies but also the organizational and administrative apparatuses, the decision-making routes, and most importantly perhaps the specified systemic sociolinguistic functions and capacities (or systemic task specification) of each level of the sociolinguistic hierarchical structure.

On the 'lower levels' of that structure the sociolinguistic capacity of individual speakers to make use of the linguistic and social resources available to them in producing and reproducing social structures and social order is often underestimated. So it might be tempting to think that linguistic market and sociolinguistic hierarchy exhaust the possible mechanisms of sociolinguistic co-ordination and so long as they are 'under control' in a language planning or a language policy effort, the expected outcome is guaranteed. The reality is that individuals operate in their immediate, localized sociolinguistic networks. Any of the theoretical frameworks (social identity theory, speech community, social network, community of practice framework and social constructionist approaches) could be used to examine the criterial characteristics and constitutive features of a sociolinguistic network and to reveal that the informal relationships people develop through social interaction form web of ties, with distinctive sociolinguistic patterns and features. As Li Wei (2000) points out, "sociolinguistic network members share a common ethics and outlook and can discuss and decide language policy informally between themselves." Networks therefore not only act as norm enforcement mechanisms to their members, but build up resistance to both internal sociolinguistic 'distanciation' and external pressure at those 'lower levels' of the sociolinguistic hierarchy. Indeed, for a language planning effort to 'take hold' "these 'lower levels' constituting face-to-face, small-scale social life must be pursued in their own right and focused upon directly, rather than merely being thought of as obvious and inevitable by-products of 'higher level' (more complex, more encompassing, more power-related) processes and institutions" (Fishman 1991:4).

As a conclusion I would like to note that the 'genre' limitations of this paper have made it difficult for me to arrive at fine-tuned presentations and interpretations of language planning and language policies perspectives of linguistic diversity in Europe. The assertions are inevitably broad and rather crude, but the following general points should be clear enough:



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1) European sociolinguists have an important role to play within the field of language policies, first of all in the identification and comprehension of the euroglossia and eurolingualism problems, and secondly in helping solve these problems by making a substantial contribution to the development of strategies for policy-making, by presenting politicians with recommendations and guidelines for European sociolinguistic integration, etc. Although recently the 'language-as-a-resource' approach to language planning (cf. Rubin 1973) has gained prominence in mapping the future of multilingualism in Europe, we have almost never projected our findings beyond the social groups who constitute our subjects. As J. K. Chambers (2000:11) puts it, "our next important frontier must expand the domain of inquiry across national borders, where we have seldom ventured, and especially across language borders, where we have never ventured."

2) European sociolinguistic integration is not understood to mean 'fusion' or 'denationalisation' of languages but rather - achieving awareness, acquiring knowledge and reaching understanding of sociolinguistically conditioned linguistic repertoires and models of communicative practices. Europeanisation is understood to mean an additional socialization of persons in such a way that they may preserve their original cultural characteristics while sharing with the European community sufficient references, values and forms of behavior to enable them to function socially and communicatively.

3) We should not be afraid of the linguistic diversity of the European linguistic community as of today and tomorrow but should try to understand and promote its unity by applying new principles for fighting the negative tendencies connected with the sociolinguistic 'distanciation' trends as outlined above. The general goal is to achieve a community of communication in the European Union. As our colleagues have pointed out, without a community of communication, the EU must remain a trading association run in an autocratic way by bilingual patrician technocrats; with a community of communication, the European Union could develop democratic structures and legitimacy and give meaning to its human rights politics. How to achieve that community of communication is both, the biggest challenge and the greatest perspective facing Europe today.

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