



WORKSHOP 1:

Moderator: Jean-Jacques Van Vlasselaer

Mr. President of the session, I have the honour to present the summarized reflections of workshop 1 devoted to linguistic legislations and their application.

This synthesis is structured as follows:

1. A very short introduction
2. A three-fold summary
 - a. A short objective description of the 14 presentations
 - b. A conceptual synthesis
 - c. A few ensuing proposals
3. Conclusion as a personal note

1. Introduction

There is the logic of war and there is the logic of peace. What has gathered the participants of this congress is clearly the logic of peace. I think this is fundamental. It is a state of mind of dialogue, as double encounter -in the etymological sense- of ratio and of language. And it is a state of mind of encounter with the other, of integration of difference, of willingness towards linguistic diversity.

In that spirit, our working group, which was remarkably homogeneous in its presence and steady in the high number and profile of participants, bypassed the dualist language. There was a will to surpass simplification, reductionism (in the views of society i.e.), folklore, and commonplace. We know that cultural clichés are the worse enemies of opening onto the other. We therefore sided with Edgar Morin's description of life and scientific need as a frequently paradoxical complexity. This is why we often used the words of "shading", modulation, variation and even the neologism "variationism". This also responds to the notion of fluidity mentioned by our colleague Khubchandani.

And in this workshop that was supposed to deal with one the harshest issues, "legislation", the very subject of discussion finally fitted with rich, humane contexts and meta-contexts, following in its own manner an ecological thought and a holistic approach that are truly necessary to address the problems we are facing.

Language was not treated as an object or a commodity either, but as what I call the “crystallisation” of culture and what our friend Jerzy Smolicz calls the “key-value” of culture.

Finally, our world is changing at a multiplied speed. As Miquel Siguan reminded to a few of us last Thursday, “Linguapax was born 15 years ago in Kiev. There were profound changes during these 15 years and there will be as many other changes during the coming 15 years. “Future is of an unlikely nature” (Edgar Morin again). And as Robert Dunbar suggested: “let’s give languages that have had a long history a long future”. And let’s remain always “watchful” as Zeynep Beykont said. This watchfulness that will make politicians –in the noble sense- out of all those sociolinguists is indeed a part of Linguapax.

2. Summary

a. Statistics

1. 14 papers were presented in the framework of workshop 1. 3 of them were from North America, 7 from Europe, 2 from Asia, 1 from Africa and 1 from South America.
 2. Two of those papers were presented in Catalan, 2 in Castilian, 1 in French and 9 in English.
 3. All of them, with more or less relation, were linked to the political-legal sphere; 2 were given by law specialists, 3 had a general nature, 9 were –what I call- case studies (concerning the Basque Country, Catalonia, Colombia, the Baltic States, Macedonia, Russian republics like Tyva and Khakassia....).
1. Jean-Claude Corbeil opened the horizon with a wide reflection on linguistic competition worldwide.
 2. Virginia Unamuno examined the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages to show its effects on the legislation and policies in different countries.
 3. Zeynep Beykont made a review of the American attitude towards English as a national language.
 4. Aleksandra Gjurkova revealed the wound felt by Macedonia under the pressure of external powers affecting its relationship with the Albanian language.
 5. Tamara Borgoyakov compared two models of language policy that bear the consequences of the break-up of the soviet empire.
 6. Robert Dunbar mostly examined the follow-up of linguistic laws on the basis of the precise cases of Canada and the U.K. to draw conclusions on the international scale.
 7. Mujawaki Hiroyuki made a field study on the different territories conquered by Japan and the linguistic consequences of the Japanese imperialism.
 8. Paula Kasares gave the detail of the five official statuses that mark the current destiny of the Basque language.
 9. Lluís de Yzaguirre made an emotive call for a non-manipulated bilingualism in the Catalan country.
 10. Alfred Matiki demonstrated how linguistic exclusion in Malawi is a continued consequence of the British colonialism.
 11. Angel Pachev reflected on the europeanizing trends of linguistic diversity.
 12. Uldis Ozolins drew-up a dazzling chart of the complex linguistic situation in the Baltic Countries and he made suggestions for the preservation of three languages.

13. María Trillos amazed us all with her brilliant description of the Colombian linguistic approach.
14. Finally, Snezana Trifunovska made a complete and clear review of the international legal aspects related to the protection of linguistic minorities. Now we know it all about hard laws and soft laws. And our encounters couldn't have ended better.

b. Synthesis

b.1 Reflections on law

There is no equality of linguistic rights in Europe and there shouldn't necessarily be such equality, i.e. similar measures cannot be taken for all languages for a set of reasons.

The most important is that every law must strengthen the weak. The protection of the weaker is a priority.

Besides, linguistic rights must take into account:

- the diversity principle (principle of openness)
- the territoriality principle (principle of modulation)
- the emergency principle (chronological principle)

and they should match the ethics proposed by Linguapax, or what Linguapax represents.

Let us note that in its application, any language policy or linguistic law creates a new balance, i.e. a new imbalance that, of course, allows the evolution of society.

Difference must be made between language policy and linguistic legislation.

A political legislation is necessary for a revision of power.

b.2 Reflections on power

Through $\frac{3}{4}$ of the papers presented, a common feature was perceptible: power and its inequalities, power relations from the most historically rooted to those of colonialism, those linked to all kinds of imperialism, whether military and/or economic, past or present that create communities of excluded peoples, marginalized persons, and "alienated men" of whom Sartre spoke so well.

Hence the idea that linguistic right is part of human rights.

Hence, also, the idea that this linguistic right must be part of a wider corpus: the right to education (the basis of which is obviously the mother language) which is fully interrelated with the other fields representing the functions of society such as administration, commerce...

b.3

After clarifying and underscoring these two concepts, the working group identified the following specific situations as proposed by Uldis Ozolins:

1. those concerning historical minorities, of the European kind (Basque, Catalan, Frisian, Gaelic, etc);
2. those of marginalized mother tongues;
3. those with widespread multilingualism (as in African countries where people speak up to 12 different languages);
4. those that are the specific consequences of imperialist situations;
5. those that represent a political arrangement imposed from outside (Macedonia);
6. those resulting from immigration (so badly tackled in Europe):
7. those concerning diasporic communities (virtual)...

In these seven different cases, the sociolinguist, legal and ultimately political intervention produces a cycle of transformation that Jean-Claude Corbeil links up as follows:

1. an existing society with a power structure creating inequalities based on any kind of linguistic muzzling;
2. intervention at the level of language status (also through the description of the effects of language relations on the society and on individuals);
3. political and legal resources available, applied and continued so that the readjustment can occur;
4. a modified society where there will be a transition from more powerful languages to languages with less power. These linguistic transitions look much like democratic transitions, said Jean-Claude Corbeil;

b.4

Of these transformation or alienating processes, the working group wanted to point out the following facts:

1. The impact on the human being, on the individual and on daily life.
2. In this dynamics of transformation we shall not forget the viewpoint of the linguist researcher whose duty is to describe any language in order to preserve all its information and therefore save all its history.
3. For the full success of such dynamics, we must not forget to educate parents, teachers, psychiatrists, judges, politicians, etc.

All this led us to the following **recommendations**:

c.1. Studies:

- an investigation on the impact of power relations over the linguistic potential of human beings;
- a comparative study on the consequences of all forms of imperialism, whether past or present, on the linguistic (competence and performance) and communication fields of the "defeated".

c.2. Linguapax should take a clear and critical stand in favour of some Charters/international laws (like the Charter on the Rights of minorities, immigrants law...) and become the primary force supporting the Universal Declaration on Language Rights.

c.3. Linguapax should sign agreements with organisms such as the African Academy of Languages and support the learning of autochthonous languages whenever it is possible. People's right to education through autochthonous languages deserves this specific intervention of Linguapax.

Finally -and this will be my conclusion- from a remark of Zeynep Beykont and a reflection of Robert Dunbar: “ We must also show the world what is working out well”. These successful fields are not necessarily in our backyard, i.e. in our cultural area.

In fact, we have learnt about African experiences, like that of Nigeria, and above all we have heard of the extraordinary lesson of civility from a country, Colombia, of which we didn't specially expect a humanist attitude towards the wide range of autochthonous languages.

This learning from the other is called otherness. It is the other who allows our identity. This differential multiplicity linking up little by little. Listening to the other. In dialogue. Through the logic of peace. Peace through the liberated language of the other. Linguapax.