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English in Europe, Threat or Promise?
Robert Phillipson

> Did you know that you have to start at the age of six and you
> have to stick at it until you're twelve at least (…) And from the very
> first day you go, you'll not hear one word of Irish spoken.
> You'll be taught to speak English and every subject will be taught
> through English and everyone'll end up as cute as the Buncrana people.
> Brian Friel, *Translations* (1984: 395)

> The study of the deeds of our ancestors is thus more than
> an antiquarian pastime, it is an immunological precaution.
> *Umberto Eco* (1997: 316)

> The true voyage of discovery is not a matter of
> searching for new territories but of having new eyes.
> *Marcel Proust*

How can English be seen as a threat to the other languages of Europe, if the EU's institutions ensure the equality of the languages of the member states. Moreover, the EU is committed to maintaining linguistic diversity member states are under an obligation to 'respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity' in The Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 22)[1], agreed on by heads of state, and incorporated into the Draft Constitutional Treaty (currently on hold as a result of the French and Dutch referenda).

There are in fact many reasons for concern. History, as dramatised above by Brian Friel (1984), shows that language oppression has been the norm in nation-states, whether monarchic Britain, republican France, or fascist Spain. In analysing language policy we therefore need, as Eco suggests, to be aware of the deeds of our ancestors, and to learn from them. We should also be prepared, following Proust, to be sceptical of appearances and to approach the territory of the languages of Europe with a critical eye.

This paper considers the operation of multilingualism in Europe, and suggests that there are several forms of linguistic apartheid in EU institutions. The second section documents some of the Englishisation processes under way in continental Europe, and measures that are being taken nationally and in the EU to promote diversity. The third section warns against the uncritical advocacy of English and the risks of conceptual muddle in the field of language policy, and ends by tabulating the many factors that militate against the formulation of equitable language policies.

The pro-English Pressures of the European Linguistic Market
Some would like to see English replacing other languages. The USA ambassador to Denmark, Mr Elton, was rash enough to state in 1997 that 'The most serious problem for the European Union is that it has so many languages, this preventing real integration and development of the Union.'[2] This fits with US foreign policy, because although the EU is at root a Franco-German project, the integration of

Europe has been US geostrategic and economic policy since 1945. This reflects the belief that, in the words of George W. Bush when campaigning for the presidency in 2000, 'Our nation is chosen by God and commissioned by history to be a model to the world'. Condoleezza Rice, Foreign Secretary in Bush's second term, is also on record as stating: 'The rest of the world is best served by the USA pursuing its own interests because American values are universal.' US plans for global dominance have been in formation since 1990 and been implemented vigorously since Bush took office (Armstrong 2005). Globalisation can be seen as synonymous with Americanisation (Bourdieu 2001), and all the more effective because it is not merely a conspiracy but a much more complex process permeating all aspects of our lives, and involving many push and pull factors (explored below).

The American empire agenda requires the dominance of English globally. An article frankly entitled 'In praise of cultural imperialism?' in the establishment journal *Foreign policy* (Rothkopf 1997) proclaims:

> It is in the economic and political interest of the United States to ensure that if the world is moving toward a common language, it be English; that if the world is moving toward common telecommunications, safety, and quality standards, they be American; and that if common values are being developed, they be values with which Americans are comfortable. These are not idle aspirations. English is linking the world… Americans should not deny the fact that of all the nations in the history of the world, theirs is the most just, the most tolerant, the most willing to constantly reassess and improve itself, and the best model for the future.

In the second half of the twentieth century, French and German declined as major international languages, leaving English in effect unchallenged. When Romani Prodi, shortly before retiring as President of the EU Commission, was asked by a journalist from *Newsweek* (31 May 2004): A unified Europe in which English, as it turns out, is the universal language?

he replied, 'It will be broken English, but it will be English'.

Quite how this should be interpreted is anybody's guess, but Prodi was then responsible for maintaining linguistic diversity in the EU. Two legitimate inferences follow. One is that Prodi had experience of a great deal of incorrect English being used in the internal workings of the EU. This is a well-known problem, and an Editing Service has been established to ensure that texts written by eurocrats for whom English or French is a foreign language are improved linguistically before they are translated into other languages[3]. A second inference is that English has acquired a privileged status in the EU system, which some interpret as meaning that it has become *de facto* a *lingua franca*, a prospect that Prodi appears to welcome. Unfortunately terms like 'lingua franca' and 'universal language' are open to multiple interpretations, some of which will be explored below. But clearly language is power, and choice of one language invariably serves some interests better than others. Why should the British and French (and to a lesser extent other EU states) otherwise so energetically promote their languages internationally (Phillipson 1992, 2003)?

A further semantic fuzziness occurs when there is talk of 'European' languages. Does this mean the languages used in Europe or only those languages that have been upgraded to the supranational EU level? These are a small proportion of the languages that have been present on European soil for centuries (marginalised languages are known in Eurospeak as autochthonous, regional minority, or Lesser Used languages). The languages that have the legal right to function as EU official and working languages are those which are acknowledged as having succeeded in dominating nationally in member

states. They are the products of nationalist ideology, and the one-nation/one-state/one-language mythology that has prevailed for the past two centuries, both in countries with an ethnolinguistic founding myth ('Blut und Boden') like Germany and Denmark (given voice by Herder and Grundtvig respectively) and those in the republican citizenship tradition like France, in which 'equality' was to be created through a single language to which superior attributes are ascribed. Belgium and Finland are the exception in having more than one official EU language for their nationals.

Enlargement in 2004 meant that the EU expanded from 15 member states and 11 languages with equal rights as official and working languages to a Union of 25 states and 20 languages. Enlargement has seen a massive upgrading of the infrastructure for both translation and interpretation for languages which are demographically small, such as Estonian and Latvian. The EU also fully respects the right of the Maltese to claim equivalent rights for their language. The Irish language has had the status of a treaty language since Ireland joined the EU, but from 2007 Irish will also be an official language[4]. In addition, at the request of the Spanish government, languages which are official in specific regions of the country, Basque, Catalan/Valencian and Galician, have been granted certain rights to translation and interpretation services, but the costs are to be borne not by the EU but by Spain[5].

Whatever the EU says about wishing to be in dialogue with its citizens, and even if modest funding is provided for strengthening minority languages, the EU has no wish to expand its repertoire of official languages. Its communication problems and inability to win the confidence, let alone the loyalty of EU citizens, are popularly referred to as the EU's 'democratic deficit'. This is in essence due to the Commission, the EU's administrative apparatus, being perceived as remote, unaccountable, and generally inefficient (a valid analysis, to judge by my own experience), and to the European Parliament not being taken seriously (as the low numbers choosing to exercise their right to vote for it show). Chris Patten, soon after stepping down as a Commissioner, wrote that the European Parliament:

> cannot avoid giving the impression that it is a virtual parliament, debating in the virtual languages of interpretation, representing a virtual electorate, organized in virtual ideological groups and disconnected from the political world at home. There are some things about which it can do very little. It cannot create a European electorate; there is none. Europe's demos is fractured. Goods may know no boundaries in Europe, but politics are locked firmly in national cultures, stereotypes, histories and institutions (Patten 2005: 131).

And in national languages, few of which serve widespread international language functions.

The EU language policy issue is so sensitive that it has been described as 'explosive' by the chair of the group of French members of the European Parliament, Pierre Lequiller, at a meeting called on 11 June 2003 to discuss a *Rapport sur la diversité linguistique au sein de l'Union européenne*, prepared by Michel Herbillon. Part of this combustion is due to the French endorsement of multilingualism abroad, while clinging rigidly to monolingualism at home, a policy that has, however, changed significantly in recent years[6]. There is also always the suspicion that French pleading of the cause of multilingualism in the EU is mostly intended to strengthen the position of French. Evidence of this French strategic foreign policy goal can be seen in the substantial investment by the French government since 2003, in partnership with 'Francophonie' countries, in teaching French to representatives of the enlargement states[7].

English linguistic hegemony means that choice of language is not merely a matter for the individual language user, since we are all constrained by wider structural and ideological forces. An

incident in the European Parliament exemplifies this. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have a paramount right to use their own language. But *Le Monde* reported on 17th February 2004 that three French MEPs tabled a motion on a financial topic not in French but in English: 'We had to shift to English in order to be heard'. Specifically the issue was the words 'standard' (in French = normal) and 'normal'. 'The problem could only be solved by resorting to English.' If even speakers of French cannot always use their mother tongue, one can imagine what the pressure is like on the speakers of the other 18 EU languages. A lot of information about the EU is publicised on its website, but whereas all texts are available in English, and nearly all in French, there is remarkably little in any other languages, apart from the 'legal acts', the laws and directives that have the force of law in member states. The Commission declared in 2005 an intention to make its website more multilingual.

The fact that minority language users are not entitled to use their languages in EU affairs reflects the parlous state of many regional languages and all immigrant languages in Europe. Those who have national citizenship have also had European citizenship since the Maastricht Treaty of 1991, but millions of immigrants and refugees have neither. The French social scientist Étienne Balibar sees this as symptomatic of a democratic deficit internally in each state:

> European citizenship, within the limits of the currently existing union, is not conceived as a recognition of the rights and contributions of *all* the communities present upon European soil, but as a postcolonial isolation of 'native' and 'non-native' populations … a true *European apartheid*, advancing concurrently with the formal institutions of European citizenship and, in the long term, constituting an essential element of the *blockage* of European unification as a democratic construction (Balibar 2004: 170, italics in the original).

The uprisings in French suburbs in the autumn of 2005 are the most visible manifestation of the reality of this European apartheid, even for those born in the country and who may have citizenship. The national 'democratic deficit' in each country dovetails with an international democratic deficit that characterises relations between most citizens and the anonymous, remote, elite bureaucratic apparatus in Brussels and the European Parliament.

One can therefore argue that there is now *European linguistic apartheid* of three types:
the exclusion of minority mother tongues from schools, public services and recognition;
the *de facto* hierarchy of languages in the EU system, in internal and external communication;
inequality between native speakers, particularly of English, and other Europeans, in international communication and especially in EU institutions.

As a result of Americanisation and Europeanisation, what we are experiencing is the erosion of the monopoly of a unifying and stratifying national language in each state. Globalisation impacts on language policy overtly and covertly. In much of Europe, competence in English is becoming a prerequisite for access to higher education and employment, in tandem with preferred forms of communication in a national language. The European monolingual nation-state, always more of a myth and project than a reality, is also under pressure from wider acceptance of the legitimate claims for minority language rights (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). What is not at all clear is to what extent states are deciding on national language policy, or whether the initiative has already passed to EU institutions, the boardrooms of transnational corporations, and English-using gatekeepers or trendsetters in countless domains. This diversity of influences and actors explains why defensive measures to stem the tide of

Anglicism in continental languages (like the Loi Toubon in France) may well be tackling symptoms rather than causes.

The EU has basically steered clear of directly addressing the issue of national language policies. It has no mandate to do so, but many of its policies do in fact impact on the use and learning of languages in member states and by their representatives in dealings with the EU. It is responsible for organising the functioning of its institutions internally and externally in a selected set of languages. It provides funding for student mobility, and for strengthening language learning. Language issues reach the media headlines occasionally when a government or political leader protests about the workings of linguistic apartheid (see examples in Phillipson 2003). For instance, the Copenhagen summit in December 2002 was primarily concerned with reaching agreement on terms for the accession of new member states. At the press conference with heads of state from the existing and potential states, the banner headline behind the politicians read 'One Europe' in one language only. This prompted the Spanish Foreign Secretary, Ana Palacio, to write in *El País* on 16 December 2002: 'The motto "One Europe", solely in English, requires a reflection. Even though Copenhagen did not face the question of languages, this is one of the pending subjects that sooner rather than later must be debated for the very survival and viability of this project of Europe with a world vocation. Within it, Spanish, one of the official UN languages, spoken by more than 400 million people in more than 20 countries, must take on the place it is entitled to.'

Precisely what this 'place' should be is unclear because the issue of languages at the European level has not been openly addressed. The Convention on the Future of Europe ignored language policy issues, even if recent EU reforms aim at increasing accountability and better communication between EU institutions and citizens. The Convention chose to ignore 'Linguistic proposals for the future of Europe', submitted by the Europa Diversa group[8], which pleads for more active policies to strengthen linguistic diversity, for funding for all autochthonous European languages, for the subsidiarity principle to ensure that power and self-regulation in language affairs should be as decentralised as possible, and for a public debate on reform of the EU system.

English is therefore Janus-faced. It can be seen to open doors to commerce, influence, cosmopolitanism and employment for the individual and a national economy. Simultaneously it represents a threat to national language autonomy and vitality, and a closed door for those not proficient in it. Linguistic apartheid operates at the level of both the individual and the group, and is all the more insidious because native speakers appear to be unaware of the operation of linguistic hierarchies. The existence of these has been normalised and internalised as a natural state of affairs – even when it may be 'broken English'.

Push and pull factors in Englishisation

There is an increasing use of English in continental Europe in business, science, the military, education (as the first foreign language, and as the medium for teaching in tertiary education and occasionally at the secondary level), in media, youth culture, networking, etc. This is an ongoing, dynamic scene, but there are various types of documentation of Englishisation:

> There has been a paradigm shift from a concern in several countries with an invasion of loan words (Étiemble 1964) to the broader sociolinguistic picture, with books appearing with titles like *L'Europe parlera-t-elle anglais demain?* (Chaudenson 2001), *Globalization and the future of German* (Gardt & Hüppauf 2004), and *English-only Europe? Challenging language policy* (Phillipson 2003).

There are studies of the Englishisation of academia in several countries (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1999, Wilson 2002; on Ammon 2001 see Phillipson 2002), and of the reception of English at all levels of society in Denmark (Preisler 1999).

A Study of the key Swedish national journal, *Ekonomisk Tidskrift*, renamed in 1965 the *Swedish Journal of Economics*, and in 1976 as the *Scandinavian Journal of Economics* (with Blackwell since 1986), documents a fundamental shift in authorship: 90 per cent Swedish in the 1960s, under 20 per cent since 1990 (and 30+ percent US authorship) (Sandelin & Ranki 1997). Related studies show that databases used for 'international' comparisons are biased, since continental Europeans also publish in other languages (Sandelin and Sarafogkou 2004). The expectation that continental academics publish in English influences topics, paradigms, first language competence, and careers.

A study of Nordic medical doctors reading an article either in English or in a translation into Danish, Swedish or Norwegian revealed that doctors reading the text (from the *Journal of Trauma*!), whether in a paper version or on a screen, took in more when reading in their mother tongue. Open-ended questions testing comprehension revealed that 25 per cent more information was grasped in one's first language (Höglin 2002: 32). This data calls into question whether the way English is expanding in northern Europe is effective or desirable.

Researchers tend to read one foreign language, rather than several. Figures for translation show that in Sweden a century ago an approximately equal number of titles were translated from French, German, and English. Now most translation is from English (Melander 2001).

There is a general perception of English being adopted as the dominant corporate language in large companies throughout continental Europe, but while this may well be the case at the higher management level, and in external relations, there is often a bilingual policy in practice.

A Danish researcher (Hjarvad 2004) analyses medialects, the new variants of language and cultural form – computer games, email and Internet interaction, SMS text messaging, television programmes (whether transmitted in the original language or the local one), advertising, etc. – which are creatively adapted from Anglo-American origins in continental Europe. The medialects consolidate the position of English, while excluding other international languages, and open up for 'linguistic differentiation and innovation'. Englishisation affects the form and content of other languages.

The increased use of English in EU institutions and practices has been analysed (Phillipson 2003).

Surveys in all the Nordic countries of the increasing use of English in scholarship and technology, in higher education, the business world and media, suggest that there are strong risks of domain loss in local languages (Höglin 2002), leading to less efficiency in thought, expression, and communication as well as lower prestige for the national language (Melander 2001). 'Domain loss' is an unfortunate term if it obscures agency, and these processes of language shift are preferably seen as entailing linguistic capital accumulation by dispossession (Phillipson, in press).

Recent developments in the Nordic countries deserve special mention, since they document a trend away from a concern with English as a threat towards the articulation of policies for endorsing

diversity. The Swedish government established a parliamentary commission to evaluate whether Swedish was under threat from English, and to elaborate an action plan to ensure that Swedish remains a 'complete' language, learned and used well by its first and second language speakers, and retains its full rights as an EU official and working language. The plan also aims to ensure that Swedes are equipped to function well in foreign languages, particularly English, and that Swedes from a minority language background enjoy language rights. A massive national consultation process was then implemented, and designed to lead to legislation that will strengthen infrastructure for language policy. Unfortunately the government seems to be dragging its feet at this point, but this nation-state seems to be shifting from monolingualism to a differentiated spectrum of multilingualism.

Norway and Finland are also investing substantially in multilingualism, whereas Denmark is expecting its higher education institutions to become bilingual in English and Danish, for teaching and research purposes, without providing any of the additional funding that would be needed for in-service training or professional upgrading. Danish university principals published an analysis of internationalisation in 2004, with many recommendations[9]. There are three main policy thrusts: 1) to retain and attract the best students in competition with foreign universities, a clear nod in the direction of the Bologna process, in which 'internationalisation' is largely regarded as synonymous with English-medium higher education (Phillipson, in press); 2) to persuade government to provide universities with better conditions for internationalisation, a legitimate complaint that funding is being cut back at a time when more is expected of universities, for instance Danes being able to function equally well in English; and 3) to strike a balance between the role of universities as Danish research and teaching institutions, using Danish for these purposes, and the need to strengthen international collaboration in research and teaching, which requires competence in foreign languages, particularly English. Specifically on language policy, universities are encouraged to consider:

1. the choice of languages of instruction for specific degrees,
2. the languages of teaching materials;
3. quality control when English is used by non-native speakers, and in-service training,
4. Danish for foreign students;
5. the languages of university publicity and regulations; proficiency requirements for university employees dealing with foreign students, teachers and researchers,
6. the language competence of new students, and teaching and research staff, including access to Danish;
7. strengthening the foreign language and intercultural competence of all students and
8. the languages of publication by researchers.

The Nordic governments circulated a draft 'Declaration of the Language Rights of Nordic residents' in a public consultation process in 2005, as a step towards governmental approval by Ministers of Culture and Education. The language rights of each resident (i.e. all those legally present, and not only for citizens) are of four types:

1. to learn the language of society as a whole (Danish, Swedish, …),
2. comprehension of other Scandinavian languages,
3. languages of international utility, such as English, Spanish and French,
4. maintaining and developing the mother tongue.

A fairly elaborate document sets some goals for each category and for various types of multilingualism and plurilingualism[10]. It endorses the idea of elites in many sectors of society developing 'parallel competence' in the national language and English (an intuitively appealing idea, but a somewhat fuzzy and probably unrealistic target).

All these Nordic measures represent serious efforts to benefit from the promise that (the learning and use of) English holds out, while addressing the fact that its advance can represent a threat to other languages. The commitment to bi- or multilingualism is also in the spirit of the EU Commission's *Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006*, (24 July 2003[11]). It seeks to promote a 'language-friendly environment' and to diversify the range of languages for learning: it recommends the learning of 'smaller' languages as well as 'larger' ones, regional, minority and migrant languages as well as those with 'national' status, and the languages of major trading partners throughout the world. The document attacks the hegemony of English as the most widely learned foreign language, and warns about the risks of domain loss: 'learning one lingua franca alone is not enough […] English alone is not enough […] in non-Anglophone countries recent trends to provide teaching in English may have unforeseen consequences on the vitality of the national language.' Whether domain 'loss' or 'dispossession' is in fact occurring has not yet been adequately explored for any conclusions to be drawn. Likewise, it remains to be seen whether the goal of all European school-leavers having a command of three languages is realistic, or merely a prescription for elites who are consciously or unconsciously committed to English as a hegemonic language.

The Dutch Language Union, *de Nederlandse Taalunie*[12] (which brings together the Netherlands, the Flemish Belgian community and Surinam) is on record as believing that national efforts need to be supplemented by supranational ones. The Union is keen to ensure that the Dutch language can remain a 'full-scale' language […] The first and foremost challenge … is to see that Dutch can remain a language of instruction in higher education', they also note that 'national language policy cannot do all the work – the framework is European – we need to convince governments and the European institutions of the necessity of a real European language policy.'[13] There is as yet not much indication that this has been achieved.

Phillipson 2003 attempts to provide a basis for exploring these issues. After exploring some topical issues in language policy, a historical analysis of the linguistic map of Europe (including showing why to call English the Latin of contemporary Europe is false), how global trends impact on European language policy in commerce, science, culture and education, and the EU language system, it sets out a number of criteria for facilitating equitable communication. It also presents best – and worst – case scenarios, and makes a large set of specific recommendations for action on language policies. The underlying assumptions are that language policies should not be left to the workings of the market, and would benefit by being made explicit in relation to agreed socio-political and cultural goals. This would result in there being a healthy balance between an increased use of English (realising its promise) and the maintenance and promotion of all other languages (reducing its threat).

The need for conceptual rigour, scepticism, and forward planning
There is currently a considerable degree of fluidity in language policy in Europe, due to
an unresolved tension between linguistic nationalism (monolingualism) and EU institutional multilingualism,
competing agendas at the European, state (national), and sub-statal levels,
an increase of grassroots and elite bilingualism, and an official rhetoric exhorting all citizens to become multilingual (an ideal that British educational planning tends to ignore), and
a rhetoric of language rights, and some national and supranational implementation (for instance in the Celtic parts of the UK), while linguistic hierarchies largely remain unchallenged.

There is also a largely uncritical adoption of Englishisation, and not enough effort to examine how this interlocks with processes of globalisation, Europeanisation, Americanisation, and what many now see as neo-imperialism (e.g. Harvey 2005a and b).

A major effort is needed to counteract the falsity of much of the legitimation of the current pre-eminence of English. There is much self-deception in the marketing of English as the solution to all of Europe's communication problems:

> in political discourse: 'English is the world's lingua franca', Lord Renton, House of Lords, 14.10.2002 (since three-quarters of humanity have no command of this language, they are evidently not regarded as needing a *lingua franca*);

> in academic discourse: 'English is the lingua franca of the European Union', Abram de Swaan (2001: 174), a political scientist who cannot be unaware that there are many lingua francas in the EU; 'the language of the proto-European state', Laitin and Reich (2003: 98), two US political scientists specialising in language policy (for critique of this 'liberal' position, see Skutnabb-Kangas 2003);

> in international cultural diplomacy: 'English no longer belongs to the English-speaking nations but to everyone', a recurrent British Council mantra, a claim that conveniently ignores British benefits, political, economic and cultural, when its language also happens to be the language of the only super-power in the contemporary world[14];

> in applied linguistics: 'The ascendancy of English is merely the outcome of the coincidence of accidental forces', Bob Kaplan of the US (2001: 19), a prolific author.

When the Director of the British Council in Germany (cited in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of 26 February 2002) declares that English should be the sole official language of the European Union, this smacks of traditional linguistic imperialism and incredible ignorance of how the EU operates.

All the more reason for us to work to create conceptual clarity and ensure that the terms we use are unambiguous. *Lingua franca* is a slippery concept: it is a misleading term for what is often asymmetrical communication between first language and foreign/second language speakers. There also seems to be an underlying assumption that a *lingua franca* is culturally neutral, and detached from dominant global or regional forces and their 'special purposes'. The term derives from the Arabic *lisan alfiranj* referring to the language of the Franks, who were seen as representing the crusaders from all over Europe who set out to recover Jerusalem and wipe Islam off the face of the known earth. There is a depressing historical continuity here, since English is now the *lingua franca* of the modern crusaders with a mission of 'freedom, democracy, and market liberalisation'. The American dog also has a flag-waving British tail: in post-communist countries in the 1990s, English was energetically marketed in tandem with the 'free' market and human rights by the British government.

I would suggest that in whatever specific contexts we meet the term *lingua franca*, we ask whether it might not be more appropriately labelled as a:

> *lingua economica* (the globalisation imperative);
> *lingua cultura* (the specific values and norms of a society, country, group or class, needing exploration in foreign language teaching);
> *lingua academica* (an instrument for international collaboration in higher education);
> *lingua emotiva* (the pull of Hollywood, the global advertising and PR giants, pop culture, and how such grassroots identification with English ties in with top-down promotion of the language);

> *lingua tyrannosaura* (the language that gobbles up others, linguistic cannibalism, Swales 1997);
>
> *lingua bellica* (the language of military conquest).

There is, alas, abundant evidence of lack of proficiency in understanding American English having fatal consequences in Iraq. This raises serious questions for the citizens of the US and for others whose governments have joined the 'coalition of the willing', and not least the UK, Denmark, Italy and Poland.

Language is integral to Britain's international standing. The ambivalence of English in the EU is connected to US agendas that in theory are not part of the ongoing 'construction' of Europe that has been in top gear since 1992, but came to (temporary?) grief in 2005. The pause for reflection on the entire Europeanisation process should be used to explore how language policies can be made more democratic and accountable, and how linguistic apartheid can be counteracted nationally and internationally.

Unfortunately there are many obstacles to supranational, Europe-wide language policy formation. They can be enumerated in outline. Each of them impinges on English as both threat and promise. The length of the list makes it abundantly clear that the tension between English as threat and promise is not straightforward. What is unclear is what the outcomes of present trends will be:

> European history has led to different cosmologies in national linguistic cultures, making cross-cultural dialogue treacherous;
>
> there are collisions of terminology (e.g. lingua franca, multilingualism, working language) in discourse (politics, media, business etc), and in distinct academic disciplines, as well as in different countries;
>
> overall responsibility for language policy in the EU is fragmented (Council of Ministers, Directorates for Education & Culture, Translation, …), and is ultimately an inter-governmental responsibility;
>
> there is a poor infrastructure nationally (except in Finland and Catalonia, perhaps in Sweden after legislation) and supranationally for addressing language policy issues, including a weak infrastructure in research;
>
> international coordination among national language bodies is in its infancy, and the processes for dialogue between scholars, interest groups, and policy-makers are fragile;
>
> language policy is politically untouchable at inter-governmental level;
>
> EU institutions are inconsistent in living up to ideals of multilingual equality (website, communications with member states) and in effect practise linguistic apartheid;
>
> the EU translation and interpretation services are impressive in many respects, but are detached from international research, and subject to an economic rationale, seeing themselves as a service function rather than policy-making (Phillipson 2003: chapter 4);
>
> the language of EU written texts is increasingly under attack (Koskinen 2000, Lundkkvist & Gabrielsen 2005, Tosi 2005), even if the translation industry and translation technology are of increasing importance (Cronin 2003);
>
> the rhetoric of EU multilingualism and linguistic equality is seen as a charade by many;
>
> linguistic human rights are a recent development in international law, and do not constrain 'international' languages;
>
> criteria for guiding equitable supranational language policy are under-explored;

journalistic coverage of language issues tends to be ill-informed;

alternatives to market forces (the comparative advantage of English in the European linguistic market) and linguistic nationalism (e.g. Esperanto) are unexplored;

Ultimately language policy is a matter of power politics, linguistic nationalism, and economics.

[1] The Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 22) http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/unit/charte/index_en.html

[2] Stated at a Luncheon, University of Roskilde, March 1997

[3] Press Communiqé, MEMO/05/269 of 20/07/05, DG Translation. Translation in the Commission : Frequently asked questions (FAQ) on the strategy to match supply and demand.

[4] Decision of the Council of the EU, 30 May 2005, and approved by Foreign Ministers on 13 June 2005.

[5] Note introductive 9506/1/05 de la Présidence à COREPER, Conseil de l'Union Européenne, CAB 19, JUR 221.

[6] See 'Rapport au Parlement sur l'emploi de la langue française', published by the Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France, Paris, 2005. The Délégation forms part of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, <www.dglf.culture.gouv.fr>. The report includes statistics for the use of regional languages in school education, teacher training, and in the media.

[7] Details of this are provided in the report identified in the previous footnote.

[8] Fourth draft, 1 July 2002, approved by an international conference convened by five Catalan bodies in Barcelona, May 31-June 1.

[9] Rektorkollegiet *Internationalisering af de danske universiteter, vilkår og virkemidle*r, 2004. The website also exists in part in English, www.rektorkollegiet.dk.

[10] This pair of concepts is being marketed by the Council of Europe in its many instruments to strengthen language learning and language policy formation. They distinguish between *plurilingualism* as individual competence in more than one language, generally at varying levels, and wish *multilingualism* to refer to societies characterised by more than one language.

[11] http://europa.eu.int/comm/language/policies/lang/policy/index.

[12] <http://taalunieversum.org>.

[13] Speech by Johan van Voorde to the Stockholm meeting, 2003, of the European Federation of National Language Institutes, EFNIL, www.eurfedling.org.

[14] The UK economy benefits by £11 billion p.a. directly, and a further £12 billion indirectly, from international education. The goal is 8 per cent annual growth across the sector, and to double the present number of 35,000 research graduates contributing to the UK's knowledge economy by 2020. In addition at least 500,000 attend language learning courses p.a. *www.britishcouncil.org/mediacentre/apr04/vision_2020_press_notice.doc*.

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