

Language Policy Issues within the European Union: Applied Geographic Perspectives

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Abstract

This article discusses several issues that impinge on formulations of language policy within the European Union. It investigates the philosophical, methodological and technical contribution that Applied Geography can make to a more holistic perspective on language in context. An agenda for international collaborative research in an enlarged Europe is proposed.

Key words: applied geography, citizenship, European Union, geolinguistics, language policy and planning, minority rights.

Problemi jezikovne politike v EU in možnosti aplikativne geografije

Izvleček

Članek obravnava različne probleme, ki zadevajo načrtovanje jezikovnih politik v Evropski uniji. Podrobneje prikazuje filozofske, metodološke in tehnične doprinose aplikativne geografije pri razvijanju holistične perspektive o jeziku v širšem kontekstu. Prispevek nadalje predlaga skupne možne pobude za mednarodno raziskovanje v okviru razširjene Evrope.

Ključne besede: Aplikativna geografija, državljanstvo, Evropska unija, geolingvistika, jezikovna politika in jezikovno planiranje, manjšinske pravice.

1. INTRODUCTION

European language policies are in a state of flux. Commercial and technological pressures empower hegemonic languages, medium-sized states struggle with strategic decisions over which language(s) of wider communication to employ in higher education, science and research endeavours, so-called lesser used languages struggle to maintain a niche in their respective contexts while languages of non-European origin figure more prominently in issues of access to public services, calls for separate, often religiously enframed, education and basic citizenship entitlement.

My aim is to raise critical issues surrounding the potential that Applied Geography has for interpreting language policies within the European Union. This may best be identified if we limit ourselves to brief illustrations of topics, approaches, key questions and techniques as developed by geographers of late. It is only rather recently that linguistic minorities have been accorded special attention in international law.¹ A basic difficulty stems from the extension of the individual human rights tradition, established after the French Revolution of 1789 whose rallying call was *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*, into the realm of collective rights. The ensuing debate has focussed on whether or not the use of a particular language in specified contexts is guaranteed by basic civil and political rights, such as the right to freedom of expression, and the right to respect for private and family life under instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights.

However, recognition of rights derived from mutual tolerance, respect for diversity and social inclusion does not assuage the worries of those minorities who require strong support for the maintenance of minority linguistic identity. This requires the state to act in respect of minority needs in public services, education, the legal system etc so that the target language may be used as a means of meaningful communication and employment.² The further extension of political support in respect of language planning requires specification as to whether personality or territorial rights (or an admixture of both) are to be implemented (Nelde, et al 1992).

Whereas the United Nations has never separated out the national minorities from other linguistic groups, the Council of Europe has established this division between national minorities and immigrant groups in a very explicit

¹ It is evident that a great deal of terminological imprecision surrounds such key concepts as *linguistic minority, lesser-used languages, minority rights etc.*

² For a clear exposition of the application of these principles see Dunbar, 2001.

manner (Ahtisaari, 2002). Within the purview of the Council of Europe, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, (1998) and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, (1998) seek to establish minimum standards. By October 2002, the Charter had been signed by 29 States, 17 of which have ratified it.³ The current political concern is to harmonise Council of Europe and EU conventions in these matters. Through its legal instruments giving force to basic values, its work to integrate new member states and consolidation of democratic stability in central and Eastern Europe, Blair (2002) argues that the Council of Europe has made an important contribution to the development of the *acquis communautaire*. Further progress in the context of the European Convention and the 2003 round of inter-governmental conferences on the reform of the treaties seems likely.

In similar vein the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been active in the specification of minority rights, most especially in the Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities, 1998, OSCE: The Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, 1998; the final paragraphs of the Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimensions Related to Linguistic Issues together with various documents released by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities. However, as in all things the devil is in the detail and we shall reference below several of the pitfalls of assuming that there is a consensus among the larger European institutions and organisations as to what constitutes an appropriate set of language policies.⁴

2. THE DETERMINATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has eleven official and working languages and a plethora of vital languages spoken among the 380 million citizens of EU states. Language policies have to deal with a varying geometry of multilingualism that is well known. Following van Els (2001) a basic distinction can be made between the

³ This includes all of the members of the EU and four of the applicant states (Blair, 2002).

⁴ Today in terms of language policy and governance the cardinal principles should be Unity, Variety and Choice. (Dalby, 1998). This would help the debate move on from perceiving a specific language as in essence a symbol of group identity and allow for a more meaningful interpretation of language as a medium of inter-cultural communication.

‘institutional’ and ‘non-institutional’ aspects of EU policy.⁵ The statutory basis for the institutional use of languages is Article 217 of the Treaty of Rome which charges the Council of Ministers to enframe all regulations. Theoretically three broad principles govern institutional usage. First all official documents are translated into all official EU languages and gain purchase in a member state when they are produced in the officially recognised language of that state. Secondly, all citizens communicating with central EU institutions are entitled to a response in the official language of their choosing. Thirdly the EU’s terminology database only gives full coverage in the languages designated as official EU languages (Labrie, 1996.p. 5. Quoted in van Els, 2001, p. 320). In practice a wide variation in institutional communication obtains within and between the many organs of government and administration and an excellent account of such machinations may be found in van Els (2001) and for the European Parliament in Mamadouh (2002).

What is not recognised so well is what Mamadouh (2002) has termed the dual influence of language diversity on national identities and on the ability of citizens to access supranational and transnational decision-making processes. It is in this respect that applied geography can have a telling role to play in examining such structures of equality and inequality across European space by undertaking a simultaneous analysis at seven scales namely:- 1) Pan-European; 2) Macro-Regional; 3) State; 4) National/regional; 5) Metropolitan/local; 6) Ethnic, cultural or interest group; 7) Individual citizen/subject/ immigrant. At each level in the scale hierarchy a different combination of ecological, holistic and geolinguistic applications will be required to facilitate policy. Agencies as varied as state governments, the European Union and Parliament, multilateral interest groups and regional level authorities contribute both to the policy agenda and to the construction of the infrastructure whereby languages can be accommodated within this complex network of agencies.

However, Mamadouh has argued that the most pertinent question is ‘How should the mediation between speakers of different languages be organized?’ She has explored an answer by reference to grid-group cultural theory and has demonstrated how policies and practices are the result of competition between different rationalities and therefore depend on the influence, strategies and alliances of their adherents (Mamadouh, 2002). One of the rationalities which has gained prominence within Applied Geography of late is the study of

⁵ *Institutional policy refers to the use of languages within and between the EU institutions themselves and in their communications with the member states and citizens and the world beyond the EU. By non-institutional, van Els means the use of languages within and between the member-states and between their citizens mutually, without the EU institutions being directly involved; see van Els (2001), p. 318.*

human ecology and planning, which in our context would seek to understand and situate language-related issues and then to apply holistic methods and perspectives to the formulation of policy.⁶ It is important to recognise that the major determinant of any allocation process in terms of planning resources is the value system of the problem identifier and solver. This is why holistic perspectives need to be emphasised from time to time because unless the decision-maker is suitably briefed, she/he will marginalise the significance of context for languages in society and will opt for thematic, partial and sectoral solutions to policy issues. Holistic thought, as Edwards (2002) has reminded us in terms of language ecology, emerges from a specific concern for the preservation and continuation of endangered languages, which in turn is underpinned by an emotional attachment to diversity.⁷

Why then do we believe that linguistic diversity is a valuable thing, and what conditions are necessary for it to thrive? Why do we lesser-used language networks seek to promote an alternative vision of European linguistic diversity to that which is advanced by the major economic actors and international organisations? Edwards (2002) asserts that this is done because it is recognised that diversity is good in itself, because it involves a preference for heterogeneous landscapes and an aesthetic appreciation that values multidimensional perspectives. He also provocatively asserts that guilt is a powerful motivating factor at work when the champions of such diversity often emanate from outside the communities concerned! An equally provocative challenge to the diversity at all costs line is provided by van Els who asserts that:

“It is a myth that the great diversity of languages and cultures as such is a good thing and that, consequently, its present manifestation in the EU represents a great richness, a treasure that should be defended at all costs. It is one of the myths that co-determine current EU policy on institutional language use.”(van Els, 2001, p, 349).⁸

⁶ *Human ecology is generally defined as the study of interactions of organisms (including homo sapiens) and the environment. If we extend the biophysical environment to encompass human behaviour as adaptation to stimuli then we also introduce concepts of governance, human health and well being. The key terms of this form of interpretation are ‘languages in context’ and being sensitive to the ‘environmental considerations in language planning’.* (Williams, 1991a; 1991b).

⁷ *Consequently, holism, like ecology, is subject to bias. It depends upon which holistic thought and who is advocating action, for whom and under what precise conditions.*

⁸ *“Diversity is in itself not a good thing, certainly not the concrete manifestations of it at the present moment. Neither is diversity of language and culture a constant factor, for they are forever changing: what disappears is replaced by something new, if people so desire.”* (van Els, 2001, p. 349).

“Another myth is that changes in language policy in one domain, in this case the EU institutions, should necessarily have consequences for other domains, in this case particularly for the language use in member states themselves.” (van Els, 2001, p. 350).

The difficulties of language reproduction are by now very well known, but the central justification for introducing greater holistic perspectives is that maintenance and revitalization efforts rely on much more than language, education and culture. And yet too few language planning agencies are really able to grapple with the multifaceted elements required, being limited to social mobilization programmes, educational initiatives and marketing campaigns.⁹ Hence they are bereft of any structural, and hence lasting, influence on issues of mainstream economic growth, regional development policy, labour migration, investment strategies and the like, all of which influence the vitality (or morbidity) of language networks and communities. Language planners conventionally cite the extra-linguistic impediments to effective policy implementation, but rarely engage such factors head on, presuming that they fall within the remit of other professional disciplines. Language planners within minority communities face the additional problem of having to resist a dominant rationality which places their efforts at revitalization within an exceptionalist frame reference frame.

3. UNIVERSALISM AND EXCEPTIONALISM

A basic difficulty in reconciling various language policies is the degree to which the target language reflects power differentials within the EU and beyond. Support for languages of wider communication, such as English, French or German derive in part from their strategic role as contributors to a former colonial, imperial past and to current state hegemony. Such support is not considered either as a direct subsidy or as an illogical intervention into the market place but as normal policy and practice to execute daily socio-economic functions. Far greater support is offered by international commerce, science and technology for such languages are purveyors of global knowledge, information and entertainment. All this reinforces the discourse of universalism and strengthens ‘rational’, normative expectations and behaviour.

⁹ *Clearly in very difficult circumstances such as those which face most Central and Eastern European ethno-linguistic minorities, even accomplishing the introduction of such elements is a challenge which I do not seek to minimise. My comments are addressed more to the by now well-established language planning agencies within the EU.*

However, when it comes to support for historical language minorities exceptionalism rules, and the logic of such support is nearly always couched in moral, cultural and group identity terms rather than in strict instrumental, functional terms. In such cases language, culture and economy are treated as autonomous spheres of influence and activity. They are not necessarily seen as mutually binding or as constituting a sustainable alternative to the hegemonic language. And when any major case for structural reform is made it is nearly always advanced by language-related agencies rather than economic agencies. This makes it doubly difficult to mainstream language issues into political economic schemas, regional development programmes and the like. For so often language planning agencies can be accused of satisfying the interests of a small minority of citizens and of engaging in special pleading. This is an understandable, if regrettable state of affairs.¹⁰ Let us now turn to a consideration of pertinent political, educational and geographical questions which have yet to be tackled adequately by policy analysts within the EU.

4. KEY QUESTIONS

- How is European language policy decided upon? What time frame is envisaged and with what implication for the various macro-programmes devised by the EU, the Council of Europe and NATO?
- What is the legal framework within which decisions about language policy and planning are made at the international level?
- What are the core needs for language development in Europe?
- Will multicultural cities such as Frankfurt, Paris, Brussels and London develop more multilingual policies which stress their comparative similarities, qua multi-ethnic nodes in a European metropolitan network, which will separate them further from 'national' curricula and training requirements?
- What political geographic form should the evolving EU take?
- Will a Federal State of Europe be established in the near future? Unlikely, more likely to create a system of multi-level governance in a post-sove-

¹⁰ Elsewhere I have advocated that the Language Agencies/Boards network could make a major contribution if it decided to develop a robust series of economic, commercial and strategic arguments for its position as advocates of the smaller languages of Europe. Clearly this would also require pressure on appropriate governmental agencies and commercial interest to produce regular, consistent, comprehensive time-series data on language use to act as a statistical base for charting the development of our policies (See Williams, 2002b).

reignty era. This will stand in direct contrast to both the nation-state system and the idealistic federal-regional system.

- How will language policies relate to a reformed supra-national territorial system? Difficult to imagine at present, but it is clear that the more strident and better organised sub-state nationalities, such as the Catalans, Basque and Welsh, have made significant, if insufficient, advances at the regional and international level in the promotion of their common cause.
- Given metropolitan networking and globalized economic trends will lesser-used language heartland regions and socio-economic structures be inevitably subject to issues of internal fragmentation and collapse in the face of social modernisation?
- How can geolinguistic analysis assist in the definition of target communities of interest, map the overlapping functional spaces and measure the socio-economic impact of language plans?

5. GEOLINGUISTICS AND GIS APPLICATIONS

Partial answers to this type of questioning may be offered by recent work on geolinguistics¹¹.

Zelinsky and Williams (1988, p.356) commented that the territorial gaps in our knowledge of the geography of language functions were obvious enough. But what was more interesting and frustrating were the topical lacunae. Addressing these is critical if we wish to endorse evidence-based EU policy formulation. What we know about the geography of language via maps, words or statistics is confined almost entirely to what is spoken at home or to the census enumerator. Treatment of speech in the workplace, church/mosque, school and on the street would be extremely useful, if demanding in terms of fieldwork.¹² Equally fascinating almost no one has tried to map functional literacy. Especially worthwhile would be studies and maps of literacy and usage in non-official tongues, including circulation patterns for 'ethnic' newspapers and magazines and listening/viewing areas and market penetration for-foreign lan-

¹¹ *Geolinguistics, the systematic analysis of language in its physical and human context, seeks to illumine the socio-spatial context of language use and language choice; to measure language distribution and variety; to identify the demographic characteristics of language groups in contact; to chart the dynamism of language growth and decline and to account for the social and environmental factors which create such dynamism.*

¹² *Clearly there are numerous academic studies which tackle such issues, but relatively few systematic government sponsored investigations designed to inform policy proposals. Again the Basque and Catalan governments demonstrate acute leadership in this field.*

guage radio and television programmes.¹³ Knowledge and consciousness of linguistically defined bounded spaces pervade most inhabitants' perception of ethno-linguistic urban neighbourhoods in the world's great multilingual cities.¹⁴ We have adequate census-based identifications of ethno-linguistic neighbourhoods, but relatively little by way of detailed micro-level analysis of urban territoriality for language groups in such places as London, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Frankfurt, Budapest or Moscow. Mapping the subjective world of constituent language groups in relation to conflict over urban space and facilities, such as education, sports centres and the like would be a fascinating cartographic and behavioural exercise. A related aspect of urban multilingualism would be to map the linguistic behaviour of non-official language groups in a wide range of social domains, including the workplace, places of worship and entertainment. However, because such data is often sensitive we should not be surprised that there is a paucity of mapped information. (Zelinsky and Williams, 1988, p.339).

Borders, boundaries and frontiers are integral both to the Geographer's trade and to the resolution of conflict within the European Union. In language border areas research has focused on simultaneous inter-lingual contact operating at a number of different scales ranging from the inter-state level, through intermediate trade, social and cultural organisations to the level of the individual. Slovenia is a fascinating example of a rapidly modernising society attempting to maintain its national language within a dynamic globalising world. It also straddles three of Europe's major culture regions, the Romance, Germanic and Slavic realm where all of its neighbours possess powerful languages of wider communication, in addition to which, of course, it has to come to grips with the demands of global English. Initial, fascinating enquiries have concentrated on the linguistic, migratory and ethno-political adjustments of the Slovene border areas and we now have an excellent range of detailed case studies by Klemencic and Klemencic (1997) on the North Adriatic border region 1521-1918; Bufon (1993; 1994; 1996) on the Slovene-Italian border population movements and socio-linguistic adjustments; Bufon (1997) on the

¹³ In 1988, Zelinsky and Williams asked us to "imagine how rich the stimuli for scholars and government officials if we could consult detailed atlases of actual linguistic behaviour in such places as London, Toronto, New York City and San Francisco, with special reference to non-indigenous speech. In these and other geolinguistic endeavours, the findings obviously could be applied in socially constructive fashion by those legislators and planners who formulate public policy as well as by the scholar" (p.356).

¹⁴ Thus Van der Merve (1993) has mapped the geography of language shift in Cape Town and Williams and Van der Merve (1996) have set forth a research agenda for Urban Geolinguistics which focuses on the linking of official census and specific social survey data, the vicissitudes of urban ecology, and the adoption of Geographic Information System methodologies.

ethnolinguistic structure of the Upper Adriatic, 1910-1991; Zupancic (1996, 1998) on issues of region, language and identity in Carinthia; together with Gosar and Klemencic (1994) on similar issues along the Slovene-Croatian border. Geography researchers based at the University of Ljubljana and the Slovene Scientific Research Centre at Koper are undertaking vital work on the readjustment process of former State Socialist societies seeking to be incorporated within the European Union.

A second need is to measure the effect which globalisation and the transnational transmission of culture by electronic means has upon language. A new geography of language and communication is being fashioned, based upon networks and real time interaction, with enormous consequences for power relations, entertainment and sport together with commercial transactions. borders This is surely a worthy and relevant field of enquiry for the European Union members, let alone those in Central and Eastern Europe, who are already conscious of the permeability of their borders to outside, possibly deleterious influences.

Much of the concern with borders and cultural transition zones has to do with respecting the minority linguistic rights of settled communities either side of the international or regional boundary Cartwright (1991, 1998).¹⁵ In consequence the major challenge of such transition zones will be how to organise internal processes which will maximise the utility of all languages within the zones. Such zones can also act as bridges in the New World Order and thus symbolise a spirit of partnership and integration, wherein the free flow of goods and people may be encouraged. Bi- or tri-lingual inhabitants of such zones are set fair to act as critical elements in the integrative process. However, because such zones are also strategically significant and have a history of periodic violence it is imperative that we fully understand the various socio-linguistic dynamics, which accompany such integrative measures. An excellent local example is provided by the Gorizia-Nova Gorizia frontier network and more generally Istrian patterns of activity between Italy, Slovenia and Croatia (Bufon, 2002). Geolinguistic analysis offers the potential for capturing much of the complexity via its sophisticated multivariate methodologies and

¹⁵ *As two competing, state-sponsored cultural realms expand, they incorporate adjacent territory and absorb peripheral populations, which are often supplemented by in-migrants from the dominant core area, together with the operation of institutional agencies such as the military, the judiciary and religious organisations. The gradual incorporation of the frontier by a rival ecumene necessitates cultural assimilation and the protection of new, superimposed boundaries. Over time, this leaves a relic, irredentist population who may pursue campaigns for linguistic rights within bilingual zones.*

illustrating the demolinguistic and political implications of various policy options.¹⁶

The advance of GIS (Geographic Information Systems and Computer-Aided Mapping) has allowed for a more comprehensive and powerful means to visualise, simulate and display information in its true spatial context. Its potential in Geolinguistics is enormous, even if its use is rather limited at present (Williams, 1988; 1991). A significant initiative is the Linguasphere Programme of collaborative research between global partners oriented around the *Observatoire Linguistique, Yr Wylfan Ieithoedd*, Cardiff University, and the School of Oriental and African Studies (The University of London).¹⁷ GIS techniques have produced multilayered maps and figures for Africa, London and parts of India. The Linguasphere team is currently developing three-dimensional views of languages in contact, with a capacity to rotate the angle of vision, to represent linear sectional distributions and to perform spatial query functions, such as adjacency, distance, and the intersection of a range of specific functions. It will also enable the simultaneous display of a number of languages, avoiding the normal bias of reproducing a single language or script. Interactive procedures are made possible by the development of an active graphic database stored on CD-ROM. Thus in a multilingual area where both official and vernacular languages are in use, the programme will be able to display a number of such languages on a single map, three dimensional views and a choice between two or more scripts or transliteration systems on screen. By scaling in and out of the image, more or less detail will be presented and including the integration of the visual database with selected sound recordings of languages. This interactive approach will provide a possible solution to the long-standing need for a universal system of reference, data-recording and data-access on the languages, cultures and peoples of the world, outside the distorting framework of nation-states. The details of linguistic and geographic data will be related in a database, which will in turn be linked, to a cartographic computer-aided design system (CAD). The database will record language names in their own indigenous scripts, together with language codings and transliterations, and will store geographic co-ordinates of individual language areas independently from their final presentation in conventional map-

¹⁶ It can also aid the analysis of problem solving through laying out several alternative scenarios as happens in the case of partitioned societies or in conflict-strewn metropolitan regions.

¹⁷ The Linguasphere Programme aims to "map and classify all the world's languages and dialects, using a unified and standardised system of reference, and to set up an international database for the storage, comparison and diffusion of all kinds of linguistic, demographic, ethnic and cultural information. Such information will be of vital importance for educational and linguistic planning as well as for the conservation of minority languages and the protection of the rights of those who speak them." (*Linguasphere Programme, 1993.p.1*).

ping form (The Linguasphere Programme, 1993,p. 13). All this follows the meticulous codification of the world's languages as presented in Dalby (1998).

A number of implications derive from this and similar trends within GIS. First the technical ability to handle and represent large and complex databases will continue to develop. Secondly, the range of language contact situations included within such systems will also widen. Thirdly, the attraction of G.I.S. to non-geographers will soon become apparent as both the quality and relatively low-cost of its productions will filter into academia and the market place. Fourthly, this development represents a real opportunity for genuine trans-disciplinary co-operation at the cutting edge of geolinguistics. Fifthly, accurate comprehensive, multilayered descriptions and analyses of particular contexts should inform public policy, in fields such as education, public administration, the legal system etc.

We are mindful that there are disadvantages also. Thus accurate mapping of populations can lead to a greater control of discriminated groups by malignant powers. In some multiethnic contexts it may be important for the ruling elite not only to know *who* their enemy is, but also to know precisely *where* they are located. Technology is a two-edged sword, as we know to our costs. It depends upon how it is applied. In turn, advanced data-handling technology presupposes good quality raw data, and increasingly government agencies in Europe, at least, seem reluctant to expend resources on surveying their multilingual populations. Thus the need for accurate data must be constantly repeated. It would be ironic in the extreme, if at the very time we had developed sophisticated techniques, we relied increasingly upon poor quality data.

Thirdly, there are costs and penalties involved in the widespread diffusion of any innovative system. Current marketing strategies in other aspects of computer-based technologies suggest that the actual costs of software and continuous output may reduce significantly as demand increases. However, control over particular aspects of the process may revert to one or two suppliers in hegemonic positions. Fourthly, it may be politically advantageous for some language groups not to have their total numbers, distribution patterns, rate of language shift or exogenous marriage tendencies to be fully and accurately recorded in accessible map and machine-readable form. Clinical representation of their situation may in fact expose more than is tolerable, and henceforth they may not be so adept at playing the beleaguered minority game of moral and economic dialogue with dominant 'partners' in multilingual polities. It all depends upon the nature of accommodation within their society, as to how their revealed geolinguistic health will effect their position.

6. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Selected governments have been very active in the application of GIS to contextual analysis, none more so than the Basque and Catalan authorities. Following a real measure of autonomy after Franco's death, both governments have invested heavily in sociolinguistic data collection and analysis so as to underpin their active language planning and policy.¹⁸ The Basque government has a very sophisticated social survey capacity with state of the art geolinguistic analysis which it employs to good effect both in pursuing its public policies and in encouraging the linguistic micro-planning undertaken by the private, commercial sectors. Ultimately, as with any scientific/technological development, computer-aided cartography is only as good as the quality and integrity of its designers, interpreters and users.

However, the Basque context demonstrates that such GIS applications can provide a frame within which governmental, commercial and communal contributions can coalesce to impact on language policy

Theoretically modest, but methodologically advanced practices currently characterise geolinguistic analysis whose significance will grow as the scholarly community and public policy decision-makers appreciate the technical capacity and flexibility of GIS cartography and data analysis. In principle, GIS applications, such as the Linguasphere Programme are geography's greatest contribution to date to sociolinguistic interpretation as we look forward eagerly to its rapid advance over the next decade or so.

Three other issues require detailed geographic investigation. First, how the experiences generated within the accession states of the EU will impact on the plurilingual character of educational and public administrative services, together with the local government and legal system of an enlarged EU is a vital challenge. This is especially so in the Hungarian-Slovene-Italian, Polish-German, Czech-German-Austrian, Slovak-Austrian, Finnish-Latvian-Lithuanian-Estonian cross-border regions. These sites will be particularly acute in the construction of a new geography of communication and interaction. Secondly, we need to analyse fluctuations in the economic demand for a skilled bilingual/multilingual workforce in several sectors of the European economy. Little comparative work has been undertaken on the linguistic training needs of general or specialised occupations. Neither do we know to what extent bilingual working practices, for example in Catalonia or Wales, offer a model for subsequent parallel developments within a range of multilingual contexts within other European regions e.g. either in respect of several European lan-

¹⁸ For a Catalan example see J. Farràs i Farràs et al (2000).

guages or selected non-European languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Hindi or variants of Chinese languages of wider communication. Thirdly the adoption of interactive media and internet-based communication is especially significant for the functional diversity of many smaller languages right across Europe. Profound issues of citizenship and alienation, inclusion and exclusion, commonality and diversity relate to the new patterns of behaviour as consumerism, media patterns, information packaging and cultural orientation all challenge the post-Enlightenment rationalities and values of civil society. Given such trends it is spurious some would argue to insist that all languages are to be treated equally within both market and institutions of the enlarged EU for as van Els (2001) comments: “The core problem is the fundamental equality of all EU languages as EU working languages. There is no linguistic insight that opposes the abandonment of this principle. Neither are the arguments for maintaining this principle tenable from a linguistic perspective” (van Els, 2001, p. 349).

7. BASIC PRINCIPLES

There are two theatres of action. The first is the geo-strategic considerations of the EU as a supra-national organisation. In relation to EU language policy, the following basic principles need to be discussed

- “the principle of equality for all ‘official’ languages, also as ‘working languages’ of the EU, will be abandoned formally;
- the basic principle will be, or remains, that none of the crucial interests of any member state or citizen of the EU may be harmed as a result of their language background;
- another basic principle will be that individual pragmatic solutions will be sought for the language communication problems in each of the subdomains of the EU organisation” (van Els, 2001, p. 350).

But in yielding responsibility for language policy there is always the second issue, i.e. the danger that citizens and communities will be relegated to the role of passive recipients of top-down language planning. Thus in institutional language planning at various scales in the spatial hierarchy we should always seek to:

- “involve the target speakers/users of services as much as possible in the Language Planning decision-making process.
- engage the participation of inter-departmental agencies to realise Language Planning aims and programmes;

- seek to introduce horizontal forms of governance where feasible, but expect only partial success given the tendency to centralise and bureaucratize language-related activity;
- anticipate and resolve to overcome the barriers, vested interests, traditional thought and practice which arise from inter-departmental turf wars and boundary disputes”¹⁹ (Williams, 2002).

8. CONCLUSIONS

Language issues are directly related to questions of citizenship, education, socialisation and participation in the public sphere. There is tremendous pressure on institutions within the EU to simplify and harmonise the range of services offered within a particular suite of languages. However, considerations of post-sovereign interaction in the Europeanization of public affairs render formal language planning increasingly difficult. This is because the post-Enlightenment notions of inclusive citizenship are breaking down in the face of market segmentation and apparent consumer empowerment. This leads to a basic tension between commonality and fragmentation, between the basic needs of state socialisation, including communicative competence in state-designated languages, and the reality of individual choices and the community-orientation of many interest groups. Over and above these issues is the more fundamental challenge facing us as the EU engages in another round of enlargement; namely how to deal with the sheer diversity of competing claims for recognition, rights and resources on behalf of those beleaguered groups who hitherto have not benefited from the institutional arrangements constructed by sovereign states in pursuit of plurinational democracy. The art of political practice and policy formulation depends ultimately on interpreting sound evidence in context. In that respect applied geography has tremendous, hitherto untapped, potential to serve the needs of policy by garnering such evidence and laying out the parameters of different contexts. I have emphasised only one such variable, language, in this paper, but the implications for other aspects of human diversity are clear. We face a huge challenge in realising European integration as a social fact, and an even greater challenge in not

¹⁹ *This means that the Language Policy and Planning agencies must recognise themselves as part of the problem as well as being part of the solution. Not always an easy consideration when many technocrats feel themselves to be ‘up against it’ when it comes to representing the interests both of their departments and of their constituents in hard pressed, competitive administrative systems.*

recognising that even the weakest identities constitute vital elements in the maintenance of our common European home.

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PROBLEMI JEZIKOVNE POLITIKE V EU IN MOŽNOSTI APLIKATIVNE GEOGRAFIJE

Povzetek

Članek obravnava različne probleme, ki zadevajo načrtovanje jezikovne politike v Evropski uniji. Najprej prikazuje problematiko človekovih pravic in institucionalno-pravnega okvira, ki zaobjema priznavanje manjšin ter odnos do manj razširjenih jezikov in državljanstva v Evropi. V nadaljevanju načena problem razvijanja jezikovnih politik v Evropski uniji in poudarja potrebo po posredovanju in uporabi širše integracijske perspektive. Osrednje vprašanje pri

odnosu z manj razširjenimi jeziki predstavlja sočasno delovanje nasprotujočih si razvojnih teženj, ki izhajata iz konflikta med poudarjenim univerzalizmom in poudarjenim partikularizmom. Zelo pomembno je za bodočo podobo in strukturo evropskega kontinenta razumevanje in usmerjanje potencialov geolingvistike in GIS-a pri proučevanju filozofskih, metodoloških in tehničnih doprinosov aplikativne geografije ter njenega prispevka za bolj holistično usmerjeno obravnavo jezikov v širšem družbenem kontekstu. Članek zaključuje še pregled možnosti za mednarodno sodelovanje pri raziskovanju in postavljanju skupnih opretnih podlag glede jezikovnega planiranja v razširjeni Evropi.