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## **Some partner languages are more equal than others**

**Robert Phillipson  
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark**

Some animals are more equal than others.  
George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 1945

The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.  
*Article 22, The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.*

... there is an urgent need for more definite language policy in the European Union taking into account sociolinguistic realities: different economic (market) value of the official languages, historically established unofficial linguistic hierarchies, competition among “big” languages and different position of languages among identity elements.

Ina Druviete (formerly Minister of Education, Latvia), 2009, 84.

Multiculturalism and bilingualism should be abandoned, and assimilation and learning of English should become national policies.

James C. Bennett *The Third Anglosphere Century; The English-speaking world in an era of transition*, 2007, 85.

Attempts to build continent-wide unity and integration in Africa, and to promote multilingualism, can perhaps learn from the experience of the European Union. This was established in the 1950s with the goal of putting an end to the wars of previous centuries, through integrating the economies of states. There has been a gradual build-up of political, juridical, and administrative structures that function alongside national governments, parliaments and social organisation. Languages are at the heart of this exercise, not merely as the medium for negotiations, legislation, and policy statements but also as the conceptual universe that this complicated unification process and project builds on. The four languages of the six founding states have gradually increased to a total of 23 languages for 27 member states. Each of these languages has in principle the same rights and functions as official and working languages, backed up by the world’s largest translation and interpretation services. There is genuine equality in some respects, but in others a hierarchy of languages which privileges (users of) some languages over others. Advocacy in favour of multilingualism is counter-balanced by market pressures that strengthen the position of English vis-à-vis all other languages. It also takes time for changes in attitudes to language and in education policy to take effect.

It is therefore important to assess who is setting the agenda for European integration. It is widely believed that the French and Germans occupy the political high ground, but geopolitics is in fact

rather more complex. 'The process of European integration might never have come about had it not been imposed on Europe by the Americans', according to a top EU insider, a Danish economist who was an adviser to the Danish Prime Minister at the time of Danish accession (see Holm 2001). The depth of US involvement with the key architects of what became the EU is explored in *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe* (Winand 1993). This collaboration was largely covert in the early decades, but now there is an annual EU-US summit. The 2007 meeting endorsed the Transatlantic Economic Integration Plan as well as agreement on the coordination of foreign policy globally. Granted the strength of the US corporate world, and the fact that European joint foreign and security policy is a goal rather than a reality, it is difficult to interpret this transatlantic 'cooperation' as anything other than EU subordination to US global ambitions.

English has progressively, over a thirty-year period, taken over the role that French played earlier as the key language of the *internal affairs* of the Union. This can be seen in the figures for the language of initial drafting of EU texts. They reveal a dramatic decline in the use of German and French, and an increase in the use of English as the default in-house language. This clearly strengthens the interests of proficient users of English, whether as a first or second language.

What this development means for French is recognized in the 'Bilan d'activité 06 Francophonie et multilinguisme', the annual report of the *Délégation nationale à la langue française et aux langues de France* : '... le français tend à devenir une langue de traduction et non plus de conception'. In effect, languages other than English become derivative. Anglocentric ways of thinking become the norm that others must follow, at the expense of alternative cosmologies, historical traditions, and legal systems.

Since all official languages are supposed to have the same status, it is puzzling that the issue is not seen as a question of the language rights of speakers of each language. It tends to be considered a problem for the French, or the Germans, the language with the most native speakers. The explanation for neglect of the topic is that language policy is politically sensitive. There is 'No more emotional topic in the EU than the language issue' (Es gibt in der EU kein emotionaleres Thema als Sprachen) according to Wilhelm Schönfelder, Head of Mission for Germany at the EU (cited in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1 April 2005). The topic is explosive ('Un sujet qui peut être qualifié d'explosif en Europe'), according to Pierre Lequiller, Président, réunion ouverte à l'ensemble des membres français du Parlement Européen, 11 June 2003. The Francophonic MEPs were meeting to discuss the *Rapport sur la diversité linguistique au sein de l'Union européenne*, prepared by Michel Herbillon on behalf of the Délégation pour l'Union Européenne.

This leads me to my first thesis: *Globalizing English is incompatible with balanced multilingualism*. Other languages that aspire to 'global' importance, including French, function in similarly hegemonic ways. Cohabitation or 'partnership' between 'big' languages and demographically or politically smaller languages is typically asymmetrical. Partnership between former colonial languages and local languages is invariably unequal. There are, however, viable strategies for attempting to achieve equitable linguistic power-sharing.

Efforts to create a balanced, sustainable ecology of languages are up against the strong forces that propel English forward worldwide. In essence what we are now experiencing globally is an extension of the capitalist system that has been enforced in the United States of America by military, economic, cultural, and educational means. Linguistic hegemony has been integral to this,

ranging from outright linguicide, exterminating the languages of the Indigenous peoples, to more subtle pressures to abandon an ancestral language.

The USA has since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century had ‘a belief in the manifest destiny of Anglo-Saxon culture to spread around the world’ (1838, the Board of Foreign Missions of the USA, then 13 ‘colonies’). President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907: ‘We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language.’ Expansion territorially and economically led to global capital and resource accumulation, as explained by President Harry Truman in 1947: ‘The whole world should adopt the American system. The American system can survive in America only if it becomes a world system.’ President George W. Bush is a brazen example of this globalising mission (2000): ‘Our nation is chosen by God and commissioned by history to be a model to the world.’ The *lingua divina* behaves for many as a *lingua diabolica*.

Naomi Klein’s *The shock doctrine. The rise of disaster capitalism* (2008) traces in depth how the Chicago neoliberal economic doctrine was exported worldwide, initially in Chile, later throughout Latin America, Europe, much of Asia, the post-Soviet world, and in Africa as structural adjustment. Military oppression and physical torture work together: the electric shocks applied to individuals with other world views accompany the economic shocks of market forces to national economies. The financial and economic crises of 2008 revealed how disastrous such unregulated market forces are. In occupied Iraq, the US believed that the reform of education required treating the entire existing education system as expendable and regarding Iraqi minds as *tabula rasa* (ibid., 338). The Americans are following down the same monolingual and monocultural road as in colonialism internal (Indigenous education) and external (e.g. the Philippines).

One relevant example of the many ways in which UK-USA dominance is asserted so as to create ‘the union of the English-speaking people throughout the world’ is the Rhodes scholarships that have functioned since 1904. They give US potential leaders the experience of studying at Oxford University in the UK, Bill Clinton being an excellent example. Rhodes believed ‘the Anglo-Saxon race the highest to be evolved in a divine plan’. His financial backing of this plan to educate rulers of the world is continued by such think tanks as the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC. Its goal is to ensure that the US and UK can ‘lead and change the world’ ([www.thatchercenter.org](http://www.thatchercenter.org); [www.anglosphere.org](http://www.anglosphere.org)).

The fortune that Rhodes made came, of course, from the mineral and human resources of southern Africa. So it is Africans who have indirectly subsidised a continuation of the British Empire and its replacement by an American one. Colonisation aimed at creating acceptance of unequal power relations, with complicity by elites in the postcolonial world. As the distinguished Kenyan novelist, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, explains in *Decolonising the mind* (1986, 20): ‘It is the final triumph of a system of domination when the dominated start singing its virtues’. The problem in Africa, again according to Ngũgĩ (1998, 90, 92), is:

There can be no real economic growth and development where a whole people are denied access to the latest developments in science, technology, health, medicine, business, finance, and other skills of survival because all these are stored *in foreign languages*. [...] there can be no democracy where a whole people have been denied the use of *their languages*, where they have been turned strangers in their own country. (italics added)

Neoliberal corporate globalisation, and corruption in North and South, is brilliantly portrayed in Ngũgĩ's novel *Wizard of the Crow*, (2006) written first in Gikūyū, then translated into English and Swahili.

Gordon Brown stated on a visit to Africa that the British should regain their pride in empire. In a press release when he was due to make his first visit as Prime Minister to India and China (17 January 2008) he announced a plan to make English 'the world's common language of choice'.

... It is in part an accident of history - a wave of knowledge and commerce, which gathered even greater global force in the post-war era, that gave the world the English language... the world is recognising the role of English - *ensuring it is taught at primary level as a core skill*. In total, 2 billion people worldwide will be learning or teaching English by 2020... with more teachers, with more courses, more websites and now a new deal involving the publishing media and communications industries, *we will open up English to new countries and new generations... English is our heritage, but it is also becoming the common future of human commerce and communication... the bold task of making our language the world's common language of choice*. (italics added)

As newspaper comment noted, this project is designed as a massive money-spinner for the English teaching business. The expertise for achieving this goal is assumed to exist in the UK – a preposterous claim - and the British Council is mandated to mastermind bringing it about. English learning is very big business for the UK, as a glance at the *British Council Corporate Plan 2006-2008* shows.

What *choice* means for schoolchildren in the South has been lucidly explained by the Tanzanian scholar, Casmir Rubagumya:

European languages were *imposed* on Africa in the colonial period. African people as communities did not *choose* to learn those languages. [...] Individual Africans do not necessarily *choose* to learn these languages (French, English, Portuguese). Since the language of instruction in almost all African countries is the language of the former colonial power, going to school does not leave any choice. Individuals who do not go to school, and therefore do not learn European languages, do not choose not to go to school. They do not have access to schooling (2004, 134).

Rubagumya also discloses why an insistence on all schoolchildren learning 'World English' is unethical. In the global village there are

a few chiefs – very powerful economically and militarily – and a lot of powerless villagers. [...] The market has indeed replaced imperial armies, but one wonders whether the effect is any different. [...] It is therefore not the case that more English will lead to African global integration; the reverse is more likely.[...] Giving false hopes that everybody can have access to "World English" is unethical (ibid.: 136-139).

I have written at length elsewhere about the role of language policy in colonialism and empire (Phillipson 1992) and in current neoimperialism (Phillipson 2008a, 2008b). The pedagogy of global English is still based on the monolingualism of the five tenets elaborated in *Linguistic imperialism* (Phillipson 1992):

English is best taught monolingually,  
the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker,  
the earlier English is taught, the better the results,  
the more English is taught, the better the results,  
if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop.

All of which are professional fallacies:

the monolingual fallacy  
the native speaker fallacy  
the early start fallacy  
the maximum exposure fallacy  
the subtractive fallacy.

These fallacies are central to the 'English Language Teaching' business of the UK and USA, and embraced by the World Bank. They contribute to the failure of African education systems to provide relevant education to most Africans, as African scholars, from Kahombo Mateene of the OAU Bureau of Languages 30 years ago to Neville Alexander at present have documented and explained.

Alas, there are plenty of influential language 'experts' who assume that demand for English is uncontaminated by economic or political interests, past or present. A top US language policy scholar, Robert B. Kaplan wrote in 2001 'The ascendancy of English is merely the outcome of the coincidence of accidental forces.' Bernard Spolsky (2004) argues against the existence of linguistic imperialism and sets up the false dichotomy 'The spread of English... Did it happen or was it caused? The same ethnocentricity and blindness to the nature of linguistic hierarchies is true of the work of David Crystal, Abram de Swaan, and Janina Brutt-Griffler.

Have francophonie educational principles moved on from the rhetoric of endorsing multilingualism to substantial contributions to bilingual education, and real support for local languages? It is important to ask whether educational institutions in North countries are really equipped and qualified, culturally, linguistically and pedagogically, to be of use. I see very little sign of this in the business of promoting English worldwide, even if there are many scholars who have become aware of the issues. Are things any better when it comes to the promotion of French (Chaudenson 2003, Maurais et al 2008, Phillipson 2008c), Spanish (Mar-Molinero 2006), or Portuguese (Casaca Figueira 2008)? We need an open mind in exploring such issues. There are strong historic reasons, grounded in the national educational systems of Europe and Europeanised countries worldwide, that in part explain current limitations. Monolingual education has been the norm, in the dominant 'national' language, which was treated as the mother tongue of all. This model was exported in colonial education.

One has to hope that former French colonies are not influenced by the attitude of the French government towards regional linguistic minorities, and the 1992 constitutional insistence that 'the language of the Republic is French'. The Constitutional Court determined in 1999:

Les principes d'invisibilité de la République, d'égalité devant la loi et d'unicité du peuple français s'opposent à ce que soient reconnus des droits collectifs à quelque groupe que ce soit, défini par une communauté d'origine, de culture, de langue ou de croyance.  
(cited in Baldi 2009, 90)

This leads me to my second thesis: *Combining linguistic nationalism and international languages is hazardous*. I shall exemplify this in relation to developments in the European Union.

In the European context it is important to recall that education, culture and language are a national prerogative. Inspiration at the supranational level, either from the EU or the Council of Europe, does not commit member states. On the other hand, education, culture and languages are no respecters of borders. They are strongly influenced by developments such as

- European economic, political, and military integration in the EU, NATO, etc;
- 70%+ of films on TV and in cinemas in Europe are Hollywood products (cf. only 1% non-US films in the US market);
- Youth is consumerist, Coca-colonised, more familiar with US products and norms than others;
- English is the most widely learned 'foreign' language in Europe, and other foreign languages are mostly in retreat;
- English has become the corporate language of many continental European companies;
- Research is increasingly published in English, affecting career prospects for the individual and the role of the national language.

There is a great deal of fluidity in language policy in Europe: there are unresolved tensions between linguistic nationalism (monolingualism), EU institutional multilingualism, and English becoming dominant in the EU. There is increasing grassroots and elite bi- and multilingualism, except in England and among the older generation in demographically large EU countries. There is a largely uncritical adoption of englishisation, English as the *lingua economica/Americana*. There is a rhetoric of language rights, some national and supranational implementation, advocacy of linguistic diversity, but much is left to market forces. States differ constitutionally (unitary, federal), in their cultures and educational philosophy (*Bildung*, skills, ...) and in the extent to which they support minority languages. There is already a considerable literature on European language policy (Baetens Beardsmore 2009, Phillipson, 2003, 2009, Truchot 2008, Stickel 2009).

There are many *obstacles to supranational, Europe-wide language policy formation*. The length of the list that follows makes it abundantly clear that the issues are 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, Multilingualism, Translation, ...), and is ultimately an inter-governmental responsibility;

- there is a poor infrastructure nationally in Ministries (except in Finland and Catalonia, perhaps in Sweden) and supranationally for addressing language policy issues;
- the research community is small and scattered;
- language policy is politically untouchable at inter-governmental level, and has a low priority, remaining untouched by the Convention on the Future of Europe and in the draft Constitutional Treaty and the Reform Treaty, despite pleas from a number of NGOs from several countries;
- 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, even if the translation industry and translation technology are of increasing importance;
- 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;
- international coordination among national language bodies is in its infancy (Stickel 2009), and the processes for dialogue between scholars, interest groups, and policy-makers are fragile.

Ultimately language policy is deeply imbued with power politics, linguistic nationalism, and economics, which means that the question of how a more enlightened and informed political will can be generated is of central importance.

In addition to EU language issues and initiatives, it is also important to recall that the Council of Europe conducts a considerable amount of language policy activity of several kinds. It is responsible for the implementation of Framework Convention on National Minorities, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It has a language policy division that organizes national surveys, and has produced a series of pioneer language pedagogy documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Other significant players in this field are NGOs, some of which are given EU funding support, such as the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages and three key minority language centres in Catalonia, Friesland and Wales, and the Federal Union of European Nationalities (which has a permanent Contact Forum with the European Parliament).

The final report of an EU High-Level Group on Multilingualism was published on 26 September 2007 (IP/07/1396; [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/multireport\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/multireport_en.pdf)), analysing many aspects of language policy and making suggestions for activities to strengthen language learning. It was published in 22 languages (all official languages except Irish), reflecting the importance of the project. The Group's many proposals relate to raising awareness and enhancing motivation for language learning; the potential of the media in evoking, enhancing and sustaining motivation for language learning; languages for business; interpretation and translation, new trends

and needs; regional or minority languages; and research into multilingualism. The key issue is whether EU or government funds will be forthcoming for implementing such ideas.

The up-beat nature of these ideas contrasts with many symptoms of crisis in language policy in Europe, such as foreign languages other than English being learned less, and the way market forces are strengthening English in many fields and in the internal management of multilingualism in EU institutions. There is a conflict between the rhetoric of supporting all languages and the realities of linguistic hierarchies and marginalisation.

Some of those who work for the interpretation and translation services are deeply disturbed by the way some languages, both the demographically small 'old' EU languages and the languages of new member states are being treated as second-class languages (Druviete 2009). This does not appear to worry career diplomats assigned to the EU, whose attitudes are doubtless coloured by many subjective factors. Fundamentally there is a gulf between EU bureaucracy and ordinary citizens, a linguistic deficit accompanying a democratic deficit. There is also deep-seated continent-wide ambivalence about the whole EU project, where integration is heading, and whose interests it serves.

As examples of linguistic apartheid in Europe, one can cite:

- the widespread 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.

The EU Commission has been addressing such issues by attempting to influence education in member states. *Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006*, stresses that learning one lingua franca alone is not enough, English alone is not enough, and warns that in non-anglophone countries, recent trends to provide teaching in English may have unforeseen consequences on the vitality of the national language.

The Commission *Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* (2005) recommends

- the learning of the mother tongue plus two languages
- national plans to give coherence and direction to actions to promote multilingualism (including the teaching of migrant languages)
- better teacher training
- early language learning, and Content and Language Integrated Learning
- multilingualism in higher education
- strengthening university competence in multilingualism
- a Europe-wide language testing scheme, an Indicator of Language Competence
- greater use of Information Society technologies
- focus on business, the multilingual economy.

The latest statement of EU supranational policy on multilingualism, approved by the Council of Ministers on 21 November 2008, is *Résolution du Conseil relative à une stratégie européenne en faveur du multilinguisme*.

While many of such ideas are laudable and merit serious consideration, there are other aspects of EU policy which are pointing in the opposite direction, most notably the internationalisation of European higher education. This has gone under the label 'the Bologna Process' since 1999. The objective is 'within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy - to consolidate a European Higher Education Area at the latest by 2010'. 47 European states are committed to it. The EU Commission largely sets the agenda, funds activities, and produces policy and planning documents. These are the foundation for the bi-annual Ministerial Meetings, which representatives of universities also attend. At the most recent ones (Bergen in 2005, London in 2007), the main focus has been on structural uniformity (a single BA, MA and PhD system), on quality control (nationally and internationally), student mobility, recognition of qualifications, and joint degrees – all of which are demanding tasks - and making European universities attractive enough to compete with the USA and Australia. These countries are Bologna 'observers', out of self-interest, since foreign students in higher education are big business for them, and Europe is potentially a serious competitor.

What is striking is that not once in the lengthy communiqués from the ministerial meetings is there any reference to languages. There is nothing on bilingual degrees or multilingualism. The language of virtually all documents and deliberations is English. This can perhaps be justified for practical reasons at a conference – though this does not guarantee equality in communication - however what emerges unambiguously is that in the Bologna process, 'internationalisation' means 'English-medium higher education', an apparently unchallenged acceptance of English linguistic hegemony (Phillipson 2006). This is a worldwide movement (Phillipson, in press).

The European process is a direct result of education being increasingly considered a service that can be traded, under the aegis of the WTO, the World Trade Organisation, and more specifically of GATS, the General Agreement on Trade in Services. Member states have been legally committed to this 'liberalisation' process since 1995, but there is a fundamental unresolved tension between education as a human right and trading in educational services. The pressures to reduce what are seen as national trading barriers are intense. Higher education is more vulnerable to international commercialisation than is basic education, though this is also increasingly seen as a market rather than a public service.

Prior to the bi-annual Ministerial Meeting taking stock of the Bologna Process in London, 17-18 May 2007, EU Commissioner Figel stated (press release IP/07/656):

Bologna reforms are important but Europe should now go beyond them, as universities should also modernise the content of their curricula, create virtual campuses and reform their governance. They should also professionalize their management, diversify their funding and open up to new types of learners, businesses and society at large, in Europe and beyond. [...] The Commission supports the global strategy in concrete terms through its policies and programmes.

In other words, universities should no longer be seen as a public good but should be run like businesses, should privatise, and let industry set the agenda. The new buzzwords are that degrees must be 'certified' in terms of the 'employability' of graduates. 'Accountability' no longer refers to intellectual quality or truth-seeking but means acceptability to corporate-driven neoliberalism. A recommendation that there should be more 'student-centred learning' probably implies more e-

learning rather than a more dialogic, open-ended syllabus. Before *European* integration has taken on viable forms, universities are being told to think and act *globally* rather than remain narrowly European – and by implication use English rather than a national language. These ideas are insulting to higher education in general and to all universities that have been internationally oriented for decades, if not centuries.

Africa has of course not been left out of the EU's global strategy. The *Erasmus Mundus* programme has funded the attachment to European universities of 866 African students and 51 staff since 2004. It now has a programme (2009 – 2013) for strengthening cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe and Africa. Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development, considers that the two topics to focus most on when 'facing crises together' are climate change and the financial crisis ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm)). Perhaps they might be persuaded to take language policy on board? Or would African countries do better to go it alone? The perils of partnership are explored by the Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training (NORRAG). It currently has on its website 48 articles online on 'The new politics of partnership: peril or promise?'

[http://www.norrag.org/pdf/\\*NN41.THE%20POLITICS%20OF%20PARTNERSHIP.pdf](http://www.norrag.org/pdf/*NN41.THE%20POLITICS%20OF%20PARTNERSHIP.pdf)

In Scandinavia, the wisdom of switching to English in higher education has been questioned for a decade or more. Does the move into English for 'internationalisation' purposes mean that vets, psychologists and other professionals will be educated entirely in English rather than the local language? There has been talk of the risk of *domain loss*, when referring to an increased use of English in research publication, or as the medium of instruction for higher education, business, the media etc. Invariably the assumption is that any expansion in the use of English is at the expense of Danish, Norwegian, or Swedish, which is by no means necessarily the case. Such argumentation reflects a monolingual worldview, and is far from the reality of much higher education teaching, especially in the natural sciences. This is often bilingual - in all but name - using textbooks written in English and a Scandinavian language as the language of the classroom and examinations. The fact that natural scientists choose to publish scholarly articles primarily in English does not necessarily mean that they are incapable of writing textbooks or popularising articles on the same topic in their mother tongue.

How far domain loss is a reality in Scandinavia has yet to be researched adequately, and preliminary surveys are of limited theoretical and empirical validity. Existing diagnostic efforts are hampered by loose terminology, in that 'domain' may refer to a vast range of activities or to a narrow spectrum, and 'loss' is inappropriate in that it obscures the agency of both the losers and the gainers. In reality, domains are not 'lost': if and when it occurs, it is when specific spoken or written activities are subjected to linguistic capital accumulation by dispossession due to forces behind an increased use of English, the result being the marginalisation of other languages (Phillipson 2006, 2008a).

The Swedish government has for years been seriously investigating how best to maintain a balance between English for internationalisation purposes and Swedish and other languages for national purposes. The culmination of a considerable amount of reporting and consultation is a 2008 White Paper of 265 pages setting out the case for legislation, *Värna språken – förslag till språklag. Betänkande av Språklagsutredningen*. (Protecting the language - bill for a Language Law. A White Paper on the case for a language law). This covers legislating to secure the status of Swedish; the

linguistic human rights of minority language users (five legally recognised minority languages, and Swedish Sign language); the maintenance of the languages and cultures of immigrants. It advocates:

- declaring Swedish the *principal* ('huvud' = main, chief) language of the country, a formulation that deliberately avoids the terms *official* and *national*, Swedish being the language that unites all residents of the country, irrespective of mother tongue;
- creating obligations for the society, including its agents in all sectors, its legislators and administrators, to see that language rights are realized;
- in higher education and in dealings with EU institutions, ensuring that Swedish should be used whenever possible;
- institutions having a duty to work out how best the pre-eminence of Swedish can be maintained (e.g. ensuring terminology development).

Substantial sections cover many aspects of the use and learning of English. The White Paper stresses the need for higher education institutions to formulate explicit language policies. The White Paper refers to the risk of capacity loss when Swedes are obliged to function in English rather than their mother tongue, whether in higher education or in the EU system. In other words people's linguistic or communicative competence may be reduced, and if this is allowed to take place, this erodes the main instrument of a well-functioning democracy, in speech and in writing. Effectively what is happening here is capacity dispossession of the individual, in the worst case in both languages.

The prevailing use of English in high-prestige domains such as scholarship has major implications, for democracy, a well-informed public sphere and population, and social cohesion, if local, more accessible languages are not *also* used. It is important not to think of democracy in purely western terms, as though patented in ancient Greece, and invariably the norm in western countries, which is simply untrue. Contact between China, India and Arabia flourished for two millennia, with translations between Chinese, Arabic and Sanskrit in many scholarly fields. The pre-eminence of Western science, in our unstable, inequitable, militarised world, is recent, and falsely legitimated as though 'knowledge societies' are a late capitalist invention:

science, mathematics, literature, linguistics, architecture, medicine and music. [...] In so far as public reasoning is central to democracy ..., parts of the global roots of democracy can indeed be traced back to the tradition of public discussion that received much encouragement in both India and China (and also in Japan, Korea and elsewhere), from the dialogic commitment to Buddhist organization... The first printed book in the world with a date (corresponding to 868 CE), which was the Chinese translation of a Sanskrit treatise, the so-called 'Diamond Sutra' (Kumārajīva had translated it in 402 CE), carried the remarkable motivational explanation: 'for universal free distribution'. (Sen 2005, 164, 182-3).

Obviously the 'global roots of democracy can indeed be traced back to the tradition of public discussion' in Africa too. There are treasures in different types of knowledge society, whether based on the libraries of Timbuktoo or the rich heritage of oral traditions in Africa. Multilingual education should be inspired by the diversity of local and global traditions – and languages, in forms of partnership that are equitable.

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