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Linguistic human rights and English in Europe

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article explores some aspects of the current expansion of English in Europe in relation to ongoing efforts to ensure greater respect for the linguistic human rights of speakers of all languages. Universal and regional human rights covenants pay homage to the principle of linguistic diversity, as does the Maastricht treaty, the bible of European integration, but there is overwhelming evidence of "big" languages marginalizing "small" ones nationally and internationally. Speakers of "world languages" are active agents in such processes of linguistic expansion and contraction.

As English is so influential, and intimately connected to ongoing processes of Europeanization and globalization, it is important to scrutinize the role played by language professionals, to assess in what ways the success of the "English language industry"ⁱ impacts on the rights of speakers of other languages and cultures. It is possible that the successful struggles of minorities for linguistic rights (see the cases of the Norwegian Sámi, Magga 1994, and the Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Kāretu 1994) may represent examples of linguistic emancipation that "small" national languages in Europe will need to follow, if these become more marginalized as a result of increased "internationalization".

The first part of the article will present important principles of linguistic human rights from international law, the second will explore the spread of English. It is also important to stress that language policy in Europe is a large, complex topic, on which there is a growing literature, much of it in French (e.g. Labrie 1993, Truchot 1994, many publications from the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie) and German (e.g. Ammon 1989, and contributions to the trilingual annual *Sociolinguistica*). Some scholars are addressing the tricky issue of the interlocking of national and supranational policies (e.g. Fishman 1994, Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas 1995, in press). All that we can do in a slim article is to shed light on a few contours of this shifting map. Initially we shall set the scene by presenting a few snapshots of the European language policy scene. They are brief, but demonstrate the significant interlocking of linguistic issues in contemporary Europe with many factors, cultural, economic and political, and the need to chart the particular characteristics of linguistic hierarchies.

2. GLIMPSES OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE SCENE

In the supranational institutions of the European Union, the European Parliament in Strasbourg, and the European Commission, the EU's administrative headquarters in Brussels, the "multilingual principle" refers to the formal equality of eleven languages as official and working languages. These are Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. Other languages have no rights, even if they have many speakers, e.g. Catalan, with more than 6 million speakers (more than speakers of Danish or Finnish). The "multilingual principle" also ignores the fact that in practice some languages are more equal than others. In particular French is the dominant language in the internal affairs of the European Commission, though English is encroaching here and is already the dominant language in the external business of the EU. This linguistic pecking order puts native speakers of languages other than the dominant languages at a disadvantage, which there is abundant anecdotal evidence of, and which has led to protests by the German government (Volz 1994). The learning of foreign languages is ascribed a major role by the EU in creating European "integration", but again there is a marked absence of symmetry or reciprocity in the languages being learned, or at least those on school time-tables. English is ubiquitously at the top of the hierarchy of "foreign" languages, despite the vigorous marketing of other languages and a number of EU-funded schemes to promote all its official languages.

The British Foreign Minister greeted the fall of the iron curtain by proclaiming that English should become the first foreign language throughout eastern and central Europe, the *lingua franca* of changed times. To assist in ushering in this new European order, the British Council is investing heavily in English teaching in former communist countries. It has formed an "English Language Teaching Contacts Scheme" to link up teachers with British services to English teaching, and is vigorously marketing a British variant of "British Studies".

In British official rhetoric, the English language is associated with democracy, the free market, and human rights, virtues that also figure prominently in French special pleading for their language. Claiming a symbiotic link between a language and human rights is in fact an abuse of the concept of human rights, which are meaningless unless they apply to speakers of all languages. States that actively promote their language abroad clearly have economic motivesⁱⁱ. The British and the French see it as being in their "national" interest to promote "international" languages.

The lack of symmetry in contemporary processes of globalization can be seen clearly in the media. 80% of films shown in western Europe are of Californian origin, whereas 2% of films shown in North America are of European origin (Hamelink 1994, 114). "America's hottest export item today is pop culture", according to Cees Hamelink, the "world" expert on *McDonaldization* (ibid., 103). The trend is towards production for global markets, so that products and information aim at creating "global customers that want global services by global suppliers" (ibid., 110). McDonaldization means "aggressive round-the-clock marketing, the controlled information flows that do not confront people with the long-term effects of an ecologically detrimental lifestyle, the competitive advantage against local cultural providers, the obstruction of local initiative, all converge into a reduction of local cultural space" (ibid., 112). Most of the processes involved, investment, production, marketing, consumption and interpretation, involve the use of language. The dominance has economic, technological, cultural and linguistic strands to it. McDonaldization is in conflict with principles of fundamental human rights, which can serve to ensure the maintenance and promotion of cultural diversity. It would be relevant to explore how

far human rights declarations in fact grant real and substantial support to the maintenance and development of linguistic diversity.

3. LINGUISTIC HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Most of the formulations in human rights instruments granting individuals or groups linguistic rights are to be found in clauses which protect minorities. The language rights of speakers of the majority languages in Europe are well protected anywayⁱⁱⁱ. A growing number of charters, resolutions and declarations also accord some linguistic human rights to long-standing regional or national minorities. By contrast, under covenants that represent binding human rights law, (im)migrant minorities have not been granted any rights to use, maintain and develop their languages in (state-financed) education, which is vital for cultural continuity. On the other hand, no international covenants overtly *prohibit* the use of any minority languages.

We shall briefly refer to UN and European instruments on language rights, and assess the degree of protection that they endorse, especially in education, which is central to linguistic human rights. Those denied such rights are in most cases minorities (minorities in terms of power, often numerically so too)^{iv}. Without extensive language rights in education (the right to mother tongue medium education), most minorities will assimilate, and the existing linguistic diversity will be extinguished.

International instruments

Article 27 of the *UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (CCPR, 1966, in force since 1976) states:

"In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language."

This article has been the most important binding Article in international law for the protection of linguistic minorities^v. The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1959, revised 1989), and several Council of Europe and OSCE (the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) documents have used approximately the same formulation. We shall return below to recent changes in the interpretation of Article 27.

The five basic universal UN conventions^{vi} have *general* provisions, for instance in their preambles, relating to the exercise of all human rights, in which language is specifically mentioned, along with gender, race, religion, etc, as one of the characteristics on the basis of which individuals must not be discriminated against. However, in the *education* clauses of many of the binding covenants, language is not referred to. Often all the other characteristics (gender, religion, nationality, social origins, etc) are still there, but language has mysteriously disappeared. Where language is mentioned, the rights can be described as representing no more than the *semi-covert assimilation-oriented toleration of minority languages* (see Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1994b, 79 ff). Minorities are allowed to use their languages in private, but

not in state-financed schools.

The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, adopted by the General Assembly in December 1992 considers

that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live. (Preamble)

This contests the popular but mistaken belief that the existence of minorities is divisive for nation states, as do several of the new instruments in their preambles.

Article 1.1 decrees that the states

shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.

Art. 1.2 states that the states

shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

The Declaration is open to different interpretations as to whether (im)migrant minorities can count as minorities. The Declaration goes somewhat further than Article 27, cited above, in replacing "shall not be denied" by "have the right" and by adding that these rights apply "in private and in public, freely and without any form of discrimination" (Article 2.1). It also prompts states to actively promote enjoyment of the rights (Articles 4.1 and, especially, 4.2). Most of the articles use the formulation "shall" and have few let-out modifications or alternatives - except where linguistic rights in education (Art. 4.3) are concerned.

The clause covering linguistic rights in education is as follows:

4.3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.

The Article appears to support minority language rights, but the obligations taken on by the state (and the Declaration is not binding) are not onerous. The modal verb "should" contrasts with extensive use of "shall" in other clauses. What constitute "appropriate measures" or "adequate opportunities", and who is to decide what is "possible"? Mother tongue instruction is one of two alternatives. And does "instruction in" the mother tongue mean "through the medium of the mother tongue", or does it only mean instruction in the mother tongue as a subject? These manifest weaknesses in the formulation of a right permit a reluctant state to provide minimalist protection, as does the European Charter (see below).

The *UN Convention on Migrant Workers and Their Families* accords minimal rights to mother tongues and is assimilation-oriented (see Hasenau 1990).

Regional European instruments

In contrast to many resounding formulations on language rights in *non-binding* declarations and resolutions, there have been, in international or European covenants which are *legally binding*, and where there is a complaints procedure, very limited language rights until the 1990s. The general policy on educational linguistic human rights for minorities seems to represent little more than posturing^{vii}.

The *Council of Europe* has played an important role in addressing the rights of national minorities. Its *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*^{viii} (1992) relates to languages "traditionally used within a given territory of a State" (Article 1), i.e. the languages of *immigrant minorities* are explicitly excluded. It warns that the promotion of minority languages "should not be to the detriment of the official languages and the need to learn them" (Preamble). The Charter represents the fruits of many years of efforts to specify language rights. It declares that "the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right" (Preamble). In education, the teaching and study of regional or minority languages should be encouraged at all appropriate stages. There is also a provision that non-speakers of the minority language (i.e. majority language speakers) living in the area where it is used should be able to learn it, if they so desire.^{ix}

The Charter will enter into force 3 months after a minimum of 5 member states have ratified it.

In the first 3½ years since its acceptance, only 3 countries have both signed and ratified it, Finland, Hungary and Norway, while another 11 countries have signed but not ratified^x.

Another limitation is that states that sign it can decide which minorities they wish to apply it to, i.e. even if they accept that a group in their country is a minority, they do not necessarily need to extend the rights to this group. The Charter is full of escape clauses and alternatives which make it possible for an unwilling state to sign and ratify it and still grant very few rights even to a group that the state has promised to apply it to (see Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1994b for details).

Another relevant Council of Europe initiative, drafted by its European Commission for Democracy through Law, was the *Proposal for a European Convention for the Protection of Minorities* (CDL 91 - 7, which was accompanied by a substantial Explanatory Report, CDL 91 - 8). It is important to note here that the *Proposal* was to apply to "minorities", not "*national minorities*". It had an explicit definition of who belongs to the minorities the Convention was supposed to protect:

Article 2

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "minority" shall mean a group which is smaller in number than the rest of the population of a State, whose members, who are nationals of that State, have ethnical, religious or linguistic features different from those of the rest of the population, and are guided by the will to safeguard their culture, traditions, religion or language.
2. Any group coming within the terms of this definition shall be treated as an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority.
3. To belong to a national minority shall be a matter of individual choice and no disadvantage may arise from the exercise of such choice.

This definition might in fact have made it possible for immigrants who have taken the citizenship of the new country to become minorities, since the existence of a minority would be decided upon on objective grounds. A state would not be able to claim that they do not have any minorities if the group claiming minority status met objectively specified conditions. But this

was not to be.

At the Vienna Summit Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe (8-9 October 1993), the decision was made not to proceed with the Proposal. Instead, the Committee of Ministers were instructed "to draft with minimum delay a framework convention specifying the principles which the contracting States commit themselves to respect, in order to assure the protection of *national* minorities" (Hartig 1995, 1, our emphasis)^{xi}. The Ad Hoc Committee for the Protection of National Minorities (CAHMIN) completed drafting in October 1994 and the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 November 1994, a year after the work on it was started^{xii}. It is also open to non-member States. By 1 October 1995 it had been signed by 31 states^{xiii}, but only been ratified by 4, whereas 12 are needed for it to enter into force. The Framework Convention is "the first ever legally binding multilateral instrument devoted to the protection of national minorities in general" (Hartig 1995, 2). The Convention aims at the establishment of effective equality between persons belonging to national minorities and others in the State and assumes that "it is not always enough to provide a legal guarantee of equality" (ibid.). Therefore the Convention "also identifies objectives which the States undertake to achieve and which will require positive measures. These measures may entail positive discrimination" (ibid.). So far as the medium of education is concerned, we again find that the Article covering this is more heavily qualified than anything else in the Framework Convention:

In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, *if there is sufficient demand*, the parties shall *endeavour* to ensure, *as far as possible* and *within the framework of their education systems*, that persons belonging to those minorities have *adequate* opportunities for being taught in the minority language *or* for receiving instruction in this language. (Article 14.2, our emphasis).

Even international lawyers, a cautious breed, seem to consider this provision as "weak" and "unsatisfactory - given the general context of the Convention as a whole as only a 'framework' for action by States" (Thornberry 1995, 13).

Here again, immigrant minorities are effectively excluded, even from this weak provision. Their exclusion can be seen by contrasting this Convention with the earlier *Proposal for a European Convention for the Protection of Minorities*, that had a definition of minorities which would have made it possible for immigrant minorities to be included. The Framework Convention has no definition of minorities whatsoever. The Proposal referred to "minorities", the Convention specifically applies only to "*national* minorities". Since these are not defined, the State can deny the existence of any minorities, especially immigrant minorities, who can easily be constructed as being distinct from national minorities, with different interests.

Another major forum that has influenced norm-setting in human rights and the overall pattern of East-West links in Europe in the past decade is the *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe* (CSCE, now OSCE). An OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (Max van der Stoep) was appointed in 1992. The (1990) *Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE* states unambiguously that *national* minorities should have the right to maintain their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, the right to seek voluntary and public assistance to do so in educational institutions, and should not be subjected to assimilation against their will (CSCE 1990a, 40).

The CSCE document is akin to the proposed European Convention for the Protection of

Minorities in stressing the right of minorities to define themselves:

To belong to a national minority is a matter of a person's individual choice and no disadvantage may arise from the exercise of such choice. (32)

As one might predict, immigrant minorities are not covered. The States are willing to accept that they are some kind of human beings too, but their rights will (hopefully) be examined at some future point:

The participating States reaffirm that the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers have their human dimension. In this context, they ... (22)
- express their readiness to examine, at future CSCE meetings, the relevant aspects of the further promotion of the rights of migrant workers and their families. (22.4)

The European Parliament's *Directive on the education of the children of migrant workers* (77/466/EEC of 25.7.77) is fraught with difficulties of interpretation and implementation. This is clear from the Parliament's own *Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry into RACISM and XENOPHOBIA* (A3-195/90, PE 141.205/FIN, 111). The Directive merely recommends a few hours of teaching of the mother tongue as a subject. That this is seen as an optional right of doubtful relevance can be seen from much public debate in one signatory state, Denmark, where it is frequently suggested that the teaching of the mother tongues of migrant minorities could be dispensed with^{xiv}. It is striking that this is taking place in a country which, along with the other Scandinavian countries, regards itself as spearheading international efforts to promote the observation of human rights.

In sum, one can conclude that at the "universal" level of the United Nations, and in many supranational European fora, efforts have been made to codify minority language rights and to disseminate some awareness of the positive role of minorities. Many international lawyers seem to think that the standard-setting phase is largely over - what is needed now is standard-clarification: to clarify the scope and substance of existing rights. However, the codification efforts have not yielded results which would in any way guarantee the support needed for minorities to maintain and develop their languages and cultures, especially in education. Both clarification and additional codification are needed.

At state level, there are of course many examples of good practice in minority language rights, for instance Belgium, Finland or Switzerland, though the position is in fact complicated in each of these^{xv}. In former communist states, language rights have figured prominently as one of the teething problems of emerging democracies, which confirms the need for clear principles and for mechanisms to ensure that rights can be enforced.

In the customary reading of the Article 27 of the CCPR, rights were only granted to individuals, not collectivities. And "persons belonging to ... minorities" only had these rights *in states which accept that such minorities exist*^{xvi}. Thus far, the Article has been interpreted as

- excluding (im)migrants, who have not been seen as minorities;
- excluding groups (even if they are citizens) which are not recognised as minorities by the State, in the same way as the European Charter does;
- only conferring some protection against discrimination (i.e. reactive or "negative" rights) but not a positive right to maintain or even use one's language;
- not imposing any obligations on States.

On 6 April 1994 the *UN Human Rights Committee* adopted a General Comment on Article 27 which interprets it in a substantially more positive way than earlier. The Committee sees the Article as

- protecting all individuals on the State's territory or under its jurisdiction, i.e. also immigrants and refugees, irrespective of whether they belong to the minorities specified in the Article or not;
- stating that the existence of a minority does not depend on a decision by the State but needs to be established by objective criteria;
- recognizing the existence of a "right";
- imposing positive obligations on the States.

What are the possible implications of the General Comment for educational linguistic human rights? This depends essentially on to what extent states will start implementing the new interpretations and how the the Human Rights Committee follows it up (Eide, personal communication, November 18 1995). But clearly the underlying thrust is in the classic mould of human rights instruments striving to equip individuals against a state that does not live up to its obligations. It also builds on the belief that many of the conflicts in the contemporary world have their roots in injustice and the denial of human rights, and that we still have a long way to go before such rights are generally respected. This attempt to push "soft" international law in a more proactive direction is occurring at a time when the UN is embroiled in many conflicts worldwide, including European ones, when supra-national alliances are being realigned and reshaped (EU expansion, OSCE, new roles for NATO), and when the naive optimism of post-communist euphoria and western European europhoria has been replaced by the sobering reality of states failing to manage their affairs in ways that their citizens can support and identify with. The need for language policy to contribute to the elaboration of democratic scenarios that acknowledge the fact of ethnolinguistic diversity and contribute to harmonious coexistence between minority, majority and international languages is manifest.

4. ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EUROPE

This is not the place for an analysis of the extent to which the various states of Europe provide support for *minority* languages. A study of this topic would reveal major variation in the degree of support within states (e.g. Catalunya or the Basque country as compared with other regions in Spain) and between states (e.g. Catalan-learning in France and Spain, by mother tongue Catalan speakers themselves and speakers of Castilian or French). Nor is it possible to generalize very meaningfully about the degree and type of investment in *foreign* language learning, even if the European Union has commissioned such studies, which have rather meagre explanatory value (e.g. those published by the EU's Eurydice office). The picture varies from support for the learning of *several* languages (e.g. Finland), a concentration on *three* identified foreign languages (the Netherlands) over several years, to the learning of a *single* language over a few years as one element of the British national curriculum^{xvii}.

What is clear is that the resources invested in the learning of the dominant state language are immense, and the investment in the learning of foreign languages, with all the infrastructure of higher education training, books, space on time-tables etc, is substantial. McDonaldization and the perception of the market value of English in employment favour English as a school subject. The attention paid to minority languages is a drop in this ocean.

From this one can conclude that majority language speakers enjoy the linguistic human right to

learn the mother tongue, and that in some contexts minority language speakers enjoy the right to learn the mother tongue and the dominant, official language, both of which must be regarded as linguistic human rights.

It is rare for the learning of foreign languages to be considered a matter of human rights, though one proposal to this effect has been put to UNESCO by the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV), the World Federation of Modern Language Teachers (Batley et al 1993). Such a right is more a question of cultural enrichment than of a necessity for the exercise of fundamental rights of participation in a democratic society (see the discussion of this in Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1994b, 98-103), and cannot therefore be regarded as the same type of right as the others.

At the same time it is important to recall that human rights, while being regarded in principle as an indivisible non-hierarchical set, are also in a constant state of evolution, standard clarification and refinement, and new ones are added (for instance the right to "development" in recent years). It is therefore arguable that if a diglossic division of linguistic labour emerges as a feature of any EU countries, with English as the High language for prestige purposes, and the local official language as a Low language confined to domestic use, then competence in English may become essential for social functioning and upward social mobility. There are trends of this sort visible in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, but it is too early to assess how matters will develop. However it is already the case in such countries that English is an essential component of the school curriculum, and success in examinations is imperative for access to higher levels of education. English therefore has a social stratificational function. Likewise, competence in using English-language textbooks is necessary in many areas of study. A contemporary trend is for English also to be used at times as the medium in higher education and in schools (e.g. in early immersion in Finland and Catalunya, in late immersion in Hungary). The implications of such developments, nationally and internationally, would need careful analysis, not least in relation to their impact on the exercise of linguistic human rights in particular contexts.

In Europe it does not appear that many countries have attempted to draw up comprehensive language policy plans covering majority/official, minority and foreign languages. A report, by an independent consultant, for the EU's LINGUA office, on the current state of foreign language teaching and the impact of EU initiatives sees foreign language learning as a key measure for Europeanisation, but assesses that "most Member States have not yet reached the position of defining their own strategy for languages in a coherent form" (Savage 1994: 11). This does not mean that there is no language policy, quite the opposite. There are competing, mostly covert, language policies, national and supranational, in an evolving world in which the nation state is being redefined in supranational, postnational ways. Relationships between national and international languages are likewise being redefined. Absence of an overt overall policy, whether for a state or the EU, may well lead to imbalances between economic market forces (English for business) and desired educational and social policy goals (a diverse linguistic ecology, minority language rights, etc).

The spread of English is enshrouded in myths, including for the British the comforting myth that they did not impose their language anywhere. And the notion that the Anglo-Americans are merely meeting a "demand" for English. There is, obviously, a massive "demand" for English. This demand reflects contemporary power balances and the hope that mastery of English will lead to the prosperity and glamorous hedonism that the privileged in this world have access to and that is projected in Hollywood films and ads for transnational corporations. English is a key medium for such messages, and it is logical that there should be a demand for access to what the

medium symbolizes. But just as demands can be and are orchestrated, the "supply" required infrastructure and investment, and these were forthcoming, in a big way from the 1950s onwards (Phillipson 1992, chapter 6). In a logical continuation of this investment, current British and American expenditure on TESOL in former communist countries is scarcely altruistic.

A brief historical flashback

English has spread as an inevitable accompaniment to American economic, military and political hegemony, and through its entrenchment in international organizations like the UN and the World Bank, and in the scientific community, but policy for its spread was not left to chance. The maintenance of the position of English has been a key aim of foreign "aid". The spread of English, according to a Director of the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC, was

greatly abetted by the expenditure of large amounts of government and private foundation funds in the period 1950-1970, perhaps the most ever spent in history in support of the propagation of a language. (Troike 1977, 2)

A series of British government reports in the 1950s determined that investment in an academic infrastructure was needed if British interests in the postcolonial period were to be protected and maintained. A confidential Cabinet report in 1956 states:

Within a generation from now English could be a world language - that is to say, a universal second language in those countries in which it is not already the native or primary tongue. The tide is still running in its favour, but with slackening force... it is important that its expansion should take place mainly under Commonwealth and United States auspices. (Report of the Official Committee on the Teaching of English Overseas, Ministry of Education, 1956)

The British Council had been established in 1935 to promote British interests and English, partly in response to the success of the fascist governments of Italy and Germany in using language teaching and higher education scholarships to promote their national interest. The British mission in promoting English is not without similarities to a Herrenfolk ideal, as can be seen in a wartime book on "The diffusion of English culture outside England" (Routh 1941). It is a blueprint for English as a "world-language", wrapped in a learned mantle of humanism and Darwinist cultural evolution.

"England will be the dominating force in international politics, the professed and confessed arbiter of liberty" (ibid., 31), the "world's leading nation" (50). Britain has a new responsibility which means that "we not only have a spiritual heritage of our own - a national soul - but that somehow this possession is incomplete unless shared with other nations" (134). A new career service is needed, for gentlemen teachers of English with equivalent status to "the Civil Service, Army, Bar, or Church" (60), an "army of linguistic missionaries" generated by a "training centre for post-graduate studies and research" (12), and a "central office in London, from which teachers radiate all over the world" (13). The new service must "lay the foundations of a world-language and culture based on our own".

Cutting a fairly long story short (part of it being recounted in Phillipson 1992), and ignoring

Routh's historical blindness to Britain as a poor relative of the US from 1940, this is what happened. English Language Teaching expanded massively, in higher education in Britain (and in the US, though the American English as a Second Language profession has always been more concerned with the learning of English by minority groups in the US), publishers, language schools, overseas jobs, aid, professional associations, British Council libraries and offices worldwide. This mission was formulated in the British Council Annual Report, 1960-1961, as follows:

Teaching the world English may appear not unlike an extension of the task which America faced in establishing English as a common national language among its own immigrant population.

Even if American power has set the agenda, or at least the framework, Britain is still possibly the "world's leading nation" in the global English teaching business. This is a paradoxical state of affairs, when one recalls that the British, like the Americans, are notoriously inept at learning foreign languages. Perhaps only surpassed by the French (foreign language education is a "catastrophe of planetary proportions" in the view of the French government^{xviii}). The English language is certainly important for the British economy. English for business is business for English.

The degree and nature of the impact of Anglo-American English teaching interests on well established education systems in continental Europe is debatable, just as the number of factors that influence how well people learn foreign languages is substantial. We assume that each state in Europe has hitherto decided which foreign languages its citizens should learn, with a modest level of "assistance" from foreign governments. One of the intriguing paradoxes in language policy is why governments invest substantially in the teaching and learning of a language, in particular English, that is regarded as a threat to local cultural values. In some countries, particularly France and Norway (see Norsk språkråd 1995), the linguistic threat *per se* is perceived as major and has triggered measures to counteract it. It is of course not the language that is a threat but the functions to which a language is put (hierarchizing or democratizing access to information, goods and services) and the ways in which it is learned (subtractively or additively). The argument that any language can serve any purposes, good or bad, needs to be held up against the empirical reality of the actual functions particular languages serve in particular contexts. As is well known, language planners need to address matters of corpus, status and acquisition planning.

Although EU member states spend a vast amount on language learning in schools, with mixed success, and on the interpretation and translation services of EU institutions, language policy issues tend to be regarded as a hot political potato, supranationally and nationally, and only in those countries in which language policy has a relatively high profile, such as France and Norway (which, it will be recalled, decided in a referendum in 1994 not to join the EU), is there much dexterity in handling or at least addressing the issues. The British attitude is that there are infinite supplies of their particular root, and that the sooner others cultivate it the better, preferably to the exclusion of other plants^{xix}.

An example of language policy agendas in post-communist Europe

In the October/November 1995 number of *TESOL Matters*, the editor of the *TESOL Quarterly*, Sandra McKay, reports that she functioned in May 1995 as an "Academic Specialist in a United

Nations sponsored program in Latvia to develop the use of Latvian among Latvian residents in all domains of society". The efforts of the UN team were to be directed towards building up Latvian learning among those with Russian as a mother tongue. McKay does not indicate whether she herself speaks either of these languages, but this is rather unlikely. She endorses the idea of an increased use of Latvian, though she is by no means convinced that this will materialize. She reports that English provides a bridge between the local participants, who were "composed of both Russian and Latvian speaking members." This is a curious outcome of a UN project to support Latvian, granted that few people in Latvia speak good English, and granted that everyone knows Russian - though for important cultural and political reasons the Latvian-speaking group are keen to reduce the role of Russian and to extend correspondingly the use of Latvian. There is also clear research evidence documenting that Russian-speakers in Latvia are keen to learn Latvian (Druviete, personal communication^{xx}). None the less the American expert is convinced that "English will provide a neutral medium in which Latvians and Russians, as well as other minority groups, can work to establish a new independent Latvia" (McKay 1995, 17). McKay also quite blithely offers the information to her TESOL colleagues that TESOL is facilitating American exports, as English is "opening Latvia to trade and commerce from the West", naming McDonald's and TV films as showing the way (ibid.). TESOL itself is naturally also an export item, and not neutral in any sense (see Oda 1994).

It is unfortunately unlikely that this is an isolated example of a project that is apparently well motivated but that presents a threat to local languages and commerce^{xxi}. Post-communist states, all of which are multi-ethnic, are urgently in need of solutions to their problems. Western know-how and investment may be of value, but anecdotal evidence from a variety of eastern and central European contexts makes one extremely sceptical about the value of much "aid" to language education. In postcolonial contexts it appears to have served so-called donor countries better than the recipients. The powerhouses of educational "world English" are in abrasively monolingually oriented countries, with divisive education systems, states which seldom accord linguistic human rights to their own minority language users, immigrant and indigenous, and which notoriously fail to educate the younger generation as competent foreign or second language users. Yet they have a successful export business in language education^{xxii}. A small study in California (reported in a book analysing the myth of the global appropriacy of native speakers as ESL teachers, Medgyes 1995) documents that even specialist ESL teachers rate themselves as poor language learners, and that they have a poor track record of learning the language of the country where they have practised their trade. One of the factors that contributes to the relative success of foreign language learning in Europe is probably the fact that most teachers have themselves been successful in learning the language in question.

Although there are success stories in bilingual education in North America and Britain, these are not in the educational "mainstream" and indeed are under direct attack^{xxiii}. Nor is multilingualism and an understanding of multi-ethnic states a central concern of orthodox TESOL, though this may be changing. There is increasing evidence of language professionals subjecting the global relevance of ESL professionalism to serious scrutiny in both Britain and the USA^{xxiv}. But for every critical voice, there is probably a chorus of triumphalists.

It is difficult to avoid concluding that the agents of world English are to some degree facilitating McDonaldization, and that what is promising for Anglo-American business is threatening to everyone else. *How* significant the TESOL business is in such processes is very difficult to assess, and an empirical question in any given context, but it would seem that language specialists have a special obligation to assess the relevance of their professional competence and

the wider socio-political and policy dimensions of their activities.

5. AN ECOLOGY OF LANGUAGE PARADIGM AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO A GLOBAL DIFFUSION OF ENGLISH PARADIGM

The overall pattern of much of what we have been discussing is powerfully captured by Yukio Tsuda of Japan, who postulates two competing global paradigms in language policy, the Diffusion of English paradigm and the Ecology of Language paradigm. Tsuda sees the paradigms as characterized by the following (1994: 49-61, our lettering and numbering^{xxv}):

Diffusion of English Paradigm

- A.- capitalism
- B.- science and technology
- C.- modernization
- D.- monolingualism
- E.- ideological globalization and internationalization
- F.- transnationalization
- G.- Americanization and homogenization of world culture
- H.- linguistic, cultural and media imperialism

Ecology of Language Paradigm

- 1.- a human rights perspective
- 2.- equality in communication
- 3.- multilingualism
- 4.- maintenance of languages and cultures
- 5.- protection of national sovereignties
- 6.- promotion of foreign language education.

The "English-speaking world" is saturated with uncritical, hegemonic views of the global appropriacy of English and the benefits that accrue from using the language. Although English linguistic hegemony is not unchallenged on any continent, the Diffusion of English paradigm has a triumphalist history in all parts of the world, not least in the "mother" country in the period of the successful entrenchment of the capitalist system, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

Against the heteroglossia embodied primarily in class and gender difference there was pitted a monoglot and monological representation of the language. It was a representation which was crude in its form and brutal in its exclusivity; and it still has effects in the present. (Crowley 1996, 188)

These effects are demonstratively visible in the "national" curriculum in Great Britain and in the English Only movement in the United States. A similar paradigm is now an essential ingredient in globalization and McDonaldization, with technological backup that was unthinkable a few decades ago, and asymmetrical patterns of cultural and linguistic dominance.

An approach to global language policy based on the Ecology of Language, and not least principles of linguistic human rights, would entail a much more democratic promise for

humanity. This will be an uphill task, since many countries are trying, actively or passively, to block the path of linguistic human rights. For instance Greece and Turkey have not signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and of the almost 120 States which *have* ratified it, the United States and Haiti are the only ones which have *failed* to ratify the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Eide 1995, 23), which codifies *some* linguistic and educational rights. Germany and Britain have not ratified the Optional Protocol which gives access to the complaints procedure. At the CSCE Copenhagen meeting on the Human Dimension in June 1990, France, Greece and Turkey did not go along with some far-reaching formulations for the benefit of minorities. When the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was accepted (June 1992), France, Turkey and United Kingdom abstained, and Greece voted against it (*Contact Bulletin* 9:2, 1992, 1). Thus the United States, Britain, France, Greece and Turkey have often prevented or sought to prevent the granting of linguistic human rights. This has not prevented all of these countries from projecting themselves as protectors of human rights and minorities, and voicing criticism of other countries for their treatment of minorities.

The prospects for minorities in Western European countries, including migrant and refugee minorities, to enjoy their educational linguistic rights fully are thus not very good. In many countries there is a long tradition of minorities being deprived of their rights by subtle pressures and means, whereas in other parts of Europe such as Slovakia, cruder legislative means of enforcing assimilation are currently being implemented, to the great concern of the Hungarian-speaking minorities. The idea that "English" can solve such problems is pure fantasy. An ecology of language perspective embracing use of all the relevant languages is needed.

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i This term is used within the profession, e.g. in the monthly *E L Gazette*, the BBC English supplement to the *Guardian Weekly* (28.1.1996) and British Council activities are intended to promote this industry.

ii The "English 2000" project was launched by Prince Charles for the British Council in early 1995. The press pack associated with this media event declares that the aims of English 2000 are "to exploit the position of English to further British interests" as one aspect of maintaining and expanding the "role of English as the world language into the next century". Fundamental ambivalence about whose interests are served by an increased use of English can be seen in the project description: "The English language is in the full sense international: it is divesting itself of its political and cultural connotations." That is a debatable proposition about the "internationalization" processes which English is part of, but apparently contradicted by the next sentence in the text, when the British connection is stressed: "Speaking English makes people open to Britain's cultural achievements, social values and business aims."

iii Some states experience the need to legislate to "protect" the official language. In Slovakia there are plans to draft a law to protect the state language (i.e. Slovak), comparable to laws in France (Loi Toubon) and the English Only amendments in the United States. As in language learning, the legitimacy and results depend to a large extent on whether this is done in an additive way (so that other languages, especially national minority languages, have substantial guaranteed rights anyway) or in a subtractive way (so that the "protection" of the official language encroaches heavily on the rights of other languages in the country).

iv Definitions of minorities are notoriously difficult - see Capotorti 1979, Andryšek 1989, Hannum 1990, Packer 1993.

v See Capotorti 1979, the UN Special Rapporteur on minorities, confirmed in more recent UN reports.

vi The Charter of the United Nations, 1945. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. The clauses relating to linguistic human rights in these and a substantial number of charters, resolutions, and declarations are included in the appendix of Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (eds.) 1994a, pp. 371-412.

vii This is Lachman Khubchandani's term for much language policy in India (personal communication).

viii The entire text of this comprehensive Charter is included in the appendix of Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1994a.

ix We could envisage that this right might be extended to members of one minority group learning the language of another minority.

x These countries were (by 1 October 1995) Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain and Switzerland (Hartig 1995, 4).

xi In addition, the Committee of Ministers was instructed "to begin work on drafting a protocol complementing the European Convention on Human Rights in the cultural field by

provisions guaranteeing individual rights, in particular for persons belonging to national minorities" (Hartig 1995, 2).

xii Considering that most comparable instruments have been a decade or more in the making, one wonders why this document was drafted so hastily.

xiii Of the member States, the following have not yet signed: Andorra, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Greece and Turkey. Ukraine has signed, despite not being a member State.

xiv It looks as though the (ruling) Social Democratic party in 1996 may obtain a parliamentary majority in favour of converting mother tongue lessons to Danish lessons.

xv There is an extensive literature on such topics. See, for instance, McRae 1983, 1986.

xvi Finns in Sweden have tried to be accepted as such, but without success, see Skutnabb-Kangas, in press a. In October 1995 the Prime Minister finally agreed, after more than 3 years, officially to receive the declaration submitted by the Sweden Finnish minority that asserts their minority status.

xvii See the survey article Trim 1994, and van Els 1992.

xviii In papers prepared for the 10th session of the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie, 1994, on "La francophonie et l'Europe", which elaborated a strategy for promoting multilingualism - and French.

xix *Editorial in "The Sunday Times", 10.7.1994: "The way of salvation for the French language is for English to be taught as vigorously as possible as the second language in all its schools... Only when the French recognize the dominance of AngloAmerican English as the universal language in a shrinking world can they effectively defend their own distinctive culture... Britain must press ahead with the propagation of English and the British values which stand behind it."*

xx Information from Dr Ina Druviete of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, who has been involved in a substantial amount of sociolinguistic fieldwork in Latvia. See also Druviete 1995, forthcoming.

xxi Danish government money earmarked for promoting human rights in Estonia has partly been spent on improving the English language competence of people from Estonia.

xxii The TESOL/English as a Second Language lobby is assisted by the voice of the eminent grammarian, Lord (Randolph) Quirk: "... the latest ideas in English teaching. Where best, after all, to get the latest ideas on this than in the leading English-speaking countries?" (1990, 8).

xxiii See the contributions to Skutnabb-Kangas (ed.) 1995 for some of the successful examples. Despite this, "the anti-immigrant, English-only, anti-government-program sentiments are so strong in the U.S.A. and California in particular that there is little hope of weathering this storm. In September [1995], the Bilingual Education Office [of California State Department] was closed and the eight consultants were sent to seven different offices ... with little possibility of advocating for language minority children. I have tried to come up with some scheme to organize advocacy efforts but without success. I have requested meetings with superiors since mid-August but they refuse to even meet with me" (David Dolson, earlier Director of the Bilingual Education Office, in a letter in December 1995 - see also Dolson & Lindholm 1995 on some of the most successful North American experiments).

xxiv See Tollefson 1991, Phillipson 1992 and Pennycook 1994, all "North" scholars who have been profoundly influenced by scholarship in the "South". Kaplan 1995 is an astonishing admission of past failings by one of the luminaries of the ESL world.

xxv See elaboration of this in Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas in press, and references there.