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Language attrition, language death, language murder - different facts or different ideologies?[i]

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1. THE BACKGROUND - HOW MANY LANGUAGES ARE "SAFE"?

Linguists agree that many languages face extinction. Michael Krauss from Alaska, one of the linguists who has worked hard to make the world aware of the threat to languages (e.g. Krauss 1992), estimates (at a conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, reported in **The Philadelphia Inquirer** 19.2.1995, p. A15) that while humans probably spoke 10,000 to 15,000 languages in prehistoric times, this is now down to around 6,000 for spoken languages[ii] and dropping fast (see Table 1). Krauss estimates that only around 600 of these languages, less than 10 percent of the world's languages, are assured of still being around in 2100. Already today, between 20 and 50 percent of the world's languages are no longer being learned by children, meaning they are "beyond endangerment, they are living dead and will disappear in the next century" (ibid.). Only languages with over 1 million speakers are considered by Krauss to be "safe" ('Have a good future'), whereas other authors, e.g. Michael Foster (1982) see languages with fewer estimated speakers than 5,000 as threatened, meaning there is a grey area between 'clearly threatened' (under 5,000 speakers) and 'safe' (over 1 million speakers). Panu Hallamaa (1997) has suggested excellent criteria for threat, based on intergenerational transmittance on languages, which complement Fishman's criteria on reversing language shift (1991).

Table 1 approximately here

Knowing that the **average number of speakers for the world's spoken languages** is 5,000 to 10,000, it is easy to see that the future for linguistic diversity is not bright, also because it is unlikely that many new languages will be born. Latin, for instance, took some 2,000 years to evolve into a dozen or so European languages, Krauss observes.

2. BIODIVERSITY AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

In Western thinking there seems to be a possibly stronger inheritance of seeing homogeneity as positive and natural than in many other parts of the world. The Bible definitely sees the diversity of languages as a curse, a punishment for peoples' pride. As opposed to the Bible, Abdussalam (forthcoming) describes the views in the Qur'an as follows:

"variations in languages, dialects, and modes of expression among the groups and individuals are considered a sign of Allah's omnipotence, beside the creation of the heavens and the earth".

This positive attitude towards diversity in the Qur'an seems to be true not only for linguistic but also ethnic/racial diversity. Many myths from other parts of the world seem to consider diversity as positive too. And accepting diversity as more positive than homogeneity also precludes many either-or stances.

How many languages have there been in the world? Whereas the number after the tower of Babel was supposed to be 70 or 72 according to the Bible, Mark Pagel (as reported by Nicholas Ostler in **Iatiku: Newsletter of of the Foundation for Endangered Languages** 1, 1995, 6) has estimated

the upper and lower bounds of the number of languages ever spoken, using current hypotheses of the rate of language change and the age of the language faculty in man[iii]. His middle estimate was 140.000 - with a low figure of 31.000 and a maximum of 600.000, which puts into some sort of perspective the 5-8.000 we reckon with now.

Combining Krauss' upper and Pagel's lowest limit for prehistoric times, if we suppose that there have been, say, 15,000-30,000 languages and the figure is based on change, it must mean that they have not all existed at the same time and that many have died, and new ones have come into existence. My first question is then: Does this mean that it is "natural" for languages to come and go, natural in the same way as for biological organisms? If so, does this also mean that, in the present time, trying to maintain languages, trying to prevent what might be seen as a "natural" development, is "working against nature" and should not be done?

Mark Pagel also points out that in North America "languages, like all biological species, get thicker on the ground as you approach the equator" (ibid., 6). This seems to be true on the other side of one of the oceans too: if we exclude languages whose speakers have immigrated to Europe during this century, there are fewer native languages in the whole of Europe (at least when excluding Russia but probably even when Russia is included) than in just on African country, Nigeria, which is much closer to the equator. The most linguistically diverse areas in the world (e.g. Indonesia, Papua New Guinea or California) are all close to the equator.

Reporting on the conference "Endangered Languages, Endangered Knowledge, Endangered Environments" at the University of California, Berkeley (October 1996), Luisa Maffi, President of Terralingua[iv], also says that there are "remarkable overlaps between global mappings of the world's areas of biological megadiversity and areas of high linguistic diversity", and likewise a "correlation between low-diversity cultural systems and low biodiversity" (Maffi 1996).

My second question is: Does this mean that we can discuss languages and linguistic diversity (linguodiversity) somehow in the same way or at least parallel to biological diversity?

One of the problems with these two questions for me is that a common sense logic seems to say: you cannot have your cake and eat it.

Either you believe that biodiversity and linguodiversity are somehow similar or parallel, and then you must accept the other parallel too, namely that languages like biological species "naturally" have a life-span, including death.

Or, if you believe that languages do not die a "natural" death - they die because of human intervention, because of murdering agents - then it sounds logically contradictory to use an argument about the necessity of biodiversity to support the claim about the necessity of linguodiversity.

You cannot have it both ways. If we accept **both** principles that I stand for (languages should be maintained; linguodiversity is not only valuable but necessary for the future of the planet, as is biodiversity, and there is a relationship between them which has, though, to be conceptualised in ways which avoid what has been called biologism), is there not a logical contradiction in the eclecticism: We draw (some) arguments from **parallels with nature** (= linguodiversity is in some way parallel to biodiversity), at the same time as we are suggesting procedures which would mean **preventing a "natural" development** (= preventing languages from dying)?

Many researchers, including some who are here, Peter Mühlhäusler, Hartmut Haberland and Florian Coulmas, have discussed this question in different but insightful ways. While agreeing with many of the arguments Haberland and Mühlhäusler use, I shall concentrate on sketching the preliminary contours of just one aspect of the puzzle, namely that seeing the issue as a question of two paradigms or at least two theoretical, maybe epistemological, approaches, might solve one part of the puzzle.

First a few words about the necessity of linguistic diversity and the links between biodiversity and linguistic diversity, then the question of the two paradigms of natural death or murder, and finally a comment about transcending the paradigms if not the puzzle.

3. THE NECESSITY OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND THE LINKS BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Mark Pagel has "some suggestive results with neural nets, arguing (by implicit analogy) that if learning different phonological systems can affect the development of our brains, just think of the variety that different grammar and semantics may make; and what the human race will lose, in terms of knowledge of its potential, if the diversity of languages available is markedly reduced" (reported by Nicholas Ostler in **Iatiku: Newsletter of of the Foundation for Endangered Languages** 1, 1995, 6).

According to Maffi, ethnobiologists, human-ecologists and others have proposed theories of 'human-environment coevolution', including the assumption that "cultural diversity might enhance biodiversity or vice versa." In this perspective, the conference on endangered languages stressed "the need to address the foreseeable consequences of massive disruption of such long-standing interactions". The processes of language loss also "affect the maintenance of traditional environmental knowledge - from loss of biosystematic lexicon to loss of traditional stories". Schooling, in addition to migration, was explored as one of the important causal factors in language loss at the conference.

Most of the world's languages are spoken by fairly few people. Likewise, most languages in the world are not used for reading and writing on a daily basis. Darrell Posey from Oxford Centre for Environment, Ethics and Society, writes about the around 250 million indigenous peoples of the world (1997, 8). Demographically they make up no more than around 4 percent of the world's population. But they have around 19% of the earth's surface under their control or management, and the majority of the world's oral languages 60-80 percent (between 4.000 and 5.000) are spoken by them (table 2).

table 2 approximately here

In addition, they are

"active stewards of some of the most biologically and ecologically rich regions of the world" (ibid., 8).

The holistic views of indigenous people

"link environmental sustainability directly with individual health and community well-being" and "the diversity of life that provides the cornerstone for sustainability" with "the knowledge of that diversity enshrined in the laws, sciences, religions, rituals, and ceremonies of human societies. In other words, there is an inextricable link between environmental and cultural diversity." And it is

"language that links cultural knowledge to environmental practice. Without language, indigenous concepts of nature, perceptions of environment, and categories of conservation and management would be lost. Traditional knowledge may indeed linger even after a native language is lost, but the richness and diversity of that knowledge cannot survive even one generation of language loss." (ibid., 8).

To me this indicates that there is a strong correlation between biodiversity and linguistic diversity. Even if the correlation need not indicate a direct causal relationship, meaning neither type of diversity can be seen directly as an **independent** variable in relation to the other, linguistic and cultural diversity is a decisive **mediating** variable in sustaining biodiversity itself, as long as humans are on the earth. It is also a necessary prerequisite for sustaining the knowledge basis needed for the discourse of legitimating the support for **maintaining** biodiversity. It also gives food to thought to see that 96% of the world's population not only leaves the responsibility for 60-80 percent of our planet's linguistic and cultural resources to a mere 4% but the elites of those 96% are busy killing those resources. If we instead at least really left the 4% alone, they would manage well in reproducing and developing those riches.

4. NATURAL DEATH OR MURDER?

My second question is: language death or language murder? The <u>first</u> of the two paradigms holds that if everything living in nature has a life-span, everything is born, blossoms, withers away, is replaced by the next candidate - then

why not languages? Let a natural order prevail! Besides, the weak (individuals and species which cannot adapt to changing circumstances) die and the strong (those who can adapt) survive in nature. The concepts LANGUAGE ATTRITION and LANGUAGE DEATH do not necessarily imply a causal agent. First attrition and then language death are seen as occurring because of circumstances beyond the control of any agents. The "effects", for instance language death as a result of "modernization", are often regarded as inevitable concomitants of social change. Language death is thus seen as comparable to the evolution of natural organisms which develop, bloom and wither away, athrophy, and finally die.

When some liberal economists (e.g. Friedrich List, 1885, 174ff.) a century ago considered that nations had to be of a "sufficient size" to be viable, it followed that smaller nationalities **and languages** were doomed to disappear, as collective victims of "the law of progress". Their speakers were advised to reconcile themselves to "the loss of what could not be adapted to the modern age" (Hobsbawm 1991, 29-39). Several Western European liberal ideologists and Soviet language planners in the early part of this century held that nations (each with their own language) were but one phase in a development towards a unified world with a world language, coexisting with national languages which would be "reduced to the domestic and sentimental role of dialects" (ibid., 38).

This liberal ideology of development is still alive and well. When discussing "small ethnic groups and languages", we are warned not to "be idealistic and feel blind pity for everything which *in its natural course* is transformed, becomes outdated or even extinct", (Šatava 1992, 80; my emphasis). The concept of language death can be associated with this type of liberal ideology, whether in Eastern Europe, North America (the "English Only" movement), or in aid policies worldwide, these invariably supporting dominant languages. At the individual level, language death would within this paradigm be seen as a result of a voluntary language shift by each speaker. At a lunch with the American Ambassador to Denmark, Mr. Elton, in March 1997, he said the the most serious problem for the European Union was that it had so many languages; this prevented a real integration and development of the Union. If we accept this type of anthropomorphizing of languages as organisms and believe in some type of neo-evolutionary modernisation theory (as it seems to me many linguists and politicians implicitly do), does the parallel not mean that those languages and cultures which respond to the demands of modernity, technology, information society and market economies, survive and spread, while those whose speakers cling to traditions, die?

The second paradigm which also corresponds to my contention holds that many languages and cultures have died at least during the last centuries NOT because this has been a "natural" development, but because they have been "helped" on their way. They have not "died" because of old age or lack af adaptability - they have been murdered.

Linguistic and cultural genocide[v], the **extermination of languages**, analogous concepts to (physical) *genocide*, is a more accurate name for what has happened (whereas **language death** and **language attrition** would be analogous concepts to *natural death*). And linguistic and cultural genocide is happening every day, at an accelerating speed. The main stages for this murdering are in my view the stages where consciousness industry has a free range: day-care centres, educational institutions, mass media[vi].

What is linguistic genocide? When the United Nations did preparatory work for what was to become the INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE (E 793, 1948), **linguistic and cultural genocide** were discussed alongside physical genocide, and were seen as serious crimes against humanity. When the Convention was accepted, Article 3, which covered linguistic and cultural genocide, was voted down in the General Assembly by 16 states, and it is thus *not included* in the final Convention of 1948 (see Capotorti 1979, 37). What remains, however, is **a definition of linguistic genocide**, which most states then in the UN were prepared to accept. Linguistic genocide is defined (in Art. 3, 1) as

Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group.

My claim is that "prohibition" can be direct or indirect. If the minority language is not used as a medium of education and childcare, the use of the minority language is indirectly prohibited in daily intercourse/in schools, i.e. it is a question of linguistic genocide.

Linguistic genocide reflects **LINGUICISM**, an analogous concept to *racism, sexism, classism* etc (and coarticulating with these). I have defined them all in similar ways. While linguicism is "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, 13), racism and ethnicism can be defined as "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of "race" (biologically argued racism) or ethnicity and culture (culturally argued racism:

ethnicism). Linguicism is then linguistically argued racism (Skutnabb-Kangas 1986). Linguicism has mainly been studied in connection with the education of immigrant and indigenous linguistic minorities (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988) and in relation to the prominence of English as a "world" language and the role of applied linguists in promoting English (Phillipson 1992).

Some languages may have died. A great many of the world's languages have been eliminated in recent centuries as a (direct or indirect) result of European settlement and colonisation. The remaining ones have, through linguicist processes, been **hierarchized** so that speakers of some languages and varieties have more power and material resources than their numbers would justify, simply because of being speakers of those languages and varieties. Maintenance of a linguicist hierarchy typically involves a pattern of **stigmatization** of dominated languages (mere "dialects", "vernaculars" or "patois"), **glorification** of the dominant language, and **rationalization** of the relationship between the languages, always to the benefit of the dominant one. These dominant or majority languages expand at the expense of minority (or minorized) languages (Table 3). Learning dominant languages has often been a **subtractive** experience for minority language speakers, whereas those dominant language speakers who learn other languages mostly do so in an **additive** way (see Lambert & Tucker 1972 for these concepts).

Table 3 approximately here

Juan Cobarrubias (1983, 71) has elaborated a taxonomy of policies which a state can adopt towards minority languages. For some, only the first policy would be linguicidal, for others the first three:
(1) attempting to kill a language;
(2) letting a language die;
(3) unsupported coexistence;
(4) partial support of specific language functions;
(5) adoption as an official language.
LINGUICIDE, in contrast to LANGUAGE DEATH, then implies that there are **agents** involved in **causing** the death of languages. The agents can be **active** ("**attempting** to kill a language") or **passive** ("**letting** a language die", or "unsupported coexistence", also often leading to the death of minority languages). In liberal ideology, only an **active** agent with the **intention** to kill languages would cause linguicide, whereas the other two would fall within the domain of language death. Linguicide is the extreme end result of linguicism at the group level.

Seen from the perspective of a conflict paradigm, the **causes** of linguicide and linguicism have to be analyzed from both **structural** and **ideological** angles, covering the struggle for structural power and material resources, and the legitimation, effectuation and reproduction of the unequal division of power and resources between groups based on language. The **agents** of linguicide/linguicism can also be **structural** (a state, e.g. Turkey vis-a-vis Kurds or Greece vis-a-vis the Turkish minority; an institution, e.g. schools; laws and regulations, e.g. those covering linguistic rights or the position of different languages on time-tables in schools; budgets, e.g. for teacher training or materials in certain languages) or **ideological** (norms and values ascribed to different languages and their speakers).

There is thus nothing "natural" in language death. Languages cannot be treated in an anthropomorphic way, as organisms with a natural life-span. Language death has causes, which can be identified and analysed.

5. LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The analysis necessarily also involves an ethical dimension. Whether humanity has a moral obligation to prevent linguicide, or whether this would be interference in an inevitable process in which only the fittest survive, has been debated at several levels, some partly inspired by primordial romanticism, some by instrumentalist "modernism". An attachment to one's language or mother tongue as a central cultural core value seems, like ethnicity, to draw on primordial, ascribed sources but to be shaped and actualised by (achieved) economic/political concerns (Fishman 1989, Smolicz 1979). This also means that language shift **can** be "voluntary" at an individual level: a result of more benefits accruing to the individual who agrees to shift than to someone who maintains her mother tongue. But in most cases of language shift I suspect that either sticks, punishment, or carrots, economic or other benefits, or ideological persuasion, hegemonic mind-mastering, have been at work - meaning linguicist agents.

"Preservation of the linguistic and cultural heritage of humankind" (one of Unesco's declared goals) has been seen by some researchers and politicians as a nostalgic primordialist dream (creating employment for the world's linguists). The perpetuation of linguistic diversity can, however, be seen as a recognition that all individuals and

groups have basic linguistic human rights, and as a necessity for the survival of the planet, in a similar way to biodiversity. Human rights, especially economic and social rights, are, according to human rights lawyer Katarina Tomaševski (1996, 104), to act as **correctives to the free market**. The prohibition of slavery meant that **people** should not be treated as commodities, and ILO (The International Labour Organisation) has added that **labour** should not be treated as commodity.

"The purpose of international human rights law is thus to overrule the law of supply and demand and remove price-tags from people and from necessities for their survival",

Tomaševski claims (ibid., 104). These necessities for survival include basic food and housing, but they also include basic civil, political **and cultural** rights. Education, including basic educational linguistic rights are part of the necessities from which price-tags should be removed. This means that it is the duty of governments to enable people to provide these necessities for themselves. If they cannot do so (as many cannot, among other reasons because the right to work is not a fundamental human right), it is the duty of governments according to human rights principles to provide for those unable to do it themselves. If this really happened, we would not need to worry about the fate of the world's languages. But it does not.

The development which has accelerated after the disintegration of Soviet Union, the triumphalist proclamation of the "free" market system (which of course is everything but free - see e.g. Escobar 1995) as The Global System For Ever, is an active agent in killing languages faster than ever. In global **human rights policies** there is a conspicuous silence about economic and social (or welfare) rights, coupled with very vocal anti-welfare approaches. In global and European **economic policies** human rights are hardly mentioned, except when legitimating capitalist benefits for the industrialised countries by alleged (and often factual) human rights violations by underdeveloped countries. Tomaševski states (1996, 100) that

"the ideology of the free market has exempted economy from public control (sometimes even influence) and thus eliminated the basis for human rights, when these are understood as an exercise of political rights to achieve economic, social and cultural rights".

This also means that when people are forced to shift their languages in order to gain economic benefits of the kind which in fact are bare necessities for basic survival, this is a violation of their linguistic human rights.

6. THE PUZZLE: LIBERAL POST-MODERNITY OR RADICALISED MODERNITY?
It seems to me that we in studying the approaches to how to theorize the threats posed by the issue of endangered languages really are dealing with different theoretical approaches, almost different paradigms. With lots of simplification, one can force the tendencies into just two, one liberal, one radical. An interesting question for debate seems to me to be to what extent what poses in a new guise as a new, sophisticated alternative to what it calls either outmoded marxism or mainstream approach, namely post-modernism, shares several traits with those old evolutionary liberal approaches which in development studies build on modernisation theories.

Many of the overt arguments used by the researchers and politicians who advocate the benefits of homogenisation, and likewise the much more covert arguments behind the theorizing of both the archivists[vii] and, especially the postmodern critics of linguistic human rights are in fact, it seems to me, based on some of the evolutionary premises, even if much of post-modernism overtly distances itself from any further evolution whatsoever - history and the Great Stories and Theories are dead. Therefore it may be difficult to see that many post-modernist arguments, despite a celebration of multiple diverse choices and identities, and an interest in seeing how **we** create the world through the word (rather than choice for the majority of the world's population still being largely constrained by structural and ideological framing), still are exponents of the same liberalist discourse.

Rather than starting to build big new theories, I shall present a very preliminary pragmatic list with many fuzzy edges, of some of the empirical differences between the two approaches I have mentioned, a list which could then be used to induct a framework for theorizing the differences (Table 4).

Table 4 approximately here

Finally, I would like to relate the two approaches to Anthony Giddens' comparisons between pre-modern and

modern cultures on the one hand and his conceptions of post-modernity and what he calls 'radicalised modernity' on the other hand (Giddens 1990 passim - see Giddens' Tables 1 and 2, and Figures 1-7). I would like to suggest the following working hypothesis:

The **'language murder' type theorising** combines some of the sources of localised trust from the 'pre-modern' environment, with transcending the limitations of especially aesthetic-oriented post-modernity into radicalised modernity which again might be a source of trust in the necessity for and possible success of Giddens' 'Utopian Realism' and even 'Post-scarcity System' - and both these utopian scenarios presuppose linguistic and cultural diversity.

On the other hand, the **'language death' type theorizing** seems, rather than being a source of **any** trust, either to contribute to the **threats** in Giddens' 'environment of risk' under 'modernity', or, in the post-modernist guise, to lead to a certain group apathy, combined with individual sceptical hedonism, combined with the type of individual and group-level fragmented, dissolved, disempowered acceptance of the "inevitabilities" which characterises 'Post-modernity' in Giddens' Table 2. Paradoxically, a linguistic and cultural homogenising seems to be at the core of the spread of the possibility of spreading the free market nomadism and the ensuing ideological chaos which precludes joint action, legitimating it with the help of sophisticated intellectual games.

These are of course VERY big and provocative assumptions which need to be carefully worked out, analysed, and reworked (my email for comments is tovesk@babel.ruc.dk).

7. FINALE: ARE YOU A DOUBLE AGENT? THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LINGUISTS

Some of the complexities of the questions discussed are illustrated in the very actions and texts of those who try to save languages. Missionaries (especially Christian ones) have been **both** agents of linguistic and cultural genocide and imperialism, **and** at the same time active in saving a type of written form, however distorted, of languages whose killing as oral languages they have also partly enabled.

Many of us linguists may, as unintentionally as the earlier missionaries, be "double agents". At the same time as we are busy trying to create conditions for (what we think are) the world's languages to survive, we are, for instance, by omission and invisibilazion of **sign languages**, actively preventing half the world's languages from having a chance of survival because we do not even acknowledge their existence![viii] Likewise, by not acknowledging the power relations which are killing languages, as a legitimate concern for linguists **qua** linguists (rather than as activists in their spare time), by separating "research" from "politics", cultures from structures, we may be supporting the murder of the very languages many of us are busy preserving and categorizing in archives.

"One day the apolitical intellectuals of my country will be interrogated by the simplest of our people." O.R.Castillo, from Malaquias Montoya's graphic 1984.

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Table 1
THREATENED LANGUAGES

Threatened languages

PREHISTORIC TIMES■ 10-15,000 (Michael Krauss)
■ 31,000-600,000; middle estimate 140,000 (Mark Pagel)

1997■ 5-8,000 oral languages and thousands of sign languages
of these:
'safe'■ not even languages with millions of speakers (Trond Trosterud)
■ lgs with over 1 million speakers (Krauss)
■ around 600 lgs will be there around 2100 (i.e. these 600 are 'safe') (Krauss)

 'threatened'■ "clearly threatened": lgs with fewer than 5,000 speakers (Michael Foster)
■ "beyond endangerement", "living dead": not learned by children; 20-50% (1,200-3,000) of the 6,000 lgs (Krauss)
■ degree of threat cannot be directly predicted from numbers (Trosterud)

'Average number of speakers'for the world's languages: 5-10,000 ...

Table 2
Contribution of indigenous peoples

DEMOGRAPHY■ around **4%** of the world's population

**ECOLOGICAL
RESPONSIBILITY**■ control or manage around **19%** of the surface of the earth (Posey 1997)

**RESPONSIBILITY
FOR LINGUISTIC
DIVERSITY**■ speak **60-80%** of the world's oral languages (4-5,000 of 6,000)(Posey 1997) and an equal
percentage of the sign languages

Table 3
Reproduction of unequal power relations through colonizing the consciousness: glorification, stigmatization and rationalisation

1. GLORIFY the majority/dominant group, its language, culture, norms, traditions, institutions, level of development, observance of human rights etc.

2. STIGMATIZE and devalue the minorities/subordinated groups, their languages, cultures, norms, traditions, institutions, level of development, observance of human rights etc so that they are seen as traditional, backward, not able to adapt to a postmodern technological information society.

3. RATIONALIZE their relationship economically, politically, psychologically, educationally, sociologically, linguistically, etc., so that what the dominant group/s do/es always seems functional, and beneficial to the minorities/subordinated groups (the majority is "helping", "giving aid", "civilizing", "modernizing", "teaching democracy", "granting rights", "protecting world peace", etc.

Table 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TWO VIEWS ON THE FATE OF LANGUAGES

	Linguistic imperialism paradigm - "Radicalised modernity" paradigm	Evolutionary modernisation paradigm - post-modernity paradigm
1.	Analyses power relations between and within the language communities	Does not analyse power relations between the lg communities and objects to others doing so (e.g. Conrad 1996)
2.	Sees lgs as created by and their fate therefore influencable by people	Sees lgs as organisms with a natural life-span
3.	Discusses presence of **both** lgs, support for both, consequences in relation to both lgs	Discusses <u>either</u> the dominant lg (TESOL-tradition) <u>or</u> the dominated lgs (endangered lgs tradition as represented by the UNESCO Inst. in Tokyo)
4.	Wants to change the unequal relations between languages and their speakers	Wants to make records of lgs before they die
5.	Discusses the relationship between lgs (domination, complementarity, etc) including mutual influence	Does not discuss the relationship between the lgs, or does it only in linguistic, descriptive terms
6.	Description is theory-driven and not sufficient in itself but basis for analysis	Descriptions technical and atheoretical; or theories come only from (socio)linguistics
7.	More multidisciplinary, impossible to analyse without using at social and political analysis in addition to (socio)linguistics	Less multidisciplinary
8.	More primordially oriented vis-a-vis the roles lgs, especially mother tongues, play for speakers	More instrumentally oriented - speakers choose languages, including mother tongues, for instrumental reasons
9.	Sees a qualitative difference between the roles of the MTs and later languages	Sees a quantitative difference only between the MT and later languages
10.		

i   Thanks to Hartmut Haberland for constructive comments in an ongoing discussion - as usual.

ii   SIL's **Ethnologue**, 13th edition, counts with around 6,700 (but lists some 39,000 language names). "Language" in itself is of course a very fuzzy concept as Peter Mühlhäusler quite correctly keeps pointing out.

iii   Being aware of one of the negative -isms in the world, linguicism, does apparently not automatically result in being aware of the others, here sexism. What is meant is human beings...

iv   Terralingua is a nonprofit international organisation devoted to preserving the world's linguistic diversity and to investigating links between biological and cultural diversity (Web-site: http://cougar.ucdavis.edu/nas/terralin/home.html).

v   When I use this strong term and make this very serious accusation, I am deeply aware of the risk of turning off some people who object to the term. This problem has been discussed by many others too (Nicholas Ostler reports - in **Iatiku: Newsletter of of the Foundation for Endangered Languages** 1, 1995, 6 - about a discussion on tactics ("Is it effective in the long run to up the ante, and use chock and scandal to make a point?"). I think it is necessary here, though. Those readers who object, are invited to start with the United Nations definition of linguistic genocide and the short history of (lack of) linguistic human rights in Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1994, Skutnabb-Kangas in press and forthcoming.

vi   Religions are also part of the consciousness industry, but they are maybe no longer implicated in linguistic genocide quite to the same extent as they used to be when proselytizing was more common. See e.g. Mühlhäusler 1996, 1997.

vii   Archivists here are the groups whose main interest is to describe, catalogue and thus "preserve" languages they see as endangered, to the exclusion of working with analyses of and action for changing the power relations

which threaten these languages. Of course it is perfectly possible to do both at the same time, describe and act.

viii   For brilliant discussions about this, see Branson & Miller 1993, 1994.