Dichotomies in European Language History and Possible Effects on EU Language Policy

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Abstract. The article discusses the relationship of territory and language from a language policy perspective. It specifies a dichotomy between French and German linguistic history in the time of nation-state building and describes the corresponding effects on the current EU language policy. The paper therefore sheds light on the strong national focus of the present policy. Although France equates a 'state nation' and Germany can be referred to as a 'linguistic nation,' both views obstruct a modern and regional-based approach to language policy. Moreover, the article argues that a regional cross-border perspective should involve the multilingual competence of speakers and the issues of migration and critical regionalism.

Keywords: EU language policy, France, Germany, history of language policy, multilingualism, critical regionalism, national identity.

In the European Union (EU), we can observe today a discrepancy between the multilingual language policy and politics, which supports a trilingual policy, whereas not even half of the European population claims to speak English (Kruse 2012). Furthermore, the EU language policy is based on a multilingual principle when all 24 official languages have equal status; nevertheless, the language used in most situations in EU institutions is English (Kruse/Ammon 2013, Schloßmacher 1997). For example, whenever I speak with people from other countries in holiday hostels, or at scientific congresses, I use English for communication, but my English sounds very different from the English I have learned at school and from the English I use when holding a speech which I have nearly memorized before. The English I use in these cases is not simply BSE (Bad Simple English), but it is part of multilingual strategies that many people use in international communication. In addition to my competence in English, I make use of my passive knowledge of other languages and of the help by other persons who translate words and phrases for me (Lüdi 2002). Additionally, we use code switching and non-verbal communication. Direct and personal contact compensates for the lack of knowledge of a foreign language. This observation appears quite important when we think in terms of language and territory. In this article, I will discuss to what

extent the dichotomy of state nation and linguistic nation in Europe is a reason of the fundamental problems in today's EU language policy.

The relationship of territory and language can be analysed in manifold ways. From the moment of birth, people find themselves in a structure of space and time. Basically, there is no natural language production without using space. In communication, there is always a sender and a receiver, and this fact affects the grammatical and lexical structures of languages and, eventually, the language policy. This might be a cognitive problem: how space is being mentally processed and then formed into a language. Actually, space does not seem to be a great linguistic problem (Vater 1991: 1, 6). But from a sociolinguistic perspective, we do not care how languages are used to differentiate the world. We care who speaks what language to whom and when (cf. Fishman 1965). A number of publications are available on the social condition of language and territory (e.g. Nelde 1992, Haarmann 1993, Ammon 1995, Clyne 1996, Krefeld 2004, Williams 2012). These studies mainly examine the contact and migration phenomena and dialectology. However, the *Where*-question or, in other words, the territoriality principle is the leading issue in the language policy. Thus, the main question the language policy asks is: who speaks what language to whom, why and where. The core issues of any language policy are the territorial spread of a language, the communicative reach of a language and its social implications. This article examines the situation most common in Europe when every historical region (including nation-states) has at least one official language, and most of these regions can be considered as consolidated monolingual. In Europe, this monolingual perspective is illustrated by the common appellation to nation-states and their respective languages. A state is understood as a political unit: a political regime with a corresponding sovereign state territory, a state nation and power exerted over this nation, as defined by the three-element doctrine of states (Jellinek 1900). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the sovereign territory can be divided into a (sub-)state and a cultural area. According to the concept of *demos* and *ethnos* by Habermas (1995), *demos* describes a state community, whereas *ethnos* describes a cultural community. These communities do not necessarily have to be territorially superimposable. Furthermore, Krefeld (2004) discriminates between the areality and territoriality of languages. In terms of language planning, *areality* describes the corpus of languages which can be locally specific. Thus, territory describes the local status of a language. As a result, there are analogies between *ethnos* and language, on the one hand, and *demos* and language, on the other hand. Of course, basically, there are no real monolingual territories in Europe and there have never been any. On the other hand, the development of nation-states in Europe gave rise to the idea of national monolingualism. This idea is an ideologically driven concept that does not exist in reality. Recently, this has been described in depth by many scientists (cf. Hüning/Vogl/Moliner 2012).

Space is not only an objective fact but also a product of people's interaction. Linguistic communication can never be seen as an exchange of information between arbitrary speakers at any place. According to Krefeld (2004: 21), communication takes place in a specific areal constellation within a certain territory. Linguistic features are connected to specific areas in language geography. The language territory is subject to the legal application of a language. This territoriality of a language applies for a small village as well as for communication at international level. Nowadays, geographically mobile people and modern communication technologies often result in huge differences of congruency of language area and territory. In other words, some languages 'leave' their nation-state and some are used on the whole territory of a nation-state without being an official language. This phenomenon is analogous to the idea of a nation and state; on the other hand, it shows that the sovereignty of state can increase or decrease.

In the course of European history, speakers have been constantly migrating. Accordingly, an agreement on specific territorial languages or declaration of a language as an official language has always been ideologically or politically driven. In most cases, the so-called migrant languages are the main reason behind local language diversity (multilingualism), and these languages should always be considered as minority languages. In turn, minority languages are the product of nationalities (Maas 2008: 148). Even the language of tourism could be considered as a minority language of a region, although most authors deny it (Krefeld 2004: 12). Krefeld (2004) defines migration as mobility which is constituted through the basic reorientation of everyday's living environment. This environment is characterized by social networks and providing a living through work. Naturally, this definition allows different exceptions. The issue of the so-called migration languages – understood as minority languages – should be of huge importance for the European language policy within a new territorial approach.

In this context, it is also important to mention that the research on social and territorial conditions of languages has its origins in historical linguistics. Naturally, historical linguists have to deal with a variety of languages spoken by mobile people. On the other hand, modern linguistics has been strongly focused on structural and generative issues. It was not before the 1960s that a new field of social linguistics based on the dialectology of cities gained interest and attention (Wildgen n.d.: 1). Along with the founding of the European Union and, earlier, of its predecessors – the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Communities –, a common language policy was developed for the European space. Finally, in 2012, the comprehensive Oxford Dictionary of Language Policy, edited by Bernard Spolsky, was published (Spolsky 2012). Although still not considered as a subject of its own, language policy has been gaining more and more attention in the last decade.

The connection of territory and languages may have undergone the most significant changes since the end of the 19th century, when the nation-states

emerged. Today, many authors (de Swaan 2001, van Parijs 2011, van Els 2005, Gerhards 2010, Ammon 2009) argue for a multilingual Europe with safeguarded national languages and English as the only or at least the main lingua franca. Their analysis is far more in line with the language reality compared to the EU language policy, which claims the equal status of all official languages of the EU.

Here, I would like to discuss how the history of the nation-state has influenced the current EU language policy and why the international status of a language is of importance for the identity of nation-states. The actual EU language policy does not seem to have any influence on factual language politics (Kruse/Ammon 2013) or language learning behaviour (Kruse 2012, 2014). Furthermore, the idea of a European identity through foreign language knowledge does not seem to be realistic (Kruse 2012: 148 ff.). One of the reasons of this ineffectiveness is that it supports the mobility of EU citizens. In fact, only 2.7% of all EU citizens live abroad and 4.1% of all Europeans are migrants from outside of the EU (Eurostat);[1] nevertheless, their native languages are not officially recognized as minority languages. The migrants' plurilingualism is not recognized as a valuable body of European language plurality. These non-recognized languages are languages without a territory in the EU. In contrast, territory was one of the most important constants in national history.

To understand this policy, it is necessary to have a look at the historical development of languages and nation-state building. Although history shows a distinct dichotomy between the language policies of different nations, the idea of territoriality prevails. However, the new territories change and so should the idea of territory and languages. A new European identity – as postulated by the EU – can probably be developed only without the traditional nation-state idea of territory and language. Language areas are restricted by communicational and educational borders and no longer by national borders. It is necessary to think of a *demos* communicational territory instead of only defending old ethnos areas as many populist parties do. In addition, linguistic justice makes it necessary to rethink national language borders. The pressure of a powerful international lingua franca would have a very negative effect on national languages if their use would be restricted only to the territory of the respective nation-states.

From 1789 on, a new idea of a nation arose in Europe. A nation (Lat.: natio = birth, origin) is based on the political will of the communities to be a nation. This will can be based on a common culture or language, but without the will these qualities do not make a nation (Ammon 1995: 31). Additionally, a nation is the 'highest taxation [classificatory unit] of human groups. In today's politics and political vocabulary, there is no concept that would grant a human group a more privileged status than that of a nation' (Kamusella 2009: 32). Broadly

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[1]   http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics, checked on: 05.02.2014

speaking, according to the definition given by Ammon (1995: 33), a nation is built up by a large group of people with a common history, the same cultural and traditional background and the feeling of being associated. People speaking a standard variety form a language community. Very often, language communities are also understood as cultural communities. These cultural communities can identify themselves as a nation (Ammon 1995). On the way from a nation to a nation-state, languages have become a very important factor of unity concepts. A language was understood as a key factor of national identity. In France, the language of the kings and later of the Académie Francaise was supposed to be a key factor for the new state (Ehlich 2008: 41, Trabant 2002, Braselmann 1999). Ehlich (2008: 43) also states that the nation project and, along with it, the national language ideology were carried out further in the post-colonial states. Furthermore, this is also true for the EU. Despite of the prevalence of a monolingual ideology, these concepts have never represented the reality. No society is monolingual, and therefore the question arises what language rights and status speakers of different languages have in a community. The history of a monolingual state can be told through the examples of the French and the German nation building, which show two different approaches to a national language. These different approaches are influencing today's EU language policy, e.g.: it is quite common to speak of Germany as a 'Sprachnation' (linguistic nation) and France as 'Staatsnation' (state nation) (Ammon 1995:20). Therefore, if a European state ever comes to exist, it will be neither a nation-state nor a culture-state but a 'state-state' by ways of speaking.

France is often cited as a typical example of a nation-state. French was the language of the kings in power and it was one of the main characteristics of power. At the same time, the power of the kings excelled the original territory of the French language and included the territory of other French languages like Breton or Occitan. Already in the 16th century, politics preferred French to Latin, and that implied not only a struggle against Latin but also a campaign against other languages in France (Trabant 2002: 27). Finally, under the reign of King Louis XIV, the use of Latin was reduced to numismatics and memorial inscriptions. To support the further development of the French language, the Académie Française was founded in 1635 (Trabant 2002: 31). Since the Treaty of Rastatt in 1714, French emerged as the main international language of Europe in all high domains and held this position until 1918, when the treaty of Versailles was written in French and English. 'In a democracy, language has the function to let the people participate in political life. Language is an instrument of public thinking. […] In a democracy, non-understanding is not tolerable' (Trabant 2002: 56, translation by the author). In the times of the French Revolution, the language spoken in the high society was associated with the regime and with the specific accents typical for the aristocracy: the Jacobin revolutionaries considered it to be *bad French*.

The same applied for the other languages of France, which were also considered as old and therefore barbaric and anti-progressive (Trabant 2002: 55 ff.). Only the multifaceted French could be the language of the Revolution: to spread the word of freedom (the declaration of human rights was originally written in French), the people had to be educated in that language. Additionally, French was believed to have a proud history which goes back to classic Greek roots. Breton, on the contrary, was looked down upon as an odd language of the Averni tribe (Schmitt 2000: 687). The general Jacobinical idea was that in a democratic state French monolingualism was supposed to enable people to read and understand the laws and to comprehend the political discourse. The building of a monolingual nation-state in the course of the French Revolution was democratically driven, although questions of power and centralization played a crucial role.

Remarkably, the French state was geographically larger than the French nation and, along with it, larger than the French language area (Ammon 1995: 19). Therefore, building a nation-state meant to expand the national and the French language territory to the size of the state. A long and violent assertion of the language in France followed. The language policy of the Jacobins, also known as 'le terreur,' was uncompromising (Trabant 2002: 32 f.). But the idea of one language for one nation was born and it has been shaping the national identity from that moment on. This nation, therefore, can be defined by the territory on which the language has been expanded: the state-nation and later the European colonies all over the world. Of course, this was true for many European countries. At the beginning of the 19th century, Europe extended its national territory to about 55% of the world and by 1860 about to 67% of the world. At the beginning of the First World War, the European territory comprised about 85% of the world's territory.[2] For hundreds of years, until about 1900, the French language was very influential in the German-speaking community as well. Remarkably, this was not the case the other way round. At the end of the 19th century, we can observe the end of the strong French influence and the rise of the prevalence of English language (Trabant 2002: 145). The 20th century was marked by a steady loss of the international influence of French mainly in favour of English. The result of this close connection between national identity and the language is that the French fear they might lose the national sovereignty if they lose the language sovereignty. Today, French is the only language of France which is constitutionally safeguarded.

Contrary to the developments in France, the German-speaking states in the 17th century were all smaller than later the German nation (see table below: nation without a common state). Therefore, roughly speaking, building a nation-state meant breaking down the state borders and expanding them to the size of

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2   University of Augsburg: http://www.philhist.uni-augsburg.de/de/lehrstuehle/geschichte/didaktik/weltgeschichte/kommentare/kommentar_20.html

the nation and of the German-language territory. Such nation, therefore, can be defined by its language territory. The pre-existence of the unified language geography prior to the existence of the nation is the reason why the term *linguistic nation* is chosen (Ehlich 2008: 47). A similar term that is often used is *cultural nation*. In particular, Herder and Fichte pointed out that a nation exists through its language (Ammon 1995: 20 ff.). Prussia was the first German state that defined citizens according to their language. Language, therefore, was regarded as the core criterion of nationality (Haarmann 1993: 260). It was not until 1871 that the German nation-state was finally founded, thus considerably later than the French state. But the feeling of strong language identity did exist way before the time of the French Revolution and the rise of the young nations in 1789. Later, this identity was strongly expressed in the Romance period. The common language of the German nation has therefore never been a critical issue for the development of the nation-state. There is nearly no legislative regulation, which would systematically set the role of languages in Germany (Ehlich 2008: 47). The implications of the Second World War and the above-mentioned cultural self-esteem resulted in a specific German cultural and language policy with the main feature being international restraint. Today, Germany is a state without a federal minister of culture. Similar to some European nations but contrary to France, the official language is not determined by the German national constitution. Moreover, the term *Volk* is used in Germany in the sense of nation. The term goes back to the ancient German word *fulka* and was later perverted by the German national-socialists. German linguistic literature, particularly before 1933, commonly stated that nation (Volk) and language are genuinely identical. Subsequently, the folk were being equated with the German race. The disastrous results are commonly known: all German-speaking people were supposed to be united into a German nation-state, excluding all others on the 'German' territory (Ammon 1995: 27, Scholten 2000). The idea of a linguistic *Volk* is still very much alive, though nowadays it is integrated into a generally different and democratic picture of the modern times. For example, a recent brief article by Silke Wiechers under the title 'Wir sind das Sprachvolk' (We Are the Language Folk) deals with the language protective initiatives in Germany. Furthermore, in 1998 the German Bundestag published a statement with a title 'Die Sprache gehört dem Volk!' (The Folk is the Owner of the Language). It shows that the term *Volk* is not completely discredited, especially in the aftermath of the protest movement leading to the German reunification in 1989, but it is a sensitive issue.

Today, the nation project continues in the sense that the factual EU communication promotes a single common language very similar to the concept of a national language (Schloßmacher 1996, Kruse/Ammon 2012). Ehlich (2008) states that this view is particularly popular in Germany. It is also prevalent in the smaller states of the Benelux countries and the Nordic countries, whereas,

as commonly stated, the French oppose such a development in order to protect their national identity. Since the position of French appears to be weakening both nationally and internationally, French language policy has changed in favour of multilingual regimes within the EU unification process (Kolboom/ Kotschi/Reichel 2008, Kruse 2012: 185 ff.). Although final evidence is still missing, it is very likely that French politicians are the driving force behind the multilingual ideology of the EU. German politicians mostly keep a low profile in this respect. France is very keen on defending its territory and its 'Francophonie' – a network of French-speaking states. The loss of French in discourse domains is seen as a serious threat to the stability of Francophonie (Trabant 2002: 94 f.). In Germany, this perspective is missing because its territory has never been really split up or endangered. This applies not only to the language policy but also to the cultural policy.

Thus, it did not come as a surprise that France was the only country striving for the detachment of the cultural sector from the American-European Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (DW 2013). In Germany, on the contrary, the nation-state never had to fight for language unification despite the high importance of the language for the German nation-state identity. There was no strong need to deal with multilingualism and with the position of the German language in it. To stand up for the language was not as necessary as it was for the French nation. But from both perspectives plurilingualism would cause uncertainties and disturbances when being confronted with the reality of other languages. As an aside, it should be mentioned that this was also true for researchers in linguistic history. Until the mid-19th century, linguists believed that plurilingualism had a negative impact on a child's brain. Today we know that the opposite is true (Ehlich 2008: 48). And still it is very popular to claim a monolingual concept for the EU today. Notably, the spreading of the English language has many historical reasons. One of them is the expanding of the US state sovereignty onto other nations to foster the interests of one specific nation-state. Additionally, the Spanish-English language conflict in the US shows that the American nation is very well aware of the fact that a language is more than a 'trivial arbitrary and interchangeable tool of communication' (Ehlich 2008: 52). The nation is thus aware as well of the positive effects of the international status of their language.

The connection of language and nation in the European history is so strong that it appears difficult to rethink this connection when it comes to the European Union (cf. e.g. Anderson 1983, Coulmas 1991, Wright 2000) though there are major differences between the European nations and the European Union. Therefore, Ammon (1995) suggests using a different terminology to talk about the relationship of language, community and territory.

Table 1.

Traditional terminology	Suggested Terminology (Ammon)	Examples
Language nation (Culture nation)	Language community (cultural community)	All German-speaking people
Language nation (Culture nation) [multiple states with the same languages/ culture, not the complete language community]	Nation without common state	Former East and West Germany together
Nation-state	Monolingual nation-state	Today's Germany (apart from the non-German-speaking minorities)
State nation	Multilingual nation-state	Switzerland
State nation	State of a nation part	Former East or West Germany, taken individually
State nation	Multinational state	(former) Soviet Union

(Ammon 1995: 34)

Along with Switzerland, Belgium is another example of a multilingual nation-state. This issue was once tackled by the European Court of Justice, but the territorial principle of language policy in Belgium was found not to infringe the human rights. The court ruled that the language region ensures language homogeneity in areas where the majority of the population speaks only one language (Vuye 2010: 8). Territorial language rights support not only the right to express oneself in a certain language but also the right to be listened to and to be understood in the course of communication. Switzerland, for example, can hardly be described as a state nation; it is not a linguistic nation either, but a nation with multiple language communities. Using the terminology above, we can also consider it to be a multilingual nation-state (Ammon 1995: 31). Language community is understood here as a group of people with the same (mother) tongue in all its varieties. In terms of territoriality, different combinations of language community, nation and state can be found in Europe and for Europe. It is therefore important to remember that the existence of a nation is not a necessary condition for the existence of a state (Griller 1996).

Today, the question of territory and language has to be revisited under the terms of the deconstruction of the nation-state. Basically, the question of languages in Europe is integrated in a general political, social and economic perspective of the EU. This is widely done by the EU policy itself (though not by politics) and by many linguists and language theorists such as Ammon (1991, 2005), Kraus

(2004), van Els (2005), de Swaan (2009), Wright (2009), Gerhardts (2010), van Parijs (2011), Krzyzanowski/Wodak (2011), Gal (2012), Grin/Gazzola (2013) and others. Nevertheless, the programme of the latest Vilnius International Conference of Applied Linguistics in 2013, notably with the title *Languages and People: Space, Time, Identity*, suggests that in scientific practice the status of languages in a given territory is sometimes underexposed. The model for the EU will be the 'multilingual region' set within a concept of regionalism, which constitutes an international civil society and corresponding policies. Presumably, there will not be sufficient answers to the language question if language is investigated solely in terms of language acquisition, mobility and jobs and not in terms of active citizenship and modern regional communication. Political and social analysts show that one of the main problems of globalism, apart from wars, migration, poverty and debt accumulation, is related to the loss of regional sovereignty and to the loss of personal bonds and social cohesion (Butler/Spivak 2007, Negt 2012) and at the same time to the missing international solidarity and international citizenship (Grimm 1994, Habermas 2001, van Parijs 2011). In general – and this is also true for the EU language policy –, politics has to be bound newly to the experiences of everyday life. Today, structures of power and capital are often mystified and are out of touch with most citizens' reality. According to the German social philosopher Oskar Negt, the systematic mistake of today's development lies in the fact that the richness of a society in the monetary sector, i.e. its money expression, is completely uncoupled from the production and life context of people (Negt 2012: 27).

The Indian philosopher Gayatri C. Spivak suggests the concept of 'critical regionalism' as a possible social reaction to globalism, on the one hand, and the concept of 'international citizenship' on the other (Butler/Spivak 2011). The concept was originally coined by architectural theory. It is an approach against the disconnection of buildings from place and regional context, what – roughly speaking – results in a lack of sensual connection of the people to those buildings (Tzonis/Lefaivre 1981, Frampton 1983). Following this theory, the region is not a geographic fact but a social invention and is basically variable (Powell 2007: 8). The good examples are the so-called Euroregions:[3] cross-border regions within the EU working together mostly on cultural and economic issues. The future construction of a fair and efficient communication is also a question of a dimensional ratio between the centres and the periphery. The periphery may not be disconnected, nor may minorities be excluded from the international communication. In comparison to the position of English, all other language communities are in a minority position. All of them must consider an 'Ausbaurückstand' (Ammon 1991: 277 ff.) compared to English. According to Maas (2008: 150), there exist

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3   cf. http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Areas_of_Work/Transfrontier_Cooperation/
      Euroregions/What_is_en.asp

exogenous minorities and endogenous minorities. Exogenous minorities live in monolingual regions whereas endogenous minorities exist in the multilingual regions of multilingual states. Naturally, these exogenous minorities can possibly be a threat for a nation-state (Maas 2008: 151). Thus, this combination plays a crucial role in the post-national settings. When thinking of the EU member states as EU regions, the latter can be interpreted as exogenous minorities. To be accepted as a minority, the language needs to be politically represented, it has to be literary, it has to be acknowledged as a language and not as a dialect and, finally, it should be used on a compact territory. Of course, this applies to all official languages of the EU, albeit not to all minority language communities which are recognized by the European Charta for Regional and Minority Languages. Another perspective of regionalism unfolds with Negt's (2012) identification of three major threats for the modern democracy: Polarization, Flexibility and Uncoupling. All these threats have a language issue connected with the territorial meaning of language. Negt comes to the conclusion that many Europeans perceive the institutions that carry out decisions on their lives as too distant and too abstract. Furthermore, English is the language which is mostly used in the EU institutions. At the same time, it is a foreign language for most European citizens. This uncoupling is a reason of the lack of political awareness. On the other hand, a functional political democratic system is in the first place accessible at the local level. The mere technical access (via Internet) to political decisions or their media chimera does not make people (feel) well-informed and connected. The Internet connection does not automatically enhance the power of political judgment (Negt 2012: 79 f.). Furthermore, a European identity is based on accessible institutions (Kraus 2004: 56). 'The most important engine for the implementation of European integration is not the verbalized overcoming of language nationalism, but it's meaningful integration in a model of a multiple European identity' (Haarmann 1993: 317). A European identity can be based on the founding myth of the EU (Kruse 2012: 152 f.). This means that not only the modern effects of globalism and capitalism determine the process of European history. The building of the nation-state in the Middle Ages should also be used as a background experience for today's language issues. Multilingualism is an important element of the European identity. However, the touristy nature of inherent learning programmes, such as Erasmus, is not sufficient for building a social European identity. Local adult education other than learning a profession and local European experiences in modern regions seem to be much more effective in the development of an active citizenship and the EU identity (Negt 2012: 85). Another but a related problem is the connection of foreign language knowledge and the elite(s). As the data on language knowledge of EU citizens show, this is not going to change in the foreseeable future (Kruse 2012, 2014). English as a foreign language is commonly spoken by the elite(s). But the disconnection between the avant-gardes

(Frampton 1983) or the elites and the *demos* can indeed be understood as a threat to democracy and polity (Negt 2012: 41 f., 102). For example, Negt argues that particularly the elites were making the US American wars and issuing national security acts in recent history.

Obviously, there are several reasons why we should not equal the situation of nation building in the 19th century and the unification development of the EU today. First, the reality people live in has changed from villeinage to more or less working democracies. Second, national identity has developed with respect to nation-states and, finally, there is not going to be a European nation (Habermas 1994, Grimm 1994). One of the reasons for the latter is that the three-element doctrine, which says that a state has a state territory, permanent population (Staatsvolk) and state power, can no longer be held up (Habermas 2011). A *Staatsvolk* is not given in the EU and due to the political nature of the EU the question of the state territory remains unclear. Furthermore, national identity will be more independent from nation-states or from a state like the EU. For most nations, a common language presumably remains a very important cultural issue. Both the EU as a state community in its today form or a possible EU state in the future and the regions will have different desires to serve the population in a relatively uniform manner. Federalism is the favoured solution for these situations (cf. Williams 2012: 174). Williams gives examples of other nations (India, Nigeria, the Soviet Union/Russia, Indonesia, Republic of South Africa and Canada), which, if seen as multilingual regions, can be compared with the EU to a certain extent (for exceptions cf. Spolsky 2004: 157 ff.). Similarities are set because of the territorial language policy within a single state.

Nonetheless, territorial governance can be a frame for the language policy (Williams 2012: 176). Foreign language knowledge today is regionally and socially highly inhomogeneous. 'The Euroregions make efforts towards an equal treatment of the member languages und use practically no English in negotiations' (Gellert-Novak 1994: 126, quoted after Konrad 2003: 13; translation by the author). Admittedly, nowadays this must be considered as a desideratum since it is likely that these ratios have changed in the meanwhile. The EU is a cultural, social and political project settled in between the opposite forces of globalism and regionalism. A critical regionalism attempts a negotiation between these two poles to avoid the excesses or limitations of each. It permits connections in time and space between individual, local moments of cultural struggle and the wider patterns of history, culture and politics that it relates to (Powell 2007).

There are several possible reasons why the EU language policy is lacking effectiveness. One reason could be the described dichotomy of national language ideologies and history: France is supporting multilingualism in order to keep up the international position of French, whereas Germany, due to historical reasons, has no powerful language policy. Therefore, we see that the nations do not seem to

pull together for a coherent language policy of the EU. The different perspectives on the meaning of national languages for the existence of a nation-state result in disparate commitments on the EU language policy. As a result, this language policy is strongly influenced by national interests and lacks an international cross-border approach. In this sense, national language history generally opposes critical regionalism. It is difficult to unite the linguistic interests of the countries with such a different linguistic history. Referring to the beginning of this article, the mentioned multilingual strategies are a good example of a modern regional approach to interlingual communication. In these cases, the factual linguistic knowledge is respected and used for a communication, which is not segregated by the borders set by national languages. Since languages seem to be the least priority of all priority issues in the EU, language ecology prevails and English as a lingua franca – not only in Europe but also worldwide – is spreading extraordinarily fast. The language question might be seriously underestimated if it is not better shaped by EU politics in the future.

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