Gerd Jendraschek

The Struggle against Monolingualism

Gerd Jendraschek
Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail

Abstract

Speakers of regional and minority languages frequently have to choose among two or more languages, a choice that can be crucial to the future of the less powerful language. The monolingualism of the majority of Europeans is in many cases a result of a monolingual language policy. One challenge to this monolingual ideology is English, but the international role of English does not make regional languages superfluous, as these continue to have an important sociocultural function for their communities. However, only the stronger ones among the regional languages can hope to survive. Completely artificial languages designed as a neutral tool in international communication suffer from the absence of a real community that could support them. As a consequence, only multilingualism can offer some kind of solution to the problems of interlingual communication.

« *Face à la mondialisation, la demande de langues régionales est sans cesse plus grande* »

(Jean-Loup Chérel)

1. Introduction

Globalization is one of the key words at this turn of the millenium. Many consequences are attributed to it, and it is evident that some general processes like urbanization, industrialization, or increased individual mobility have an effect on the ecolinguistic situation in many societies. As a result of competition between languages, small languages are progressively disappearing whereas a limited number of dominant languages is expanding. Intermediate cases try to survive by imitating the dominant languages. The aim of this article is not so much to show what can be done to prevent this, but to show in the light of this evolution how "interlingual" communication works and how it may work in the future by establishing some general patterns. The focus is on Europe, but similar problems can be found everywhere and most of the generalizations should apply to other regions of the world as well. The situation of regional and/or minority languages competing with surrounding dominant languages illustrates the problem (section 1). The reduction of the number of languages leads to a reduction in the number of multilingual speakers. Monolingualism is already dominant in most of the western world, and it is the ideology of monolingualism that constitutes a major problem in interlingual communication. French language policy may serve as an illustrative example (section 2). Relatively stable multilingualism could, however, be possible if a "complementary distribution of languages" is achieved (section 3). Such a distribution may contribute to the preservation of a regional identity with its positive consequences for social stability. Endangered language communities can be divided into different categories according to their inherent strength to assure their own survival (section 4).

Often it would be useful to have a "neutral" language so that everyone would have equal status in interlingual communication. Some thoughts on this question and on the related problems of language

planning will be presented in section 5. But in Europe itself, speakers of regional languages are mostly multilingual and therefore constitute an avant-garde in the struggle against the dominant monolingual pattern (section 6).

2. Minority vs. Regional Languages

Some scholars make a difference between these two terms: a minority language and a regional language (see e.g., Wirrer 1998). Here, a minority language is a language spoken by a minority in the reference territory itself, as is the case for Basque in the Basque Country, irrespective of whether we conceive it in a "narrow sense" (the three provinces of the Autonomous Community or *Euskadi*) or in a "broad sense" (Euskadi plus Navarra and the provinces located in France). The percentage of active Basque speakers is between 20-25% in both cases (ESPB 1996). This definition shall not conceal the fact that "subregions", mostly rural areas or small towns, have a majority of Basque speakers.

A regional language is a language characteristic of a region, with the respective names being in many cases derived from one another. Basque is the regional language in the Basque Country, Catalan in Catalonia, Galician in Galicia. At least when opposed to those languages, Spanish is not a regional language, as it is spoken both inside and outside those regions. It is, however, a minority language in Catalonia, where a majority have Catalan as their mother tongue (irrespective of whether that majority may know Spanish as well). We are aware that this terminology is difficult to apply to certain cases, e.g., German in Belgium or Irish in Ireland where it may be difficult to determine the reference territory, not to mention those language communities which have no reference territory at all (e.g., Yiddish, Romani). But the percentage of speakers in a given territory seems crucial for the implementation of well-adapted language policies.

Speakers of regional languages are often bilingual and, therefore,

have to choose which language to use in a given situation. Choosing a language is in many cases a rational choice even if this choice can be the result of economic or political pressure. That situation can be conceived as one of languages competing for speakers. The languages in the market place have different attributes that make them more or less attractive for potential speakers. Language "customers" in such a setting are themselves mostly bilingual; otherwise, they would not really have the possibility to choose among languages. However, they can chose a preferential language for different linguistic activities.The most important linguistic activity for the maintenance of an endangered language is of course intergenerational transmission, which often coincides with the choice of the language spoken at home. It can also affect the choice of a school for children where one of the languages is dominant, as many linguistic minorities in the EU have obtained educational facilities in their languages mostly during the second half of the 20th century. These are just examples of decisions concerning linguistic choices.

Let us take the case of Euskadi, which is the Basque name for the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, consisting of the three provinces of Alava, Guipuscoa, and Biscaya. As far as linguistic legislation is concerned, Spanish and Basque are both official languages of Euskadi (Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailordetza 1999). The Basque gouvernement's language policy may seem a bit unrealistic, as it tries to obtain a bilingual society (Kasper 1997:206, Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailordetza 2000), where both languages would be mastered by everybody and potentially used in every situation. One could argue that two languages sharing the same functions would lead to complete redundancy. But in that specific case, such a policy is a reasonable compromise in a situation where a majority (in Euskadi itself) has Spanish as itsmother tongue, whereas many Basque speakers consider that the Basque language was oppressed in the past and is still dominated by a language that had been "imposed from outside" and that Basque should, therefore, be officially preferred over Spanish

nowadays. The most far-reaching demand is that of the application of the territory principle, where Spanish would lose its official status altogether (see Bornaetxea 2001).

Examples of the application of this territory principle can be seen in most of Belgium and Switzerland. The case of Rhaeto-Romance-a minority language surrounded and dominated by German in spite of its official status in Switzerland illustrates, however, that political support alone cannot reverse language shift, as the simple application of the territory principle is difficult to realize where the regional language is spoken only by a minority (see Baggioni 1997:32). Furthermore, Basque as well as Rhaeto-Romance are much less standardized (cf. Poche 2000:110-111), less represented in the media; few books are published in those languages. On the other hand, the competing languages Spanish and German have a long written history, are spoken in large territories and can even be considered international languages as they are official in several countries. The only "advantage" of the minority/regional language in that competition is its long implantation in the region and its identity load which is important for the psychology of social dynamics and the transmission of the region's historical legacy.

3. The Monolingual Ideology

Let us briefly look at the case of France as it illustrates quite well the case of monolingual language policy in Europe. France is in the centre of Europe, it has linguistic minorities like most European countries, and it has a long monolingual policy tradition, again like most European countries. The effects of that policy are still quite visible in its legislation. To give an example, France could not ratify the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, as it was interpreted as anti-constitutional (*Le Monde* 19-6-1999). In fact, the French Constitution states that French is the language of the Republic,

i.e., the only official language in all of France. The monolingual policy generally appears in the form of protection against languages coming from "above" (i.e., English) as well as those emerging from "below" (i.e., regional languages). Monolingualism, which is the dominant pattern for most of the French population, can be seen as a consequence of such a policy.However, languages cannot be forbidden in a democratic society, so English as well as regional languages are "present" on the French territory anyway. English exists in international music, Internet news, scientific publications, tourism, and so on. Regional languages survive mostly as a result of cultural activities and parents' support, but their intergenerational transmission is at risk, since regional languages are rarely "home" languages. There is another factor that is helping regional languages in France to survive for the moment, which is influence and support from outside. This is particularly evident in the case of Basque and Catalan, which have their demographic and cultural centre on the other side of the border. There would probably be no Basque television and no daily newspaper in Basque in the French part of the Basque Country if they did not come from Euskadi, i.e., the Spanish side. The situation is similar in Brittany, which is more and more integrated in a sort of Interceltic Network (see Roudaut 1999).

Following on from what has been said, languages other than French are and will be present in France. In that situation, many individuals and policy-makers often draw wrong conclusions, which have again negative consequences. They begin to accept that French will lose its official monopoly on the French territory, but they do not accept that monolingualism must be abandoned altogether in order to foster multilingualism. So the situation is often presented as if a choice had to be made between languages from "above" and languages from "below", which is shown by the following statement where a former French minister of education claims that what would be necessary in order to win international competition was not shepherds speaking regional languages, but computer scientists who know English:

Il faudrait que la France fabrique des informaticiens sachant parler anglais, et on nous propose de fabriquer des bergers parlant breton ou occitan. Je ne suis pas sûr que l'on va gagner la compétition internationale avec ce genre de mesures.

(Allègre, *Ouest-France* 30-04-2001)

Winning international competition is useful, and English is useful in international competition. Opposition towards learning English does not make sense; it is the most important language in many domains worldwide. If French opposition to English was to continue, this would have no consequence on the English language. But it would have negative consequences forFrance. It would lose economic and political influence, and in turn the French language would lose influence as well, together with the country itrepresents. Therefore, learning English is useful for France. In order to improve the results of learning, the presence of English must be allowed and even encouraged so that children can be exposed to the language. As long as languages are separated in practice (and do not merge), there is nodanger for French.

4. The Complementary Distribution of Languages

Let us pass over this and return to the discussion of the question if there will still be a place for regional languages once English is learned by all children. Many people will say that there will not be. They say regional languages are of no use, whereas English is very useful. However, this argument is completely false when we look at linguistic practices in most language minorities.Wehavetolookatthe distribution of languages, i.e., which language is used and can be used in different communicative situations. If we take any Basque village, or even a small town, where a majority still speak Basque, we can

imagine such a language distribution pattern. So let us assume English is important for those Basques, then we have to ask *where* and *when*? We can suppose that it is useful in school, for academic research, to have access to international media or for economic contacts, which is with the *outside world*. So English is important for *international* contacts. For most inhabitants of our Basque town, international contacts constitute only a small part of all their contacts, but this depends of course on their professional activities or their interests and other personal factors. This does not mean that international contacts are not important. It just means that English is quite useless when the contact is not international. Nobody will use it for *neighbourhood* or *supraregional* contacts. The intensity of any social interaction is inversely proportional to the potential number of participants. This means that English can potentially be used with a large number of participants; therefore, it does not provide intense contact, but rather a distant one. Basque on the other hand is the language of neighbourhood (in a more or less broad sense), something that is shared by a limited number of participants and something that is specific, because it belongs to the region and to nowhere else. It is part of the creating of identity. Simply stated, identity is a constellation of social and cultural factors that make people feel at ease. It is not a futile exercice to compare it to other "identity-creating" activities in everyday life. Think of the living room of the new house you just moved into. You will not want to make it look like the neighbour's house, nor like any standardized hotel room. When you come home, you want to feel at home. So you try to preserve an individual character. You choose colours, furniture, posters or paintings, and so on. We wouldn't like it if people from outside decided how our living room has to look like, just because they are more powerful. That would not be our own individual living room any more. This does not mean that it is hermetically closed to outside influences. If your neighbour had a brillantideaastohowtoimprovetheinteriorofyourlivingroom,you would not refuse it just because it was not your own idea. Being

completely closed in relation to the outside world deprives us from possible improvements and from enjoying possible diversity. On the other hand, being completely open means to renounce individuality, continuity, anddistinctive identity, it will mean being controlled by the outside world. Or to come back to our living room allegory, it will mean being homeless.

What we said about the living room, is also true for culture, language, and identity. Language is a link that holds culture and identity together. It is a strong social link, and it makes people feel at home. That is why people continue to speak Basque. Invoking economic reasons in policies against regional languages means neglecting the need for people to feel at home. Needless to say, this feeling is subjective. It does not mean that we have to die where we were born. People can be very happy on journeys, but they usually have some personal effects with them, so that even in a hotel room they can feel a bit at home. You can start to feel at home if you try to understand what is going on in your new neighbourhood. Learning the language of the new neighbourhood can make you feel at home, and it is even more useful for you than for the neighbourhood. It is that kind of integration that can make the newcomer feel at home. This fact is well known in Euskadi, and it is part of the Basque gouvernement's integrative language policy which supports "Euskera as a form of insertion and inclusion of immigrants" (El País 2001). And you just care more about your home, about what you possess, than about something that belongs to somebody else. The following quotation states the same in a more academic way (Payton 2000:104):

> Within the framework of the European Union, there is increasing recognition of the importance of 'pride of place' in economic regeneration, and of the significant relationship between culture and economic development....

Another important point in that respect is *cultural authenticity*. This

means that a linguistic, or more generally a cultural environment, is a result of centuries of history. It has beenformed,developed and carried on by the local population. If you say "well, our culture is not modern, it does not allow us to participate in innovation, so let's abandon it altogether", you have to find something else to fill the gap. The problem is that this something else is someone else's historically developed culture. The result is alienation; it is like selling your home without knowing where to move. Finally, integration into the dominating culture may be successful, but the minority's new cultural centres are elsewhere, the historical personalities are elsewhere, and decisions are made elsewhere. The minority will have little influence on the development of their "new" culture; after all, they are newcomers that have to adapt (cf. Fishman 1991:17-58).

Preserving minority cultures--where this is reasonable, we will come back to this point later--does not mean refraining from participating in other cultural environments. Many writers have been successful in a language that was not their mother tongue. Other bilingual writers write in two languages. But we should not forget that elites are always privileged as far as access to the outside world is concerned. For the majority, cultural authenticity is an important factor in social stability. It helps to create identity, as the local culture ismuchmoreaccessible for everyone because it has its roots in the community itself, whereas dominant culture comes from outside and is perceived as urban or something you see on TV.

Does all this lead to the conclusion that minority cultures and languages have to be preserved at any price? This is a difficult question and generalizations do not give answers for specific cases. However, different categories of "minorities" can be distinguished. The following classification is mainly based on cases in the "Western world".

5. Different Categories of Threatened Languages
5.1. First Category: Minorities that are Majorities (Catalan, Quebecois)

The first category of "minority" and the one with the least difficulties to preserve its specificity is one that is not a minority. Ideally, these minorities are demographically and economically powerful so that there should be no need for them to adopt another culture/language. The clearest case in Europe is Catalonia. It has more inhabitants than Denmark, is one of the richest regions of Spain, has an influential cultural centre, Barcelona, and has a (partially) distinct history (see Berkenbusch 2000, Loyer & Villanova 1999). This case is quite comparable to Quebec. There too, the minority is only a minority with respect to the whole state as it has never been a minority on its "own" territory. Catalan as well as French have always been majority languages in their respective territories. However, the struggle for the preservation of the regional culture/language against the strong neighbour is quite perceptible. It is perceptible because

- the region has the economic capacity to implement linguistic support policies, e.g., byfinancing TV, radio, publications, and schools;
- it has enough political and demographic weight to defend its interests on a nationwide level;
- the regional language is spoken by a majority in its territory and it is always easier to find support for a majority.

Languages of communities within the first category cannot be considered endangered. The only thing that distinguishes them from non-regional languages is that they have no monopoly in their territory and that their speakers are often bilingual.

5.2. Second Category: Minorities at Home (Basque, Welsh)

The second category provides cases like the Basque or Welsh one. Demographically less powerful than the members of the first category, they, nevertheless, aspire to join them through their efforts to develop media and education ressources and to increase the presence of the language in regional administration and gouvernment (cf. Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailordetza 2000, Heinecke 2000:87-91). The objective is to look like a "normal" linguistic community one day, where the language could be used in every kind of situation. They are hampered in this by the fact that the language has almost disappeared from the most urbanized areas and is, therefore, associated with rural life. The total number of speakers in urban areas may still be impressive but cannot conceal the fact that these are more or less isolated individuals, whereas in the rural areas the regional language is often dominant and used in most situations of everyday life. But even in the rural areas, the intergenerational transmission is at risk, e.g., as a consequence of population movements or media influence.

The communities of that second category are making progress in some areas, or have the potential to do so in the future. It seems that they are successful in preserving the language in the middle run. However, nothing can be said about the long run. With the regional language being the language of a minority in its own territory, it remains mostly a language of personal contact, i.e., you have to know if your interlocutor speaks the language before starting any linguistic interaction. This entails the use of the dominant language in most official situations where you cannot know the linguistic abilities of your interlocutor. Legal intervention (e.g., by requiring language profiles for jobs involving contact with the public) has only limited effects, as using the dominant languages in such situations remains more effective. The regional language has to conquer such formal areas. Being

formerly largely limited to informal areas, it remains difficult to compete against a fully developed language of widespread diffusion.

5.3. Third Category: Disappearance as a Result of Convergence (Occitan, Low German)

A specific case is that of languages that are genetically close to the majority language so that they are often considered as substandard varieties of the latter by the speakers themselves (as expressed by the names *patois* in French and *Platt* in German). Occitan and Low German can be mentioned here. They share some caracteristics of the firsttwocategories; nevertheless, they seem more threatened. Theymay have a relatively large number of speakers in a wide area, but these do not really form a community, as interaction is often limited to local networks or dialectal areas (e.g., the Occitan varieties, Gascon and Provençal, are often seen as individual languages rather than relating to a common Occitan language; cf. Meisenburg 2000:257-258). The most important point for explaining why they are threatened seems to be the lack of distinctness, which in the cases mentioned above holds asmuchforthelanguageas for the culture in general. Ifyouaskwhat Basque culture is, you can get clear answers: Basques have their own gastronomy, sports,music, dances, architecture, traditions and of course a language that is genetically unrelated to the neighbouring languages. On the other hand, what is specific about Occitan culture? This question is even more difficult to answer: What is Low German culture? When the distinct character of the threatened culture is difficult to perceive, the disappearance of that culture will be perceived as less dramatic. On the purely linguistic level, areal contact leads to convergence; convergence leads to merging. Here, merging means disappearance of the less powerful variety. Convergence means that languages in a contact situation begin to resemble each other, as bilingual speakers "synchronize" them in their brains.This is even true

in a contact situation like that of Basque and Castilian. As a consequence of contact with Romance languages, the conjugation system of Basque is nowadays largely periphrastic, only a handful of verbs still having synthetic forms. In spite of convergence, the two (or more) languages remain too distinct to merge. On the other hand, the regionalvarieties of German and French that have largely replaced Low German and Occitan respectively can be considered as a result of merging between two genetically close languages. The language shift, then, takes place between this merged variety and the regional language. These new regional varieties are dialects of the dominant language, whereas the languages they have replaced were not!

This category is specific and cannot have the same status as the first two categories, for it is limited to genetically closely related languages. However, the three categories have in common that the languages they represent exist at a supralocal level, and that different steps have to be taken on different levels, i.e., regional, district, town, village. These communities are the only ones that can be compared to "official" languages, as they may hope to obtain the same facilities (media, education, official use etc.).

5.4. Fourth Category: Candidates for Dissolution

What follows somehow dampens down the euphoric optimism about small linguistic communities that was so dominant in the paper so far. However, realistic evaluation is a prerequisite for effective measures.

Most small linguistic communities either lack the demographic, economic, political, or socio-cultural weight to dream of real competition with the dominant languages that surround them. Some casesmaybenefitfora while from geographic isolation, but geographic isolation is seldom everlasting. Ifyou look at cases like Ladino in some Alp valleys, Aranese in a small valley of the Pyrenees or Saterfrisian in the middle of a marshy region in Northern Germany, you can see that it was mainly this geographical isolation that helped the language

to survive up to now. New roads, railways, and economic/touristic activities, often demanded by the concerned population itself, or increased individual mobility as a caracteristic of "modern" societies, put an end to isolation and are likely to lead to a progressive "dissolution" of small linguistic communities. Legal measures may render this process less painful but they cannot prevent language obsolescence in the long run. Ecolinguistic conditions are just too bad for these small languages.

6. Artificial Languages and Language Planning

Quite often, languages are divided into two groups, namely "natural" and "artificial" languages. "Natural languages" are those languages that have a longhistory and have developed as a community language over many generations. On the other hand, artificial languages are planned, often by a single person, as was the case with Esperanto, "invented" by Ludwig Zamenhof. They start their existence without a community before creating their own one, are supposed to be without irregularities, and are generally designed as *lingua francas*.

However, this opposition is more one of prototypes than of distinct groups. Any "natural" language has to be planned in order to be officialized, and at least any *written* language is planned, since any writing system is an invention. Writing a language and/or using it in official, formal situations makes explicit convention necessary. Moreover, any language that is to be used in education must be "synchronized" with the world's dominating languages, in which most academic knowledge has been encoded. Words like *system, organization, society* or *alternative* are characteristic of specific social, political and philosophical environments. As these concepts have become universal, they have had to be integrated in recently standardized languages, either as borrowings or as loan translations. Sometimes, borrowing and loan translation can occur simultaneously,

which gives rise to synonymy. Later, those synonyms can acquire different stylistic or semantic nuances (cf. Turkish *sistem* vs. *dizge*, *organizasyon* vs. *örgüt*, *sosyete* vs. *toplum*, *alternatif* vs. *seçenek*). So this is one example of language planning.

Another way of conscious intervention in natural languages is *unification.* Often unification takes place by extended contact between different dialectal varieties, from where a common interdialectal variety emerges. However, unification can be only "on paper", as in the case of the two competing Norwegian standards:

> *Bokmål*, which has its basis in large part in the Danish spoken during the period of Danish rule, serves as the written norm for most of the dialects of the larger urban centers. *Nynorsk*, created by the philologist Ivar Andreas Aasen (1813-1896) who drew it from the old rural dialects that preserve Norwegian as it descended from Old Norse, serves as the written norm for most of the dialects of rural areas and some smaller urban centers. ... Both Nynorsk and Bokmål are pure written languages. No one actually speaks these languages--in Norway all spoken languages are regarded as dialects.
> (Holst 1998. Http://www.lysator.liu.se/nordic/scn/6.2.3.)

To complete the picture, let us say that originally artificial languages are subject to language change as well, as they become "living organisms" onbecoming an actually spoken variety. An extreme case, though not the most important one in this process, is "nativization":

> Some speakers of Esperanto have become so enthusiastic about the language that they have chosen to use it at home, even when they share a common native language, and so their children learn the language as their native tongue. An even more important factor is the number of international marriages that have developed between

people who have met each other through Esperanto and whose only
common language is Esperanto. The result is that today at least
several hundred and perhaps asmanyasafewthousandindividuals
throughout the world speak Esperanto as a native language. There
are annual conferences, at least one international magazine, and one
on-line mailing list devoted to such individuals.

(Harlow 1998. Http://www.webcom.com/~donh/efaq.html#natives)

To sum up,wecansaythatnaturallanguagescanundergo planning
and that artificial languages can undergo "nativization/naturalization".
Can artificial languages be a solution to monolingualism? This is an
important question as most of these languages were indeed created in
order to make international communication easier and more accessible
for everybody. S o let us first take a look at the advantages theypresent,
and then at the shortcomings.

Having a short history and being planned in *vitro*, artificial
languages have few irregularities, i.e., they are supposed to have none;
even in an artificial language community there are purists who disagree
with most of the language users as to what is correct. Indeed, they are
generally much easier to learn than any natural language. Furthermore,
they are neutral, as they do not favour any nation. Look at English!
It has become the language of scientific publications (among other
domains where it is dominant), probably because of the academic
dominance of the English-speaking countries. The fact that publishing
ismostly done now in English favours research work in these countries
as they have an easier access to publication. Having to publish in a
foreign language is an obstacle for speakers of other languages and
more so for beginners in academic research. The neutrality argument
seems to be the strongest of all the arguments of the artificial language
movement. A frequent objection is that *a-posteriori* languages like
Esperanto which draw their lexical material mostly from European
languages are not neutral for people outside Europe. This is true, but
it is also true that the advantage of European-based artificial languages

is a relative one, i.e., they are at least much more neutral than English could ever be.

And there we have come to the shortcomings. Neutrality is one, at least for an international language. Look at standardized, unified Basque! In spite of being neutral with respect to the dialects it is based on, it represents the whole Basque community. So Basques can identify with that "new artificial unified" language, at least after getting used to it. It is a symbol of unity. Artificial universal languages on the other hand have no unified community behind them, no political, economic, cultural, or identitary power, though this is what a language needs if it wants to expand. This can be seen in the whole of Europe. The supradialectal varieties of the big European languages have been imposed because they have educational, economic and political power behind them.

The reason why English has so successfully imposed itself in international communication is precisely that it is not neutral. It has power behind it which makes it attractive. Big languages eliminate small languages because they represent power.Artificial languages have no power behind them. Theoretically they could have, if they were officialized by, say, the United Nations Organization. But this is idealism. Remember, unified Basque, Norwegian or whatever, although "artificial", appeal to cultural identity. Cultural identities are opposed to other surrounding or dominant cultural identities, such as Spanish or French (for Basque) or Danish (for Norwegian). It is no coincidence that language revitalization movements often emerge when the identity language is threatened by an "external" language.

Artificial universal languages on the other hand could only appeal to some kind of worldwide universal identity, but such an identity does not seem to exist. There is no "counter-identity" in opposition to which it could emerge. So it does not emerge. Artificial universal languages have neither the power argument of big languages behind them, nor the "opposition to disappearance" argument of small languages.

7. Conclusion

The future will bring about more and more contacts between speakers of different languages. In the past, only a minority was concerned by the necessity of managing frequent interlingual communication, or interaction was reduced to some stereotyped patterns, e.g., in the tourism industry. New technologies (e.g., Internet, satellite TV), closer political ties between neighbouring countries (e.g., in the European Union) or the increasing internationalization of the labour market have already begun to make the classical monolingual policy ofmostnation-states appear obsolete.Aspolitical and economic boundaries have become "permeable", the same will be true for imposed linguistic boundaries.However,one shouldbeware of the error to think that English can and will provide the solution for every kind of interlingual contact. Different contact situations will require different linguistic abilities. The "stronger ones" among the regional languages, the formerly "monopolistic" national languages which will continue to have an important function in supraregional contacts, as well as English will have to be used according to a pattern of complementary distribution.Widespread multilingualism is possible and desirable, once the dominant monolingual ideology--which can be seen as a corollary of centralistic national policies--is abandoned.

Looking at Basque Internet sites can provide some hope, many of them use the regional language Basque, the supraregional languages Spanish and French, and the "international" language English and are thus a perfect example of such a complementary distribution of languages in a multilingual setting. A model for the future perhaps.

Remark: We would like to thank Francis Cornish for corrections and advice.

References

Baggioni, D. 1997. *Langues et Nations en Europe.* Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages.

Bornaetxea, A. R. 2001. *Bilingualidad: La Política Lingüística en el Estado Español.* Available at URL <http://www.ucm.es/info/eurotheo/d-abor naetx3.htm>.

El País. 2001. *Los Programas a Examen.* Available at URL<http://www.elpais. es/elecciones/pvasco2001/candidaturas/comparativa/euskera_inc.html>.

Enquête Sociolinguistique au Pays Basque [ESPB]. 1996. *La Continuité de la Langue Basque* 2. Vitoria-Gasteiz: Gouvernement Basque, Gouvernement de Navarre & Institut Culturel Basque.

Fishman, J. A. 1991. *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages.* Clevedon; Philadelphia; Adelaide: Multilingual Matters Ltd. (*Multilingual Matters* 76).

Holst, I. 1998. Available at URL <http://www.lysator.liu.se/nordic/scn/6.2.3>.

Harlow, J. 1998. Available at URL <http://www.webcom.com/~donh/efaq. html#natives>.

Heinecke, J. 2000. Kymrisch. In J. Wirrer (ed.), 80-96.

Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailordetza-Viceconsejería de Política Lingüística. 1999.Language Use SurveysintheLanguage PlanningProcess. Available at URL <http://www.euskadi.net/europa_hizk/cas922.htm>.

Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailordetza-Viceconsejería de Política Lingüística. 2000. Basque as One of Two Official Languages. Available at URL <http://www.euskadi.net/euskara/indicei_i.htm>.

Kasper, M. 1997. *Baskische Geschichte in Grundzügen.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Lacoste, Y. (ed.). 1999. *Nationalismes Régionaux en Europe*. Paris: La Découverte.

Loyer, B. & J. L. Villanova. 1999. Etats et Souverainetés en Europe: L'exemple Catalan. *Hérodote* 95, 21-34.

Maalouf, A. 1998. *Les Identités Meurtrières.* Pairs: Editions Grasset & Fasquelles.

Meisenburg, T. 2000. Okzitanisch. In J. Wirrer (ed.), 256-268.

Payton, P. 2000. Cornish. In J. Wirrer (ed.), 97-104.

Poche, B. 2000. *Les Langues Minoritaires en Europe.* Grenoble: Presses
    Universitaires de Grenoble.

Roudaut, D. 1999. La Celtie: "C'hewec'h bro un Ene", "Six Pays, une Seule
    Ame" (Des Velléités Emancipatrices des Pays Celtiques à L'émergence de
    la Celtie). *Hérodote* 95, 77-113.

Service France e t Régions. 1999. La Charte sur les Langues Régionales a Até
    Déclarée Anticonstitutionnelle. *Le Monde* 19. 6. 1999.

Wirrer, J. 1998. Zum Status des Niederdeutschen. *Zeitschrift für
    Germanistische Linguistik* 26, 308-340.

Wirrer, J. (ed.). 2000. *Minderheiten und Regionalsprachen in Europa.*
    Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.