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Linguistic imperialism of and in the European Union
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ABSTRACT

The article tracks the transition from the transportation of European peoples and languages to other continents to the establishment of a world order underpinned by US military and economic might worldwide. The myth of 'terra nullius', unoccupied land outside Europe, has been succeeded by an expansion of the cultural universe of the USA (as a 'cultura nullius') and English. English is fraudulently marketed as a 'lingua nullius', as though it serves all equally well. Linguistic imperialism permeates EU institutional activities and their outreach. Churchill explicitly advocated US and UK dominance globally through military, economic and language policies. Globalisation and global English are interlocking projects. The formation of the EU was a joint US and European project. The role of the European Court of Justice in advancing European integration and neoliberalism is documented. Many European Commission initiatives like the Bologna process strengthen English in continental Europe. This authoritarian executive managerialism is undemocratic. Linguistic imperialism has many push and pull variables. Loose reference to English as a 'lingua franca' in political and academic discourse conceals the role of English as the neoimperial language of the transnational global corporate class of US-NATO-EU empire.

The British Empire and the United States who, fortunately for the progress of mankind, happen to speak the same language and very largely think the same thoughts.¹

The power to control language offers far better prizes than taking away people's provinces or lands or grinding them down in exploitation. The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.²

Winston Churchill, 1941, 1943

The plan is for the United States to rule the world. The overt theme is unilateralism, but it is ultimately a story of domination. It calls for the United States to maintain its military superiority and prevent new rivals from rising up to challenge it on the world stage. It calls for dominion over friends and enemies alike. It says not that the United States must be more powerful, or most powerful, but that it must be absolutely powerful.

D. Armstrong, Harper's Magazine 305, 2002³.

The process of European integration might never have come about had it not been imposed on Europe by the Americans.

Erik Holm, 2001, 34.

The most serious problem for the European Union is that it has so many languages, this preventing real integration and development of the Union.
*The ambassador of the USA to Denmark, Mr Elton, 1997*⁴

No-one pays attention to what you say unless you speak English, because English is the language of power.
*Ombudsperson for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gret Haller, 1999*⁵

The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.
*Article 22, The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000*⁶

These vignettes reveal something of the complexity of analysing language policy in historical and current processes of greater European and transatlantic integration. There are many constituent elements and agendas. Teasing out causal factors, and isolating the specific role played by language policy is a considerable challenge. It is an important issue, but one that few social scientists have engaged with, even in the study of European integration. In law and principle, all EU official languages have equal status, but in reality French was *primus inter pares* in the early years, whereas gradually over the past four decades English has become dominant. The Union's 'respect' for linguistic diversity is a noble principle but elusive. The article analyses the historical record of the British and American empires, and the interlocking of two projects, the formation of a European Union, and the globalisation of English. It explores whether English linguistic hegemony worldwide and within the EU institutional framework can be seen as linguistic imperialism and what the implications are for speakers of other languages.

The terms 'empire', 'imperialism', 'colonialism', and 'neo-colonialism' are tricky, because they overlap to some extent, but more importantly because the terms have 'a complicated history and many different, fiercely contested meanings... Defining something as imperial or colonial today almost always implies hostility to it, viewing it as inherently immoral or illegitimate ... the subject is so highly charged with political passions and emotion' (Howe 2002, 9, 34). The topics have also generated a vast industry of historical and political scholarship that is of direct relevance to the study of language policy in the modern world, though language issues seldom figure prominently in them. Harvey (2005) stresses the need to define the concept imperialism if it is to be used analytically rather than merely polemically. This principle guided my definition of linguistic imperialism as a variant of linguicism, operating through structures and ideologies, and entailing unequal treatment for groups identified by language (Phillipson 1992, 2009) in comparable ways to racism, sexism, and classism.

The article tracks the transition from the transportation of European peoples and languages to other continents to the establishment of a world order underpinned by US military and economic might and the popularization of US norms worldwide. These are disseminated through Hollywood products, media forms and technologies, business strategies, scientific and educational activities,

and advertising that markets consumerist capitalism. English plays a central role in all of these.

There has been a transition from the occupation of land to the occupation and appropriation of cultural and linguistic mental spaces, as Churchill astutely anticipated. The ideology of *terra nullius*, the myth of 'empty' land, has been succeeded and supplemented by the dissemination of an American *cultura nullius*, cultural practices projected as universally valid, but fluid and adaptable in their interaction with other cultures. English is increasingly projected as a *lingua nullius*, a language not owned by anyone, as though it serves all equally well. English tends to be internalized as detached from the underlying imperialist forces, military, economic and cultural that explain its capitalist dissemination. Exploration of the role currently played by English in the integration of Europe can illuminate these momentous, turbulent changes.

Global Americanisation entails processes of McDonaldisation (Hamelink 1994, Ritzer 2011), the standardisation of modern social life through processes of control and predictability, and through the subordination of progressively more aspects of life to the commodification engendered by neoliberal market forces. Europeanisation exemplifies this process. English is marketed as a *lingua franca* in processes that serve to sanitise linguistic imperialism. Linguistic imperialism has many parameters, with several supply and demand factors, but is primarily a question of inequality, of speakers or users of one language being unjustly privileged. The EU's language policies are facilitating the localisation of the 'global English' project, its products and processes (Phillipson 2012a), as will be exemplified in this chapter.

The historical background to the empire of English

Languages of empire - Greek, Latin, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Chinese and many others - have underpinned political and military control, commerce and the promotion of several major religions. In the Roman empire that covered much of Europe and North Africa, the strategy for co-opting a conquered people was insightfully analysed 2000 years ago by Tacitus (1948, 72), whose uncle, Agricola, was charged with converting the British to Roman norms:

the sons of chiefs ... in place of distaste for the Latin language came a passion to command it. In the same way, our national dress came into favour and the toga was everywhere to be seen. And so the Britons were gradually led on to the amenities that make vice agreeable - arcades, baths and sumptuous banquets. They spoke of such novelties as 'civilization' when really they were only a feature of enslavement.

The current position of several European languages - primarily French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian as well as English - on non-European continents is due to processes of global Europeanisation and linguistic imposition over the past five centuries. The countries that were defeated in 20th

century wars, Germany, Italy, and Japan, had their imperial ambitions and their language empires aborted.

The *terra nullius* doctrine that has served as a fraudulent cover for the dispossession of the territories, cultures, and languages of the Americas and Australasia was a confirmation of policies promulgated by the Papacy prior to the Requerimento that Spanish conquistadores took with them to the 'New World', 'drawn up (in Castilian) at the behest of King Ferdinand of Castille in 1513 ... extended the tradition of the Crusades, and Castille's own reconquest of Granada, a battle for Christ closer to home which became a model for Cortez's expedition to Mexico in 1519, and Pizarro's to Peru, where he murdered King Atuahalpa in 1532' (Errington 2008, 25). The locals who could not understand Spanish were considered 'subhuman, and so could be subjugated forthwith' (ibid.).

The English philosopher John Locke provided a rationalisation for Europeans arrogating to themselves a God-given right to occupy territory elsewhere. In the chapter on Property in *Two treatises of government*, 1698, Locke argues that God commanded people to labour, as a result of which they can increase their possessions: 'God, by commanding to subdue, gave Authority so far to *appropriate*' (1988, 292). Since the indigenous peoples of America have failed to labour, 'they are rich in Land, and poor in all the Comforts of Life'. Nature has given them the same resources as people elsewhere, and productive territory, but they 'for want of improving it by labour, have not one hundredth part of the Conveniences we enjoy: And a King of a large and fruitful Territory there feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a day Labourer in England' (ibid., 296-7). To which Locke adds that 'In the beginning, all the World was *America*, and more so than that is now; for no such thing as *Money* was any where known' (ibid., 301). The fruits of labour can be converted into gold, silver, or money, which can then be used as a way of legitimating 'disproportionate and unequal Possession of the Earth', this inequality being, in Locke's claim, 'tacitly but voluntarily' agreed on by society (ibid., 302).

This argument was supposed to justify European colonisation and sanctify Christian proselytization. Land in what became named the Americas was *terra nullius*, land belonging to no-one, to which its benighted inhabitants had no claim or rights. The ideological foundation for this argument is the dichotomy between Us ('civilised') and Them ('barbarians') that has been deeply rooted in the thinking of the Western world since the time of the ancient Greeks. The same fraudulence applied when the British took over African land and dispossessed its occupants. Colonised Kenyans became exploited labour in the 'White Highlands' and 'learned in school that white people had discovered Mount Kenya and many of our lakes, including Lake Victoria' (Ngũgĩ 2010, 168). The sale of African land to Arabs and Asians in need of food supplies is a present-day variant of this dispossession.

In the Americas some Europeans were appalled by how barbarically the inhabitants of the 'new' world were treated. Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote a thesis *In defense of the Indians* in 1552-3 in which he argued that indigenous

peoples in the Americas should not be considered sub-human and therefore eliminated, since they shared all the basic characteristics of humans worldwide, the only difference being that they were not Christian. They were 'neither slaves nor barbarians in any morally relevant sense of these terms ... the fact that they were ignorant of God is not a sufficient ground for denying them the basic rights of life and possession' (Bartelson 2009, 79, 80). This understanding did not prevail in the Americas.

US national identity was forged through the dispossession and near extermination of the indigenous peoples, their genocide (Ward Churchill 1997), the myth of unoccupied territory, the surplus value extorted from slave labour, and an active process of national imagination, one deeply permeated by religion. The USA is a warfare society rather than a welfare society, initially in North America, now globally (Hixson 2008, Craig Roberts 2014, Petras 2014, www.tomdispatch.com). The nationalist revolt of 1776 and the ensuing state formation and constitution privileged white male slave-owning Euro-Americans. These founding fathers devised a constitution in which ' "We, the people" elided hierarchies of race, class, and gender' (Hixson 2008, 39). This legacy continues to this day, when Asiatics or Arabs with whom the West is at war are seen as so sub-human that they do not merit a body-count.

From the time of the USA declaring its independence, it has seen itself as a model for the world, with a divine mission to impose its values. George Washington saw the United States as a 'rising empire', and 'in 1786 wrote that, "However unimportant America may be considered at present ... there will assuredly come a day when this country will have some weight in the scale of empires". The address was read out in its entirety in Congress every February until the mid-1970s' (Andrew Roberts 2008, 68).

Roberts, a modern-day historian of the English-speaking peoples in the triumphalist tradition of Macaulay and Winston Churchill, also cites Rudyard Kipling (2008, 144), who wrote in his autobiography that he 'never got over the wonder of a people who, having extirpated the aboriginals of their continent more completely than any other modern race had done, honestly believed they were a godly New England community, setting examples to brutal Mankind'. Kipling could see through US falsity while himself seeing colonised Indians as 'half-savage, half-child' and legitimating the British empire to a vast readership in his own poetry and novels. He also proclaimed that a Christian God was behind British military success and empire.⁷

The Monroe doctrine of 1823 articulated a policy of ensuring that the Americas would remain a sphere of interest determined by the USA rather than European powers. This was only partially successful before 1914 because of massive British investments in mining and railways throughout Latin America: Argentina was seen as late as 1920 as a necessary part of the British empire, albeit the 'informal' Empire (Darwin 2009, 137, 373).

Global Americanization, which Locke appears to anticipate, was in full swing by the late 19th century, as noted in 1912 by George Bernard Shaw, born in 1856:

‘What has been happening in my lifetime is the Americanisation of the world’⁸. In recent decades it has been in the guise of globalisation (Bourdieu 2001), one dimension of which is linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992, 2009, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 2010). The synergies between language and globalisation currently are being explored from several scholarly angles (Coupland 2010).

One of the most visible causal factors is cultural globalisation in the media:

70-80% of all TV fiction shown on European TV is American. [...] American movies, American TV and the American lifestyle for the populations of the world and Europe at large have become the lingua franca of globalization, the closest we get to a visual world culture. (Bondebjerg 2003, 79, 81)

By contrast in the USA the market share of films of foreign origin is 1%. A second symptom of cultural insularity is that far fewer translations of foreign-language books are published in the USA and the UK as compared with the numbers in continental European countries⁹. There is therefore a massive asymmetry in how cultural globalisation impacts on the two sides of the Atlantic. The extended reach of American English also varies: in countries in northern Europe, visual media products are disseminated with the original English sound track. This is one factor accounting for greater proficiency in English in the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. These demographically small countries are more open to penetration by English in academia, business, and international relations. Elsewhere in Europe it is mainly in large corporations and finance that English figures prominently, while in higher education and research the use of English is accelerating.

Language policy in the USA has fluctuated over time, but the underlying principle has been to transform a diverse local and immigrant population into monolingual English users, as briskly articulated by President Theodore Roosevelt (1919): ‘We have room for but one flag, the American flag... We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language’.

The USA became a colonial power in Asia the 1890s. Imperial exploitation in the Philippines required that education should follow the same model as in the USA, with an insistence on an exclusive use of English from 1898 to 1940: ‘... public education, specifically language and literature education during the American colonial period, was designed to directly support American colonialism. The combined power of the canon, curriculum, and pedagogy constituted the ideological strategies resulting in rationalising, naturalizing, and legitimizing myths about colonial relationships and realities’ (Martin 2002, 210). The pattern was comparable in the British empire, in Africa (Rodney 1972) and in India, though here a much larger elite was educated to serve British interests. English served the process of elite formation through the colonial empire, a process that has intensified after independence.

In today’s India, English is the language of power, used as an indication of greater control over outcomes of social activities. [...] Over the post-Independence years, English has become the single most important predictor

of socio-economic mobility. [...] With the globalized economy, English education widens the discrepancy between the social classes' (Mohanty 2006, 268-9).

India's post-independence language policy entails inclusion for the few who have a dominant role nationally and international links, and marginalisation for the many (Drèze and Sen 2014). Nehru (1956¹⁰) wanted to prevent the emergence after independence of an English-knowing caste that was out of touch with the rest of the population, but this is exactly what has happened. To suggest that a similar stratificational process might be under way in Europe might seem improbable, but it is not inconceivable in processes of global financial capital mobility and the formation of a transnational capitalist class.

European integration

The conventional wisdom of recent decades has been that the French and Germans are the driving force behind greater integration in Europe. This is only part of the story. The role of the USA in shaping the post-1945 world (the creation of the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, NATO, WTO) is well known (Smith 2003, Pieterse 2004, Harvey 2005). What is less well known is the involvement of the US in shaping modern Europe, as highlighted in the quotation from Holm initially. He was a top Danish civil servant, an adviser to the Danish Prime Minister at the time of Danish entry to the EU in 1973, along with the UK and Ireland, and later employed in the EU system. His book (2001), prophetically entitled *The European anarchy*, bewails the lack of vision of current European leaders, their petty national agendas and inability to think long-term.

The links between the pioneer European architects of what has become the EU, Jean Monnet in particular, and the US political elite, before and after World War II, are described in detail in Pascaline Winand's *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe* (1993). Monnet had spent many years in the US between the wars, and became personal friends with a large number of Americans in senior foreign policy positions in Washington, which gave him direct access to both Eisenhower and Kennedy. While Monnet and many key Europeans were quite open about their wish to create a federal Europe on the model of the USA, the Americans were shrewd enough to influence policies decisively but to remain discreetly in the background.

The planning process had started in the Council on Foreign Relations, founded in 1921, which drew on 'the elite of the American business, academic, law, media and government communities' (ibid., 2). The COFR, with the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, saw the need in September 1939 for policy papers: 682 memoranda were transmitted to the Department of State, mainly funded by the Rockefeller foundation (ibid., 3).

John Foster Dulles, a Republican who later became Eisenhower's Secretary of State (Foreign Secretary), proposed western Europe as a single economic unit in 1947. This was the agenda underlying the Marshall Plan that ensured massive

economic progress in non-communist Europe. Sixteen European countries formed the Committee for European Economic Cooperation on 15 July 1947. The French government 'Schuman Plan', 9 May 1950, was essentially written by Monnet, with assistance from Americans based in France (ibid., 22). There were many competing views on both sides of the Atlantic (Atlanticists, internationalists, pragmatists, and Europeanists in the US; Gaullists, the British, Europeanists in Europe), but those in favour of a unification that would be economic, political and military were able to influence matters decisively. General Eisenhower, when Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 'made a strong plea for European economic and political integration before the English-Speaking Union' in London on 3 July 1951 (ibid., 28).

A draft treaty prepared in 1952, essentially by Monnet, envisaged a directly elected People's Chamber, a European Executive Council, a Council of National Ministers, and a European Court. Monnet formed an Action Committee for a United States of Europe on 13 October 1955 (ibid., 77). Monnet became the director of the first transnational institution, the European Coal and Steel Community, and was the architect behind the institutions of the European Economic Community, later the European Community, later still the European Union. The free flow of goods, services, capital and people was a founding principle of European integration in plans from 1956, and was ultimately achieved with the common market in the 1990s (ibid., 129). Americans had ambassadors at each of the key European institutions, and treated their principals as heads of state when they visited Washington. American frustration with the limitations of the EEC (and the risk of it competing with the US economy) led to the creation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a looser federation with larger membership, including Canada and the US. In the longer term the goal of the Europeanists was – and still is – an economic union between the US and Europe.

There are annual EU-US summit meetings. At the 2007 meeting, a Transatlantic Economic Integration Plan was endorsed, as well as coordination of foreign policy globally. In effect this means that the EU accepts corporate America's global agenda, as loyal but junior partners. This fits well with the New American Century project, the Cheney-Wolfowitz-Rumsfeld doctrine that was implemented under Bush II. The instruments for achieving integration have been the European Round Table of Industrialists, the Transatlantic Business Dialogue, and the Transatlantic Economic Partnership (Monbiot 2000), culminating in the negotiations in 2014 of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP; also known as the Transatlantic Free Trade Area). The UK has spearheaded the adoption of this model in Europe, with its key role in global finance and strong military involvement as visible symptoms of commitment to US strategic interests. British half-hearted commitment to EU ideals is one complication.

The six founding member states agreed to accord equal rights to four languages, after blocking an attempt by the French to grant a superordinate status to French. Eurolaw and all major documents have equal validity in all official languages, currently 24. The market forces behind English have progressively

made it the dominant language in conducting EU affairs *de facto* but not *de jure*. In theory other languages than English should be used in the external relations of the EU¹¹, but the European Commission privileges English. It conducts negotiations with applicant states in English, a procedure that restricts the capacity of ordinary citizens, including well-qualified ones, to follow the negotiation process (Phillipson 2003, 123-4). The legal status of documents translated into Polish or Czech, when Poland and the Czech Republic were applying, had no juridical 'authenticity', unlike the English text. EU-US negotiations take place in just one language - no prize for guessing which.

It is an important principle that legal acts, texts with legal effect in member states, should be accessible in a national language. There is however the serious fact of variation between languages, each with their semantic and grammatical baggage evolved in different historical trajectories and legal systems. As a result there are serious interpretation problems for lawyers and judges in both national courts (Kjær and Adamo 2011) and at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) (Neergaard and Nielsen 2013). Semantic 'unity in diversity' is elusive when texts in different languages are supposed to have the same meaning.

ECJ legal method, the Community method, is in constant evolution (Neergaard and Nielsen 2013). The role of the ECJ is to adjudicate in the light of Eurolaw, including the principles enshrined in treaties that are designed to promote peace, security, and a neoliberal market economy. Analysis of litigation over many years in the ECJ reveals that the court does more than merely clarify eurolaw¹². The Court has based judgements on five sets of variables (natural law, legal positivism, common law, legal realism, fundamental rights): its approach can be literal, historical, contextual, or comparative (contrasting different national traditions), and teleological. This means that cases are determined in relation to the overall goals of European unification, including a rigid commitment to market forces.

The Court's conclusions are therefore controversial, since they entail an expansion of what is decreed in EU treaties and the exclusion of alternative economic thinking. ECJ judgements not only *interpret* what the law is understood to be but are also *constitutionalising* it. They are 'constructing' Europe in a never-ending project of European unification. ECJ judgements take this project forward, despite widespread disagreement about where the EU is heading, and without the accountability to citizens that a parliament has, or the participation of the governments of member states. Input is potentially from many languages and cultures. The outcome is formulated in French, the working language of the ECJ, with the unanimous backing of a judge from each member state, for promulgation in all official languages.

This is a novel form of supranational governance, one that constitutional and international lawyers who are evolving a more critical approach to legal aspects of global governance are analysing (de Búrca et al, eds., 2014)¹³. The integration of EU member states into a union has required an innovative evolution of legal practice: 'Integration through Law' means that treaties and eurolaw enshrine how activity in member states should be conducted and coordinated across the

union. Governance principles are determined at the supranational inter-governmental level, following which the Commission attempts to ensure that measures are implemented in member states, a mechanism of authoritarian executive managerialism (Joerges and Weimer 2014) that did not exist before membership of the EU. Languages are the instrument for achieving this.

No EU decrees on language, education, or culture have legal force, since these fields have always been seen as a national prerogative. On the other hand many EU funding schemes do impact on these aspects of social life, just as the conduct of EU affairs in its institutions entails the use of particular languages for a wide range of functions. Since language policy is left to market forces, to overt and covert principles, and to decisions and compromises at national, institutional and local levels, it inevitably functions inequitably. The market forces behind English strengthen its hegemony.

Projects in symbiosis: a European Union and Global English

I like to think of British and Americans moving about freely over each other's wide estates with hardly a sense of being foreigners to one another. But I do not see why we should not try to spread our common language even more widely throughout the globe and, without seeking selfish advantage over any, possess ourselves of this invaluable amenity and birthright.
*Winston Churchill, 1943*¹⁴

In 1943 the British Empire was seriously weakened, British success in the Second World War was dependent on the American war machine, and massive financial loans from the USA. Transatlantic partnership builds on the cultural origins of millions of Europeans who emigrated to the USA, Britain as the dominant colonising power, supplanting the Dutch, Spanish and French, and English as a link language. Churchill's first major point in his talk at Harvard is support for USA global dominance, camouflaged as 'world responsibility'.

Secondly, Churchill sees the UK and USA as linked by 'blood and history'. Links between the two countries remained close even after the US declaration of independence. Churchill sees the two nations as united by 'law, language, and literature', exemplified by morality, justice, fair play, and support for the weak - norms that both countries are better at articulating than implementing.

Thirdly, he stresses that in the war effort, American, British and Canadian forces have a joint command. He proposes that this should continue after the war, and only cease once a global system for peace maintenance has been established. The United Nations was soon established for this purpose, in a form that maintained the principle of the permanent members of the Security Council, including the USA and UK, playing a decisive role, which they still do.

Fourth, a key issue in Churchill's speech is his articulation of a plan for English as a globally dominant language worldwide, this task pretentiously claimed to be the 'birthright' of the British and Americans.

These four dimensions, globalization, consanguinity, military unification, and linguistic expansion form a complete package. The aims of global American dominance, with the UK in full support, included the integration of the economies of Europe – a condition for Marshall aid - and the establishment of English as the dominant international language.

Churchill also articulates a vision of potential UK and USA ‘common citizenship’. Here he echoes Cecil Rhodes, who envisaged the USA rejoining the United Kingdom that it broke away from in 1776. He bequeathed the vast fortune made in the gold mines of South Africa to fund activities to cement links between the USA and UK and to promote Anglo-American dominance worldwide. His legacy funds the Rhodes scholarships at Oxford University, with Bill Clinton as a typical beneficiary.

Churchill’s total faith in the USA has been shared by all subsequent British Prime Ministers. The Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC¹⁵ has as its goal the promotion of US/UK dominance worldwide, as does its British counterpart¹⁶. The ubiquitous activities of Tony Blair are in the same spirit, while enabling him to accumulate prodigious personal wealth.

Churchill’s plan to spread the English language throughout the world is packaged as being disinterested, which all evidence of British and American colonisation worldwide contradicts. Plans for English to function as a ‘world language’ under UK and US leadership had already emerged in the 1930s, with funding from the Carnegie Foundation (Phillipson 2009, 112-5). They were intensively pursued from the 1950s (Phillipson 1992, 137-172). The promotion of English became a key dimension of the policies of the UK and the USA. The English language industry has expanded massively and is of major importance for the British economy. Its key constituents are publishers, university departments of applied linguistics and English teaching, language schools, BBC multi-media English teaching, and educational consultancies worldwide.

‘The English language teaching sector directly earns nearly £1.3 billion for the UK in invisible exports and our other education related exports earn up to £10 billion a year more’, writes Lord Neil Kinnock in a Foreword to *English next* (Graddol 2006), a report commissioned by the British Council, ‘the United Kingdom’s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations’, a central conduit for British cultural and economic diplomacy. It is committed to expanding the learning and use of English worldwide. The teaching and examining of English are a major source of this parastatal’s revenue. A country that is notoriously monolingual intriguingly markets itself as having an infinite supply of ‘experts’ who are capable of solving the language learning problems of educational systems in multilingual countries worldwide.

The British Council ought, according to a policy survey conducted by a pro-government NGO to be more energetic: the students it teaches and ‘the 800,000 people who take exams administered by the Council every year ... would make

good targets for public diplomacy activity', as part of 'Diplomacy by Stealth: Working with others to achieve our goals. ... The general lesson is ... make sure it appears to be coming from a foreign government as little as possible. Increasingly ... it must work through organisations and networks that are separate from, independent of, and even culturally suspicious toward government itself' (Leonard, Stead and Smewing 2002, 81). Thus the activities of English teachers, some of whom may disapprove of their own government, can stealthily serve whatever the government sees as a national cause – local English for the global purposes of Britain, and indirectly for American empire within the emerging European empire, in which English linguistic capital is accumulating.

In Europe the use of English has expanded rapidly in recent decades. Its extensive visibility serves to make the learning of English more attractive than learning other languages. The UK has a vested interest in promoting this trend, and the increased influence that follows with it, as well as economic benefits. Other European countries are subsidising this process, to the detriment of the learning of languages such as French, German and Russian. A report prepared for a French language education policy body has calculated the effects on the economy of the UK and Ireland of the investment in the market for English learning (Grin 2005). Favouring English results in five types of quantifiable effect: a privileged market, communication savings, language learning savings, alternative human capital investment, and legitimacy and rhetorical effects. Grin concludes that a conservative estimate is that continental European countries are transferring to the UK and Ireland at least €10bn per year, more probably about €16 to 17 bn a year. This figure substantially exceeds the British budget rebate of €5bn annually.

English is at the summit of a linguistic hierarchy. English linguistic hegemony is reinforced structurally (material investment) and ideologically. The practice of learning English in ways that marginalise other languages and hinder or prevent their learning – through linguistic policies that amount to linguistic imperialism – was established in colonising contexts in the British Isles (the imposition of English in Wales, Ireland and Scotland) and the Americas (the destruction of local languages, gradual elimination of other immigrant languages). Linguistic capital was invested in the dominant language (time in schools, university departments, publications etc.) and not in other languages. In colonial empires European languages were invariably the languages of power. The system has largely been maintained in former colonies, the term 'postcolonial' occluding a linguistic hegemony that has remained in place.

Empirical study of the factors determining language policies can elucidate in any given context whether linguistic imperialism is in force. With the learning and use of English expanding in continental Europe, the issue of whether or not it impacts negatively on other languages is of increasing concern. Perception of English as a threat to the continued vitality of national languages has been analysed in Germany (Oberreuter et al 2012), the four Scandinavian countries and Finland (Hultgren et al forthcoming), and higher education in continental Europe (Harder 2009, Gregersen 2014, Dimova, Hultgren & Jensen in press, Phillipson in press). A Nordic inter-governmental Declaration on Language

Policy aims at maintaining the vitality of national languages while also ensuring that international languages, mainly English, are learned¹⁷. The position is dynamically evolving, and unpredictable: linguistic capital accumulation may be exclusively beneficial, through the addition of English to linguistic repertoires, with national languages remaining as the unifying language in all areas of life. By contrast if the linguistic capital is accumulated by processes of dispossession, as in classic colonialism, and a national language is no longer used in key societal functions – in higher education, government business, major commercial enterprises, the media – then there is evidence of linguistic imperialism¹⁸.

Language policy in the EU system

The management of multilingualism in EU affairs is demanding. Language policy is intrinsically complex because of the interlocking of languages with national interests, with politics, commerce, the media, education, and culture. Analysis of EU language policy often suffers from a failure to distinguish between the use of languages in different institutions, between different needs and practices in writing (sometimes via translation) and in speech (via interpretation), and different principles applying in work at an EU institution as opposed to communications from the EU to citizens or member state governments. The cost of the language services is often described as excessive, but according to the EU itself ‘the cost of all language services in all EU institutions amounts to **less than 1% of the annual general budget of the EU**. Divided by the population of the EU, this comes to **around €2 per person per year**’¹⁹ (emphasis in the original). This is a modest price to pay for the right of all EU citizens to speak or write in the language that they feel most comfortable in.

Language policy in the EU is politically sensitive. It touches existential national nerves, as frankly conceded by a German Head of Mission at the EU: there is ‘no more emotional topic in the EU than the language issue’²⁰. Or in the words of a French Member of the European Parliament, ‘the topic can be considered explosive in Europe’²¹. At the inter-governmental level therefore language policy has tended to be politically untouchable, apart from the endorsement of bland proclamations in favour of multilingualism and foreign language learning, and schemes to encourage states to act to achieve these goals. There is a lot of rhetoric advocating diversity, but English occupies more and more space, both in EU institutions and in the corporate world, the media, and many kinds of international activity.

The Maastricht Treaty authorised the EU to fund activities in the field of language and education, since which time many programmes (‘actions’) have been initiated, directly in school education, higher education and research, and indirectly in countless other ways. However, the rhetoric of multilingualism as a defining European characteristic ignores the fact that for the past two centuries, most European states have aimed at making their citizens monolingual. Principles of linguistic equality and multilingual diversity have thus only fragile foundations to build on in virtually all member states. Finland, with the equal status of Finnish and Swedish, is an exception to this rule, whereas the

management of linguistic diversity in Belgium and Ireland is more problematic. Major change in the status of regional languages has taken place in Spain and Wales, whereas elsewhere minority languages remain marginal.

Language policy issues were ignored by the Convention on the Future of Europe (2002-3), despite pleas from NGOs from several countries for language rights to be strengthened in a European constitutional treaty. There is a mismatch between the broad sweep of Article 22 of *The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* - 'The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity' (now incorporated in the Lisbon Treaty) - and everyday realities. The formulation creates no obligations on states nor any legally enforceable rights for individuals or groups. The most extreme form of declaring that the Charter's commitment is merely hot air was given voice by a senior French civil servant in a conference paper in the USA. Yves Marek, counsellor to Jacques Toubon²² when Minister of Culture and Francophonie, claims blandly that 'in the field of linguistic rights, like in other fields of human rights, there is no right but only ... politics'. This shows a national civil servant following the precepts of Machiavelli (*The Prince*, 1514), whereas the EU system attempts to ensure equilibrium between the interests of all member states and their languages, and requires states to make compromises. Marek also claimed that it is the French understanding of national languages that underlies how the EU handles multilingualism. This is a disturbing claim, since Marek also falsely states that in France there are no linguistic minorities, hence 'no discrimination between so-called minorities'²³.

It is unusual for a government representative to be so openly cynical about how the EU should operate, and to reveal that he thinks that universal human rights principles can be ignored. These revelations exemplify why it is so difficult to form supranational language policies on the basis of a mutual understanding of what is at stake, and what criteria and principles should be in force.

EU institutions can be considered as in effect practising linguistic apartheid, even if Eurolaw is promulgated in all official languages. Minority languages have no place. Full interpretation between all EU languages is only provided for in certain contexts. The Commission's website typically has all texts in English, fewer in French, and even fewer in other languages. Documents for consideration in member states are often dispatched from Brussels in English, and possibly French, rather than in the relevant national language²⁴. Draft texts are nearly all in English. These developments led the *Délégation nationale à la langue française et aux langues de France*, in its Annual Report of 2006 to conclude '... le français tend à devenir une langue de traduction et non plus de conception'. In other words a monolingual culture and mindset within EU institutions affects both content and form.

The websites of EU presidencies have been criticised by the European Ombudsman for using an excessively limited choice of languages²⁵. The rotating Presidency's websites are generally only in English, French and the relevant country's language. When some German speakers complained to the Ombudsman about this inequality of access, he determined that presidencies

were at fault in using such a small set of languages, and that the practice should be changed. A follow-up vote in the European Parliament on 20 November 2008 specifying that 'the information on the Council Presidency website should ideally be available in all official Community languages' was endorsed by an overwhelming majority. However, from the Swedish presidency in 2009 to the Greek presidency of 2014 the Ombud's recommendations have been ignored. The EU system fails to live up to the ideals of 'respecting' multilingualism that the EU in principle is committed to.

These examples show that EU linguistic governance is undemocratic, whether administered by the Commission or the governments of member states. The language policies in place erect barriers between a technocratic elite and citizens of diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The government of Slovakia used the 'reflection' period after the rejection of the draft constitutional treaty by France, Ireland and the Netherlands to convene a National Convention on the EU with broad participation. One topic that Slovakia chose to focus on was language policy. The deputy Prime Minister, Dušan Čaplovič, wrote on 26 March 2007 to the Foreign Ministers of all member and candidate states, and to EU Commissioners, arguing for an inter-governmental study of language policy issues in the EU system to be established. A detailed case was made, including information that new member states were convinced that their languages were not being treated fairly. Translators and interpreters from 'small' states like Denmark and Sweden share this concern. The letter referred to a Feasibility Study concerning the creation of a European Agency for Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning of 25 May 2005 (see below). It cited several EU initiatives to strengthen multilingualism. It noted that despite the unanimous recommendations of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (A6-0372/2006, of 23 October 2006) aimed at strengthening language policy activity and structure, the plenary session of the Parliament rejected them. It concludes with the hope that despite the cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of EU member states, progress towards the goal of linguistic democracy can be achieved.

The Slovaks received encouraging replies from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain, but no reply at all from other member states or the Commission. As my informant wryly comments, language problems are taboo, and 'non-reactions/replies are evidence of a poor level of current political culture and politeness of national and EU politicians'²⁶.

The Feasibility Study referred to by the Slovaks is a rare instance of the EU commissioning a professional evaluation of some language policy issues, at the request of the European Parliament, and commissioned by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture. The task was given to a consultancy with wide experience of servicing EU institutions. Their mandate excluded attention to the internal workings of EU institutions and migrant languages. Their detailed (118 pp) study, of 18 May 2005, made available on the DG's website, drew on extensive consultation with a wide range of people concerned with many aspects of language policy. It analyses needs, conditions, and modalities, and confirms

that a wealth of professional expertise exists that decision-makers ought to draw on. It makes a strong case for either a Linguistic Agency, like other high-prestige EU agencies (dealing for instance with the environment in Copenhagen, and racism in Vienna), or alternatively a network of Language Diversity Centres to strengthen policy formation and implementation, particularly for regional minority languages. The study reveals a widespread perception that there is a serious need for policy advice and information for national and EU decision-makers. This was overwhelmingly the case in new member states, whereas the established ones considered such functions 'not useful'. There was also near unanimity in responses in rejecting English as a sole *lingua franca*. The study concludes that 'A no-action scenario would seriously undermine the credibility of the EU in this field'.

In fact the Linguistic Agency proposal was rejected unilaterally by the Commission. It is impossible to know on what grounds, but if an agency had been established, there would necessarily have been a reduction of the freedom of manoeuvre of the Commission and its ability to determine language policy overtly in 'actions', and covertly through *laissez faire*.

There have been funds for language research, two projects on multilingualism under Framework Programme 6²⁷, and one completed project under Framework Programme 7²⁸. The DG for Education and Culture has coordinated various schemes for strengthening language learning. Some strengthen a wide range of European languages; many strengthen English. Relatively speaking the funds involved are small as compared with what national governments spend on education.

Whatever credibility the EU might have gained by nominating a Commissioner for Multilingualism, Leonard Orban from Romania, 2007-2010, was seriously undermined by no-action on an Academy, reduced action on minority languages, and a general failure to influence language policy decisions at the national or supranational levels. Most of the Commissioner's speeches consisted of platitudinous generalities about support for diversity and language learning, and it is probably in the nature of his role that they have to be. Language issues were downgraded in 2010 by being returned to the DG for Education and Culture. It is also a major problem that there is virtually no expertise in the Commission in fields such as multilingualism, bilingual education, and language policy. As in the civil service of member states, Eurocrats are as mobile as politicians, and as soon as experience may have been attained, either they move elsewhere in the system, or a short-term contract ends their employment.

The rhetoric of strengthening linguistic diversity and multilingualism has been totally ignored in the management of the Bologna process. Its objectives as formulated in 1999 were: 'within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy - to consolidate a European Higher Education Area at the latest by 2010'. The process is a Council of Europe initiative, though currently it is the European Commission that is the principal driving force behind it, with universities and national ministries of

higher education more or less committed to it. It brings together the Ministers for Education of 47 European countries. The European Commission funds studies that figure prominently at the bi-annual meeting of Ministers. The communiqués from these report on practicalities, and the successes and failures of the synchronization of a uniform cycle of higher education degrees, but they never refer to language policy. Implicitly this means that ‘internationalisation’ equates with ‘English-medium higher education’, although this is in conflict with the declared goals of the process. (Phillipson 2006, Meyer 2011). The European higher education ‘area’ is in effect a market.

This is not surprising because this European process is a direct result of education being increasingly considered a service that can be traded, under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation, and more specifically of the General Agreement on Trade in Services. Member states have been legally committed to this ‘liberalization’ process since 1995, but there is a fundamental unresolved tension between education as a human right, a public good, and trading in educational services. The pressures to reduce what are seen as national trading barriers are intense. Higher education is more vulnerable to international commercialisation than is basic education, though this is also increasingly seen as a market rather than a public service. It used to be assumed that EU law on the common market and the free movement of services did not apply to education or health care, but cases determined by the European Court of Justice on higher education and other social services such as residential care have overturned this principle (Hervey 2014a, 355). National higher education is now a ‘free’ market, part of the global export trade of universities, with universities in English-speaking countries in the lead. They export the same content as back home, and the same language, expanding the empire of English.

A former German Minister of culture, Hans Joachim Meyer, is convinced that the Bologna process builds on fundamental ignorance of the strengths and weaknesses of universities in the USA and the UK, and is a crude attempt to americanise European universities. He is appalled that German academia has distanced itself from its own rich traditions and is in effect substituting English for German as the medium of instruction and publication: ‘Contrary to the wording affirmed in the Bologna Declaration, the reform of higher education serves the purpose of replacing the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe by an English linguistic monopoly’²⁹ (Meyer 2011, 61). If this is in fact happening, and this is an empirical question that cannot be firmly answered at present, it is very clear evidence of the European empire being a very junior partner in American empire.

The website of the Bologna process is exclusively in English³⁰. It is no surprise that when international interest in the Bologna process is referred to on this website, the countries concerned are Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, all of whom are competitors with Europe in attracting fee-paying foreign students – and offer English-medium instruction. The website for the European Research Area, an extension from the Bologna process, is in English, French, and German³¹, though its Progress report for 2013 is only in English. The website is surprisingly frank in equating the research ‘area’ with a market: ‘The 2014 ERA survey will be crucial for identifying areas where progress in the

implementation of actions required to complete a single market for researchers, knowledge and technology has been made’.

Many continental European countries have also moved into English-medium degrees, mainly to attract foreign students, but the statistics on this activity are unreliable. Data from Germany, as reported by Sabine Kunst, Minister of Science, Research and Culture in Brandenburg, and President of the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, show that the number of English-medium degrees in Germany tends to be grossly inflated: ‘The actual number of English-medium degrees represents no more than 4% of the totality of 15,134 degrees currently offered in higher education – at the Bachelor level we are even down to just under 1%’ (Kunst 2012, 73). Proficiency in English is increasingly needed in many scholarly fields in Germany³², but that is a different issue.

The same failure to tackle the language policy issue applies to evaluations of the Erasmus programme. The report *The Impact of Erasmus on European Higher Education: Quality, Openness and Internationalisation* (IP/09/301, Brussels, 20 February 2009) fails to refer to languages. When the research institution responsible for the study was asked to explain this, the reply stated (personal communication): ‘Unfortunately neither the research team nor the commissioner (DG EAC) did put language education and language of instruction on the strategic agenda of our study.’ This is another symptom of the myopia of eurocrats and the experts that they commission studies from. There is a great deal of rhetoric about quality and internationalisation – and language is irrelevant, provided English is used!

The Commission has global ambitions for the Bologna process. EU Commissioner Jan Figel stated on 10 May 2007:

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

In other words, universities should follow a neoliberal agenda, should be run like businesses, in partnership with industry, and privatise. This is academic and linguistic McDonaldization, the creation of global uniformity and predictability, marketed with the fashionable buzzwords, ‘accountability, employability, degree certification’.

While EU policies are influential, member states and their institutions share responsibility for the neglect of language policy issues. The website of the European University Association³³ fails to mention language policy in connection with its priorities, the most important of which is ‘building the European Higher Education Area through the Bologna process’. No mention is made of European doctorates (Doctor Europaeus/ Europaea). These originated from an initiative in 1991 of the former Confederation of European Union Rectors’ Conferences. The

doctoral schemes exist in cross-national partnerships in a number of natural and social science fields. The key criteria for obtaining such a doctorate include the use of minimally two languages, research activity in two countries, and assessment by professors from minimally two countries³⁴.

A further example of how a hegemonic status for English is being established, strengthening its position both within the Commission and in member states, can be seen in the way the DG for Research operates. Over the past six years I have been involved as an expert assessing applications for research funding in the language policy area and reports of the progress of EU funded research. The procedures in Brussels and the research itself provide evidence of the complexity of European integration, which is seldom optimally effective.

In the 'Guide for applicants' for funding from the Seventh Framework Programme³⁵ there is the following advice: 'Proposals may be prepared in any official language of the European Union. If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the experts', i.e. to those assessing the quality of the proposal for funding. The rhetoric of all EU languages being valid is formally acknowledged, but it is clear that applications have to be written in English. Applicants for whom English is not the primary professional language - many in southern and eastern Europe and elsewhere - are at a significant structural disadvantage when the application has to be in English. The expert evaluators are drawn from all EU countries, for many of whom English is not the primary working language, even if they are professional researchers. Even if they can 'manage' in English, their facility in being able to express themselves optimally in English may be limited, both in speech and when formulating the written response in English that all applicants are entitled to, when every word counts. This example of how the EU conducts its affairs reveals clearly that efficiency and linguistic equality are seriously constrained. This discrimination on grounds of language is in conflict with the EU's commitment to 'respecting' language diversity. While there is some strength in the argument that this way of conducting affairs is necessary for pragmatic or practical reasons, it ignores the reality of those with high-level proficiency in English being favoured.

These examples show how the hegemony of English is being consolidated, through processes of linguistic imperialism and McDonaldisation. Several of the examples reported on confirm a pattern of European Commission 'authoritarian executive managerialism', with policies overriding informed scientific input³⁶ and recommendations by the Ombud or European Parliament. *Laissez faire* language policies, and the assumption that globalization and European unification require proficiency in English, are symptomatic of the way the global English project has been internalised. The EU is an eager handmaiden facilitating the expansion of English and leaving it up to member states to take responsibility for other languages if they choose to. This is a re-run of what Tacitus described as taking place with Roman interests and Latin 2000 years ago, and which theorists of colonial liberation refer to as a colonised consciousness. Mental colonisation, uncritically embracing the language of the imperial power, facilitates empire-building and maintenance. Monolingualism at

the highest administrative level is a characteristic of all empires, with other languages tolerated, marginalised, or obliterated. Native speakers of the dominant language play a key role in legitimating this process, examples of which are provided in the concluding section.

Lingua franca discourse

Some people imagine that English is likely to become the lingua franca of India. That seems to me a fantastic conception, except in respect of a handful of upper-class intelligentsia. It has no relation to the problem of mass education and culture (...) even the most rabid of our nationalists hardly realize how much they are cribbed and confined by the British outlook in relation to India.

*Jawaharlal Nehru, 1936*³⁷.

Is it possible that the future Prime Minister of India's worry³⁸ can bear comparison with what we are currently experiencing in Europe? Could the European upper echelon of decision-makers (I hesitate to refer to them as an intelligentsia) be so cribbed (confined to a small space) and confined by their admiration for things American that incorporation into a 21st century American empire is already well established? American ambitions have for centuries been explicitly imperial: 'The whole world should adopt the American system. The American system can survive in America only if it becomes a world system' (President Harry Truman 1947, cited in Pieterse 2004, 131). Any such world system or empire will have English as the dominant language, to the dismay of French presidents and to many European intellectuals as well as nationalists. How could adoption of English as an imperial European language be justified or legitimated?

English is often described as a *lingua franca*. This generally seems to imply that the language is a neutral instrument for 'international' communication between speakers who do not share a mother tongue. This understanding of the term may mislead one into believing that *lingua franca* English is disconnected from the many purposes it serves in key societal domains. English might be more accurately related to distinct contexts of use. It can and does function as a pre-eminent international *lingua economica* (in business and advertising, the main language of corporate neoliberalism), a *lingua emotiva* (the imaginary of Hollywood, popular music, consumerism and hedonism), a *lingua academica* (in research publications, at international conferences, and as a medium for content learning in higher education), and a *lingua cultura* (rooted in the literary texts of English-speaking nations that school foreign language education traditionally aims at, and integrates with language learning as one element of general education). English is a major *lingua bellica* (the USA with 350 bases and 800 military facilities in 130 countries (Pieterse 2004, 58), NATO not only active in Europe but worldwide (Nazemroaya 2012), 'US armed forces are now involved in 49 out of 54 African states, along with the former colonial powers of France and Britain, in what's becoming a new carve-up of the continent' (Milne 2014, 20), the fabrication of a 'war on terror', etc). English is also a major *lingua*

politica in international organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union. The worldwide presence of English as a *lingua americana* is due to the massive economic, cultural and military impact of the USA, English functioning in each of the categories adumbrated here.

In the EU system, English, French and German are described as procedural languages for select purposes in the Commission. This term is used because these languages, now mainly English, serve as a *lingua executiva* for very specific functions in EU administration, and in political negotiations for reaching consensus on policies. Effectiveness in such interaction requires an extremely high level of linguistic proficiency.

There is an ironic historical continuity in the use of a term *lingua franca* to refer to contemporary English since it was first used to describe the language of Christian crusaders from western Europe in the Middle Ages (1095- 1300), who travelled to drive out Islam from Jerusalem and Palestine. The crusaders were understood as speaking *lingua franca*, the term deriving from the Arabic *lisan alfiranj*³⁹, when crusading Europeans of various origins were seen by Arabs as Franks. These were a tribe from Germany who settled in France, hence the name of the country France. The continent that bears the name Europe now was then generally referred to as Christendom.

The term *lingua franca* became established in later centuries in the eastern Mediterranean to describe the simplified language that was used between people from different linguistic backgrounds for commercial trading purposes. It was a restricted form of language, mixing elements from several European languages that had evolved from Latin (French, Italian, Catalan), Greek, and Arabic. A *lingua franca* in this sense of the term is limited, shrunken, incomplete language. It is comparable to pidgin languages used for commercial transactions in other regions of the world. There is therefore a logical inconsistency in applying it to a rich national language that also has international functions.

Among the many orchestrating a rhetoric that uncritically promotes global English, Churchill's descendants, are uninformed and uncritical native speakers. Advocacy of global English is at its most aggressive when the Director of the British Council in Germany claims that 'English should be the sole official language of the European Union'⁴⁰. Glyn Morgan, a Welshman now in the USA, in *The idea of a European super-state. Public justification and European integration*, (2005) writes that

The spread of English as the European *lingua franca*, the emergence of a common transnational youth culture, the convergence of business practices, and – most important of all – widespread adoption of European constitutional practices (and perhaps even a Constitution) can be seen as steps along the road to a European nation-state.

He may be right about such steps, but he seems unaware that his possible scenario builds on biased presuppositions:

- it assumes that English is a neutral *lingua franca*, serving all equally well, whereas high-level proficiency in English is rare in much of Europe, and in any case, many languages serve *lingua franca* purposes in Europe,
- it fails to reveal that 'a common transnational youth culture' is essentially American, promoting a Hollywood consumerist ideology,
- it ignores the fact that 'business practices' derive from the US corporate world, and the conceptual universe it embodies, and that is taught at business schools, in asymmetrical symbiosis with national traditions,
- EU constitutional practices and legislation have hybrid origins, and equal force in 24 languages, so that a possible European nation-state could never be monolingual.

Morgan exemplifies the tendency of many native speakers of English to consider Anglo-American linguistic norms and practices as universally valid and archetypically human (Wierzbicka 2006, 11 ff.). I would add that he also takes Americanisation as a universal norm.

The Belgian political scientist Philippe van Parijs states in an EU publication: 'English will gradually replace multilingualism not only in the huge posters that hang from the Berlaymont building, but also in highly sensitive contexts such as directly-applicable legislation or plenary session interventions by members of the European Parliament' (DG Translation 2010, 90). This was in a study of *lingua francas*, written by staff of the European Commission, and published by it anonymously, which gives it a semblance of representing the institution's position on the role of English. On fallacies in a book by van Parijs that argues for English becoming universal see Phillipson 2012b. Scholars who focus exclusively on the instrumental use of a language ignore its connection to power, class, and the interests behind use of the language. By advocating English for everyone, their work unintentionally 'becomes a crucial element of an international business class structure. It facilitates the growth and spread of multinational corporations and trade' (Ives 2006, 136-7)⁴¹. This of course is a primary goal of the EU. This strengthens the global 1%, the transnational capitalist class (Phillips, Huff and Higdon 2014).

The EU *lingua franca* study fits squarely into the mould of biased special pleading for English. It covers some historical and contemporary ground, but selectively, and without ever clarifying in what way the term *lingua franca* is understood or used in EU contexts. The study fails to address the issue of the actual use made of English in the EU system, which was a prime goal of the study⁴². It assumes English functions in a neutral egalitarian way, and while noting that there can be an element of hierarchy involved, it ignores the political and economic factors that account for the way English has expanded worldwide and in continental Europe. The study includes transcripts of interviews with three individuals, without their status or role being described. Two of those interviewed are passionately committed to promoting a greater use of English. It is disturbing that an institution that works to maintain multilingualism can publish such an unscholarly text, one that simply equates *lingua franca* with English.

Labelling English as a *lingua franca*, if this is understood as a culturally neutral medium that puts everyone on an equal footing, is simply incorrect. It is a pernicious term if the communicative interaction in question relates to what is a first language for some, but for others a foreign language. It is a false term for a language that is taught as a subject in general education, which presupposes study of the cultural contexts in which the language has evolved and is used.

It can also be considered an invalid term when used to describe English as a *lingua academica*, a language of scientific activity. A German scholar considers that 'the English used as an international scientific language is not a *lingua franca*, a non-language. English is a completely normal language with its specific monolingual semantics, like all other languages. [...] It is the bearer, like all other natural languages, of a particular vision of the world. As such it is not universal and purely objective, which is what real *lingua francas* were' (Trabant 2012, 108, see also Wierzbicka 2014). Scientific activity does not merely refer to objectively verifiable objects. Scholars from the 'English-speaking world' draw on the entire English-using conceptual universe. English therefore cannot be universally valid or correspond to general human traits. Its expansion is imperialist:

In as much as these monolingual, specific textual worlds are replacing and suppressing other scientific languages, a particular semantic world is being expanded to the entire world. They are therefore not universal but imperial and colonial, in the same way as political empires destroy and degrade other particular (scholarly) cultures. A gigantic destruction of knowledge has taken hold (Trabant 2012, 108).

A related point is made by another German scholar. Scientific communication in English is not neutral, not a *lingua franca*, when native speakers of English act as gatekeepers in the field of publications, since stylistic quality differs in German, Chinese, Polish etc. (Fiedler 2011). Scientific productivity benefits from different models of thinking in different languages: (ibid: 5-6). It is common for the French to argue on similar lines, rejecting 'la pensée unique', when insisting that English should not replace other languages.

Loose reference to English as a *lingua franca* runs the risk of political disconnection and obfuscation. It can obscure the reality of particular interests being promoted through an increased use of English. It dovetails with the interest of the British and Americans in their language being consolidated as the current language of power and influence. Flagging English as 'the world's *lingua franca*', or 'the *lingua franca* of the European Union' represents banal linguicism. Such claims are eminently falsifiable, but the claims create the impression that Churchill's vision of English being used worldwide is coming to life, and strengthening American and British influence.

In conclusion

It is a fundamental error to take language policy for granted, as though market forces and the use of particular languages do not have structural and ideological

causes and consequences. Seeing English as being neutral, as a *lingua nullius*, is as deluded as the colonising concept *terra nullius*, which it has largely come to replace in processes of colonisation of the mind. It is a truism that any language can serve good or evil purposes, to consolidate or combat imperialism. Users of English as a primary language, whether native speakers of English (many of whom are monolingual) or people for whom English has become an important professional language, need to be alert to the implications of language policy and its interlocking with social injustice.

There are historical reasons for English as the language of people in the dominant English-speaking countries becoming a key medium of international finance and corporate activity that now integrates owners of capital worldwide. The institutions that service this system, including the EU, are not promoting British, American or EU empire in the traditional sense but rather a neoimperial system which strengthens the hold of the transnational capital class. The current crises in the economies of many EU member states indicate that the system is fundamentally dysfunctional for the government of these states and for individuals who do not hold and cannot accumulate capital, one dimension of which is linguistic capital.

'Global English' is a project rather than a reality. The discourse of global English or of English as a unifying language in Europe serves to substantiate processes of language hierarchisation. It can serve to displace and dispossess speakers of other languages. Global English and European integration are projects that there are powerful Anglo-American and corporate forces behind, forces that now occupy space in EU institutions and have uncritical advocates in academia. Many of the activities of the EU that aim at strengthening a common market dovetail with the marketization of English as universally relevant, despite its origins and the reality that the increased use of English serves some interests better than others. English can be seen as a neoimperial language that strengthens the capital interests that thrive worldwide.

Hardt and Negri's controversial book on empire sees power in deterritorialised networks (2000, 32-33), and elucidates why it has been so important for the corporate world to dominate not only the media but also education, which is increasingly run to service the economy, and produce consumers rather than critical citizens. English contributes to the imperial production of subjectivities, through communicative networks, creating a synergy that integrates structural and ideological elements in the new world 'order'. Among the key networks are the language policies administered in the EU system of 'authoritarian executive managerialism'. These privilege English and dovetail with the role of English in many international organizations. This symbolic violence is invariably contested but is widely, uncritically internalised, although 'friends and enemies' may refuse to accept dominance. It is therefore perfectly possible that the global linguistic map may change violently in the coming decades.

In order to assess whether English can be considered a neoimperial language, what is needed is to identify the purposes to which English is being put in particular contexts, and by whom. Is English serving the interests of the global 1% domestically and internationally, and neglecting the issue of 'mass education

and culture', as Nehru feared? Capitalist neoliberalism is intensifying the gap between haves and have-nots in the USA, the UK, and in their former colonies – countries where English is the dominant language - and English has an increasing presence in decision-making in continental Europe. The causal factors facilitating this development are identifiable, the pull and push variables (resources, ideologies) that are invariably involved in linguistic imperialism.

I have elaborated a theoretical foundation for analysing English as a neoimperial language at greater length elsewhere (Phillipson 2009, 123-138). I build on Harvey's analysis of capitalist imperialism as shifting from a territorially-derived state and empire towards 'imperialism as a diffuse political-economic process in space and time in which command over and use of capital takes primacy' (Harvey 2005, 26), and the importance of the American military machine for empire. One can analyse what a state, or combination of states, or an institution such as a corporation or a university, does to achieve its goals, including the way it manages linguistic capital. One can track practices of 'production, trade, commerce, capital flows, money transfers, labour migration, technology transfer, currency speculation, flows of information, cultural impulses, and the like' (ibid.) and the role played by English and other languages in facilitating and constituting these interactions.

The evidence presented in this article documents how English is promoted as a neoimperial language, with linguistic capital accumulation and dispossession as a major constituent of contemporary empire. Those in the global 1% are either proficient in English or able to fund services that function in English and which enable them to augment personal and corporate financial capital accumulation. The European Union is a key player in this business, not an autonomous empire but integrated into the global networks of corporate and banking interests in the USA and Europe, not least in the UK (the City of London, with its links to Hong Kong and Singapore as well as Frankfurt) and the tax havens that deprive states of the funding necessary for managing societies equitably. There is an intensification of military activities by the USA, NATO, and the EU (notably the UK and France, but other 'willing' states like Denmark). There are clear signs of military over-reach, especially in the Middle East and Afghanistan. There is massive evidence of corruption in political systems, and in the leading banks. These trends correlate with greater use of English.

Political disaffection, disillusionment and apathy are widespread in a large proportion of citizens on both sides of the Atlantic. This signifies more than a mere democratic deficit. Empires that rely increasingly on military force, and on physical and electronic control of their citizens, are fundamentally repressive and unstable.

An empire has a unified center, a state in control of its subjects and private enterprises, a productive capacity that leads the societies within its imperial reach, an historical civilization of architecture, art, and culture, and most of all enduring public infrastructures and great works across its domains of command. (McMurtry 2014, 254)

This does not match up with American empire in any narrow political sense, nor with the EU with its complex mix of sovereignty at the national and supranational levels, and the interlocking of politics with corporate and military interests. On the other hand the EU now does have a relatively 'unified center', where a great deal of power is concentrated in the Council, Commission, and ECJ. English plays a significant role here, as it does in the corporate world, and, of course, in US and UK government.

In Europe the parameters determining hierarchies of language nationally and supranationally are multiple and mobile, but the presence of English cannot be ignored. There is an unresolved tension between the maintenance of the autonomy of national languages and the hegemonic consolidation of English in the supranational EU institutions and potentially within each member state. How the linguistic mosaic of Europe will evolve in the coming decades is unpredictable, but if cultural and linguistic diversity are to be maintained, there is manifestly a need for explicit language policy formation and implementation. This should be grounded on ethical principles that value diversity and that contribute to groups and individuals enjoying linguistic human rights.

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¹ In House of Commons, 24 August 1941.

² When receiving an honorary degree at Harvard University, 6 September 1943. <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/speeches/speeches-of-winston-churchill/118-the-price-of-greatness>.

³ Cited in Harvey 2005, 80.

⁴ This remark was made at an informal lunch at the University of Roskilde, Denmark.

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- ⁵ At the Round Table on 'Social and economic factors promoting and inhibiting linguistic diversity', Innsbruck, 10-12 May 1999, see Council of Europe 2000.
- ⁶ Official Journal of the European Communities, C 364/1, 18.12.2000, or <http://www.europarl.eu.int/charter/default_en.htm>.
- ⁷ 'For the Lord our God Most High / He hath made the deep as dry, / He hath smote for us a pathway / to the ends of all the earth!' (Kipling 1913, p. 1, first published 1896). On Kipling's psychology see Nandy 1983.
- ⁸ Cited in Holroyd 1997, 660.
- ⁹ Extensive data on translations is compiled by UNESCO and International PEN.
- ¹⁰ Cited in Gopal 1980, 507.
- ¹¹ See 'Linguistic diversity and multilingualism in the European Union', Council Conclusions 1995, approved by member states' foreign ministers, cited in Phillipson 2003, 193-4.
- ¹² I am indebted to Hervey 2014b for points in this and the following paragraph.
- ¹³ The Council of Europe was acting in a similar spirit in its Democracy through Law activities, see Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1994, 107.
- ¹⁴ See endnote 2.
- ¹⁵ <http://www.thatchercenter.org>.
- ¹⁶ <http://www.margaretthatcher.org>.
- ¹⁷ A declaration on a Nordic language policy, www.norden.org.
- ¹⁸ The term in use in Nordic political discourse about consequences of the increased use of English is 'domain loss', but this is a vague concept that conceals agency. Agents of linguistic capital accumulation and dispossession need to be identified and can be.
- ¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/faq/index_en.htm, accessed 3 May 2014.
- ²⁰ 'Es gibt in der EU kein emotionaleres Thema als Sprachen.' Wilhelm Schönfelder, cited in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1 April 2005.
- ²¹ 'Un sujet qui peut être qualifié d'explosif en Europe'. Pierre Lequiller, Président, réunion ouverte à l'ensemble des membres français du Parlement Européen, le 11 juin 2003, pour débattre le *Rapport sur la diversité linguistique au sein de l'Union européenne*, préparé par Michel Herbillon, auprès de la Délégation pour l'Union Européenne.
- ²² Toubon later became Minister of Justice, so that the name given to the legislation in France aimed at stemming the tide of the invasion of English in France in 1994 is popularly known as the *Loi Toubon*.
- ²³ For analysis see Phillipson 2003, 45-47.
- ²⁴ There is a shortage of empirical documentation of this reality. The issue is explored in articles in Berthoud et al (eds.) 2013.
- ²⁵ See the European Ombudsman's press release No. 6/2006, and Draft Recommendation to the Council of the EU in complaint 1487/2005,GG-
- ²⁶ I am grateful to Josef Reinart of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, personal communication, 8 November 2007, for the information reported here.
- ²⁷ LINEE produced banal results. DYLAN achieved more, see Berthoud et al 2013, but also demonstrated the limitations of research collaboration across national borders, research traditions, and incompatible sub-projects.
- ²⁸ See <http://www.eldia-project.org>. Others are in a start-up phase.
- ²⁹ Entgegen dem Wortlaut der Bologna-Erklärung dient also die Studienreform dem Ziel, die dort beschworene sprachliche und kulturelle Vielfalt Europas durch

ein englisches Sprachmonopol zu ersetzen. Meyer 2011, 61.

³⁰ <http://www.ehea.info>.

³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/index_en.htm.

³² The German Rectors' Conference passed a resolution on *Language policy at German universities* at its 11th General Meeting of 22 November 2011. This diagnoses challenges and makes recommendations for promoting 'multilingualism and ensuring that German remains a language of science and scholarship', in English at www.hrk.de.

³³ <http://www.eua.be/Home.aspx>.

³⁴ For an example, see

<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/researchoffice/graduateeducation/g-eurodoc.pdf>.

³⁵ <http://cordis.europa.eu>.

³⁶ This tallies with the EU's Chief Scientific advisor, Ann Glover, stating that her experience is that facts are subordinated to the EU's political agenda, <http://www.euractiv.com/>, 27 May 2014. Her own advice to the Commission president is not made public.

³⁷ Cited in Gopal 1980, 525.

³⁸ Whatever Nehru may have wished, the policies he implemented served to strengthen the hold of English in India.

³⁹ For a history of the term *lingua franca*, and some examples of different uses of the term, see Phillipson 2009, 165-167.

⁴⁰ Cited in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 February 2002.

⁴¹ For a related criticism of the work of Abram de Swaan, see Phillipson 2009, 251-7.

⁴² The unscholarly crudity of the study can be seen in its 'conclusion', which fails to sum up ideas presented earlier and introduces completely new ones.