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**POLICY, PLANNING AND  
PERCEPTIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION:**

**A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE  
ON MINORITY LANGUAGE VITALITY**

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## Abstract

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Over the last few decades, minority language issues have been attracting increasing attention in the media, among academics, and in the affairs of national governments and international organizations. Nowhere has this been truer than in the European Union, where concern over the ‘endangered languages crisis’ has led to an increasing awareness of Europe’s small languages and of the challenges they face in a globalised, English-dominated linguistic marketplace. A more tangible outcome of this concern has been a growth in rhetoric within EU institutions advocating a general respect for multilingualism and linguistic diversity, and a series of support measures and resolutions designed to guarantee this. Despite the widespread rhetoric of concern and support, however, in terms of concrete legislation there is still a wide gap between debate and policy in Europe, and until now it has been left unclear to what extent this gap is actually affecting the vitality and prospects of individual minority languages.

This dissertation addresses this question by analysing how the European Union, both in the by-products of the integration process and in its deliberate rhetoric of support, is impacting the vitality of three specific minority language communities: Galician in Spain, Corsican in France and Sorbian in Germany. Drawing upon research collected via sociolinguistic surveys in these communities, it attempts to gauge whether Europe as an integrated entity is positively or negatively affecting the prospects of minority languages within its borders; if member state policies toward their minorities have been positively swayed by European rhetoric; if minority language speakers themselves see a positive effect on language use from European policy and promotion; and whether the role of English as a necessary *lingua franca* inside and outside Europe is eroding the position of the minority languages as the second language of choice.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis on the survey results indicate that unfortunately, despite the amount of attention these minority languages receive from both government and media, language decline seems to show no sign of abating in any of these communities, and indeed the actions of the EU are apparently having very little impact on individual language situations. In addition, the survey indicates that hostile or indifferent member state policy is continuing to be one of the biggest stumbling blocks to minority language maintenance in Europe. From this perspective it seems reasonable to assess that the EU has in effect failed at what it claims to be trying to achieve, namely to provide a social and political climate that is favourable to minority language maintenance, and to assume that if this is the case in these three communities it is likely to be the case across Europe. With this in mind, the study concludes with the recommendation that the EU reconsider its involvement in language matters across the board, particularly in its current working-language structure and the reluctance to put some force of law behind its minority language support, and cautions that without this, the EU will likely face the imminent erosion of much of the very diversity upon which it has been built.

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## Abbreviations

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ADECEC: *Association pour la défense de l'étude de la langue corse de l'est et du centre*

EBLUL: *European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages*

EC: *European Community*

ECRML: *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*

ECSC: *European Coal and Steel Community*

EEC: *European Economic Community*

EU: *European Union*

GDR: *German Democratic Republic*

GIDS: *Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale*

ICCPR: *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*

RLS: *Reversing Language Shift*

SEA: *Single European Act*

TEU: *Treaty on European Union*

UN: *United Nations*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

“[T]here are many reasons why all of us – not just linguists, or those whose languages are under threat – should be alarmed at what is happening and try to do something to stop it. As a uniquely human invention, language is what has made everything possible for us as a species: our cultures, our technology, our art, music and much more. In our languages lies a rich source of the accumulated wisdom of all humans. [...] Every language is a living museum, a monument to every culture it has been vehicle to. It is a loss to every one of us if a fraction of that diversity disappears when there is something that can have been done to prevent it.”

(Nettle & Romaine 2000:14)

### 1.1. MOTIVATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

It would be no overstatement to say that the words above had a large part to play in motivating the choice of topic for this thesis. Reading Nettle and Romaine’s impassioned elegy for language diversity had a profound effect on the course of my academic study yet it was not, however, my introduction to this issue; on the contrary, this topic had long possessed a particular resonance for me. In fact, it began when I was sixteen and applied to become an exchange student in Spain for my final year of high school, ostensibly to gain fluency in Spanish. Due to factors outside my control, instead of finding myself surrounded with the typical images of the Mediterranean Spain I had expected, I was placed in the Basque Country, in a climate about as culturally and linguistically distinct from that as it is possible to get on the Iberian peninsula. For twelve months I lived with a family there that spoke Basque as their primary language to each other, but had agreed to switch to Spanish for the duration of the year for my benefit.

Everything about this experience was a revelation to me. I had not previously been aware that there were any long-established groups in Spain who did not have Spanish as their first language, and even had I known, I would not have suspected that the differences would find expression in so many areas of life. I was astounded

by the strength of their connection to, and pride in, their own language, culture and history, and also by their insistence on distancing themselves from everything that was a symbol of the rest of Spain. When I travelled elsewhere in Spain, I was overwhelmed by the prejudices and strange ideas other people had about the Basques – people frequently asked me how I could live with terrorists, for example. Although I had recently known little about them myself, it shocked me that people from the same country were so ignorant and dismissive of everything Basque. After only living there a short time it seemed perfectly legitimate to me that the Basques should not want to see the surviving elements of their culture crushed by the immense power of the Spanish mainstream.

Unfortunately, the erosion of Basque language and culture was already well underway, and had been for many years. Many of my friends and schoolmates were turning their backs, or at least placing limits, on their Basque identity, believing it was detrimental to be seen as too much of a ‘nationalist’. Most young people I met had limited competence in Basque as well, and regarded it as antiquated and unnecessary. English was also posing a threat, as I witnessed in the school I attended. Although Basque language was a compulsory subject for all students, English had been slowly squeezing Basque out to become the second language of choice for most students, and already in those days it was far easier to recruit a teacher of English among the Basque population than a teacher of Basque. I have no doubt that the situation has probably worsened in the intervening decade.

I continued cultivating an interest in minority and endangered language issues throughout my undergraduate years, but it was not until receiving a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship upon graduating that I began to put the pieces of the puzzle fully

into perspective. During the twelve months covered by this fellowship, I travelled back to the Basque Country, and did fieldwork there as well as in New Zealand and Peru, where I looked at community revitalisation strategies for Maori and Quechua. The uncomfortable realization I came to was that Basque is far from alone. In fact, I realised that it is in exactly the same precarious position as many, if not most other minority languages in the world, that is, marginalised, suppressed, and continually declining in use. In both New Zealand and Peru I witnessed the same things that I had seen during my time in the Basque Country, namely that people were increasingly having to choose between two uncompromisable extremes: on one hand, speaking and helping to maintain a minority language, which in many countries means living in an isolated and economically depressed area and foregoing any chance of social or economic advancement; and on the other hand giving this up to ‘get ahead’ and benefit from the rewards that mass society and global languages have to offer. Spending time in these three communities I witnessed first-hand the difficulty and emotionally-charged nature of this decision for many.

It was these experiences and realizations that compelled me to pursue this topic for a doctoral thesis within the framework of linguistics, in the hope that informed study might help speakers of thousands of small languages find some kind of compromise through better policy and planning. In fact, I discovered that this was an ideal time to pursue research into this topic. Over the last couple of decades, for perhaps the first time ever language issues have been attracting increasing attention in the media, among academics, and in the concerns of national governments and international organizations. Nowhere has this been truer than in Europe, where language issues have continued to provoke debate in many circles, not least in the

upper echelons of European decision-making. Nevertheless, despite the amount of visibility the issue has received, I realised that there is still a wide gap between debate and policy, particularly where minority languages are concerned, and from a practical point of view very little has changed in the way governments and citizens deal with language issues on a daily basis.

One of the main reasons why minority language issues have become such a prominent topic as of late is that it is finally being acknowledged what many have known all along, namely that poor handling of language problems is often associated with inter-group tensions and, occasionally, with outright conflict. Whereas previously the threat from external sources was seen as justification for governments to put everything else aside in the interests of national cohesion, today they are realizing that as much of a threat to stability can arise from within, particularly from minority groups who do not feel their interests are addressed by the ruling majority (Grin 2003).

Nevertheless, this political aspect of language issues is not the only reason why they have, in recent years, gained so much visibility. Another reason why these issues are getting attention, particularly from the media and academia, is related to the growing awareness of the scope of language decline, often referred to as the 'endangered languages crisis' (see chapter 2). It is now an established fact that small and minority languages (see section 2.3.1 for a discussion of terminology) are disappearing at a strikingly rapid pace, and activists and scholars are increasingly finding themselves in a race against time to uncover the factors behind this disappearance. Much of the concern behind the fate of these languages inevitably goes into documenting them, as there are many whose chances for survival are so

slim that preserving a record is all that can be done. However there are many languages that, like Basque, are not yet at that critical juncture, and would benefit from a clearer understanding of what is causing them to decline. To this day, remarkably little is known about how to influence the dynamics of language death and revitalization, as the causal links are so complex. As Kendall King (2001:10) explains, the knowledge that has been gained “tend[s] to take the form of ‘hands-on’ reports of ‘what worked’ (or did not work) in a particular endangered language community”, not universal models of how to combat language decline.

Both of these angles laid the foundation the selection of my specific topic, an analysis of minority language vitality and policy in the European Union<sup>1</sup>. I chose to focus on Europe because a great deal of changes have been happening here which I believe are having a marked impact on language use. The European Union has been evolving into a powerful entity over the last few decades, and with it Europe is being integrated into a kind of super-state, with all the stress on local languages and cultures that that entails. Minority groups, in particular, stand to be affected by these changes, though as of yet it is not clear whether this effect will be primarily positive or negative. On one hand the homogenising tendencies of this integration are eroding the delicate foundations on which minority languages have survived, especially as young people are becoming increasingly mobile and seeking employment in non-minority areas. On the other hand, European integration offers a forum for minority language grievances in a way that national governments have often not done, and some believe that the respect for multilingualism in the EU institutions might end up having a trickle-down effect on the protection of language diversity at local and

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<sup>1</sup> As most of my research was completed pre-enlargement, I have limited my scope to the 15 member states that comprised the Union before May 2004.

regional levels. Additionally, the European Union has been vocal in its promotion of minority languages and cultures, articulating the belief that a strong Europe is one in which everyone has the freedom to maintain his or her identity.

The question I wanted this thesis to pose, then, is whether or not Europe as an integrated entity is positively or negatively affecting the demography of the minority languages within its borders. In other words, are minority languages in Europe better off because of the European Union? How is their vitality faring in the face of globalisation and super-languages like English? What types of concrete actions has the EU taken to safeguard and support the use of these languages? What is the perception of the role of these languages in an integrated Europe and within the communities themselves by the people who speak them? What kinds of factors are having an impact on language survival? And finally, what more could or should European institutions be doing?

There exists considerable literature on the issues facing minority languages and theoretical treatises exploring the factors in society that lead to language maintenance and shift. Broad census-type studies as well as ethnographic accounts of single language communities are relatively commonplace, but a study that attempts to assess the perceptions and opinions of a swath of the population on many aspects of the minority language issues is comparatively rare, and comparisons of similar data from more than one minority language group is even more unusual. As the ones upon whom the responsibility ultimately lies to keep a language alive, minority groups themselves are in a unique position to answer questions concerning their language's vitality and future prospects. It was with this in mind that I realised the best place to ask the above questions, without a doubt, would be to members of the



minority language communities themselves. To this end I selected three minority communities to investigate, and administered members of each a sociolinguistic survey.

The three case-study groups I selected were the Galicians in Spain, the Corsicans in France and the Sorbs in Germany. These communities were chosen because of their lack of high-profile status in the conventional minority language literature, and for the fact that they represent minorities in three countries with very different attitudes to their minority languages, occupying a spectrum from very accommodating (Spain) to tolerance or 'benevolent neglect' (Germany), to blatantly hostile (France). The fact that the same survey questions were asked of all three groups was designed to provide very interesting cross-comparisons about the effects of these types of government on minority language vitality.

The results of the survey were very illuminating indeed. Despite the relatively high profile of the minority language groups in Europe, and the amount of attention they receive from both government and media, all three languages seem to be in steep decline. There does seem to be some correlation between the level of government involvement and general optimism regarding language future, but the difference is less than expected. The actions of the EU are perceived to be generally insignificant, with the attitude of the national governments playing far more of a role; however, the idea that the EU is positively influencing these governments' stances is also discounted. Although there are very interesting differences in the responses from all three groups and many theories to be read into these, the undisputable fact is that the integration of Europe and its subsequent policies are, from the perspective of

minority language speakers, having no positive impact on language use and survival prospects. Indeed, language decline is continuing as steeply as ever.

As a linguist, I naturally value linguistic diversity very highly. However, my interest in this topic is more than purely academic, as I have seen the reality of minority-language situations from up close and have known people who are being deeply affected by the linguistic changes in their community. I believe that the situation for minority languages is not hopeless, but that a turnaround rests upon a dedicated and comprehensive campaign to change socio-political and linguistic realities in these communities. I also believe that the earlier this is tackled in the process of decline, the better the chances it will be successful. A major factor in the prevention of language death will undoubtedly be a comprehensive body of academic work that theorises, informs and critiques these efforts. This thesis, then, is my contribution to that effort.

## **1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

The thesis begins with a large section reviewing the foundations of the various strands of research and theory which are relevant to minority languages. Chapter 2 opens with an overview of the general language situation in the world today, including the challenges posed by globalisation and the spread of English and the responses to the ‘endangered languages crisis’. I also look at language vitality, including definitions and theoretical models proposed to explain it, including the first by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), as well as other terminology related to language maintenance and shift. I examine the theory and practice of language revitalisation, particularly Fishman’s (1991) concept of reversing language shift

(RLS) and his graded intergenerational disruption scale (GIDS), which provides a theoretical model for language planners to follow in reintroducing a language into various domains. I briefly touch on the difficulties in pinning down the defining characteristics of a ‘minority’, discuss different types of minority situations, and introduce the debate surrounding the division between language and dialect – a debate which in fact has huge ramifications for minority language recognition and support. In a section on language, identity and nationalism, I examine some of the differing opinions about the nature of the link between the three, particularly how it has given birth to the politically explosive assumption that there is a necessary and intrinsic link between state, nation and language. From there I move on to a section on language policy and planning, offering definitions and typologies of these, before tackling the separate but related issue of language rights in the final section. Here I examine the debate that centres on whether the right to language should be considered a fundamental human right, or whether it should be classed as a separate category of rights. I frame the current debate by providing a history of how language has been dealt with in international law over the last two centuries.

In chapter 3, I focus on Europe. I begin by outlining the history of integration and how quickly European states have moved toward a kind of supra-state structure in which they have relinquished a large amount of legislative control. I then look at the way globalisation is currently affecting Europe, with English gaining more and more ‘market value’ and usurping some of the domains that even other official member state languages used to occupy. I examine Europe’s official policy on language, arguing that the effect the European Union is having on language patterns is discordant with their lack of legislation in this area in member states. This frames a

discussion of how Europe deals with its minority languages. I recount the specific actions the EU has taken in support of minority languages, and argue that although the institution has professed a strong commitment to safeguarding diversity in all its forms, limits on legislating cultural matters have effectively prevented the institution from providing any tangible support.

Chapter 4 presents my three case studies: Galician, Corsican and Sorbian. I begin each section with an overview of the states that are home to these languages, profiling the history of the national language and examining the development of language-based national identity in each country. I conclude that all three countries have experienced the cultivation of a strong link between the state and language, although this has taken radically different forms in each one. I then profile the Galicians, Corsicans and Sorbs, outlining their history of language activism and planning efforts, as well as their present circumstances and the current status of the language, as it has been reported by other researchers and studies. The data available on all three languages would indicate that language planning has been successful to some extent in all three communities, though Galician looks to be much stronger overall, with the ‘normalisation’ strategies showing success in many areas. This chapter concludes with some predictions about the types of results I expect to emerge from my survey analysis.

In chapter 5 I recount the motivations and methodology behind my data collection method, an internet-based sociolinguistic survey administered to these three minority language communities. I look at the pros and cons of using internet technology and report my own successes and failures in conducting research this

way, though I conclude that internet research holds tremendous potential for all kinds of language research, particularly where time and money are of the essence.

Chapter 6 presents and analyses all the survey results. I look at a multitude of variables that relate to competence, language use in different spheres, the status and prestige attached to the language, perceptions of its growth or decline, issues of identity, and the kinds of support that the languages receive from various sources including local, state and European sources. The responses from each group for each survey question are presented concurrently to facilitate cross-comparison; in addition I provide examples from commentary that helps to explain some of the numbers. Among the results to emerge are the surprising observations that language decline is steeper than predicted in all three communities, that there is much less use of these languages than general competence would suggest, and that state and EU support are generally regarded as being ineffective at best, and damaging at worst. I bring the chapter to a close with an assessment of language vitality for these three languages as the survey paints it, an assessment of the current state of national and European support, and a number of generalizations about the most important findings that have emerged from the survey results.

Finally, chapter 7 concludes the thesis with a summary of preceding chapters, a section detailing the value of this particular kind of research, and some suggestions for ways in which the European Union might improve their support to the minority languages situated within their borders.

## 2. FOUNDATIONS OF MINORITY LANGUAGE RESEARCH

Research into minority languages necessarily involves a multifaceted and multidisciplinary approach. Although on the surface, the dynamics of language behaviour in minority-language communities may seem to be a linguistic concern, many of the aspects of language shift, change and loss in fact often have more to do with sociology, psychology, politics, history and economics than with linguistics itself. Perhaps because of this complexity, in many ways the field of minority language research is still in its infancy, particularly when it comes to approaching the topic from this macro, or generalist, perspective. Luckily, the growing interest in minority and endangered languages in recent years has produced an increasingly comprehensive body of research, both theoretical and empirical, which has laid a solid groundwork for my own.

The following chapter presents a brief overview of the issues that are most central to the study of minority language issues, and the most important research that has been conducted in these areas. I begin by framing the context for my own studies by examining the general state of language endangerment worldwide and how trends like the spread of English are actively affecting the use and transmission of smaller languages. From there I move on to the theoretical foundation for discussing the issues at hand, including different conceptualisations of what determines language vitality and how the term ‘minority’ is defined. I then look briefly at some of the debates surrounding language and nationalism, language policy and planning, and language rights as they pertain to minorities in an international context. I present this research from the perspective that a comprehensive understanding of both the micro-

(i.e. at the level of the individual) and macro-level (i.e. societal level) processes is necessary to attempt to fully conceptualise language shift.

## **2.1. LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT WORLDWIDE**

### **2.1.1. Introduction**

The most comprehensive catalogue of language information available, the *Ethnologue*, estimates that there are 6912 living languages in the world today (March 2006, Ethnologue online). According to linguist Michael Krauss (1992), on the North American continent 80% of the currently spoken languages are no longer being learned by children, making them effectively ‘moribund’. Looking elsewhere the picture is no less dire: one-quarter of South American languages, one-half of Russian/former Soviet languages, and 90% of Aboriginal Australian languages also fall into this category. In fact, using an arbitrary threshold of 100,000 speakers and some kind of state recognition as criteria for ‘safety’, he estimates that there are only about 600 ‘safe’ languages, or less than ten percent of those currently spoken. Although the exact number of threatened languages is certainly debatable, one thing is clear: the world’s languages are facing a massive extinction in the near future, and unless we rapidly improve our understanding of the crisis and the processes fuelling it, they will be gone before we even have a chance to react.

### **2.1.2. Background**

How has the current situation come about? Although we have no records, we can assume that until a few hundred years ago, the language situation in the world was more or less stable, with several thousand languages existing in varying degrees of

contact. Of course languages were evolving, converging and diverging, with natural disasters and human conflict taking its toll on the existence of many languages. A great diversity persisted, however, simply because people were much more isolated from each other due to limitations on communication and movement.

According to Nancy Dorian (1998), the genesis of the monolingual mindset was in Europe, from where it has spread to the rest of the world via political and cultural domination. As she recounts, monolingualism first became a politicised ideal in medieval times with the advent of ‘nation building’. The many European monarchs who attempted to unify vast and culturally heterogeneous areas did so under the belief that linguistic unity equals political unity. This ideology was later carried by the Europeans to the far corners of the globe as they colonised culturally and linguistically disparate peoples in Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas.

The second stage in solidifying the linguistic homogenisation of the continent came as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, as all over Europe the movement of workers and the general exodus toward urban areas meant that people from historically remote areas were put in contact with larger populations who spoke the national language. Grace Neville (1986:149) recounts that in nineteenth-century France, “...at best regional languages came to be regarded as useless: they brought no money or social prestige; at worst, they were seen as living proof of backwardness, all that was primitive, a lack of ‘civitas’ and even a lack of intelligence.” Both the demographic erosion caused by migration and the economic disparity between minority-speaking populations and the urban elite led to increasingly rapid abandonment of local tongues. Today we see this process repeating and perpetuating itself on a global scale, as communication, travel, movement of workers and



urbanization favour an increasingly small set of languages, and throughout the world languages are being valued as nothing more than the sum of their socioeconomic usefulness (see section 2.1.4 for further discussion of the impact of globalisation on smaller languages).

### **2.1.3. Responses to the Crisis**

To view language death as a ‘crisis’, however, is certainly a subjectivisation of the issue. Many people do not regard the prospect of global linguistic homogenisation a problem at all, even if it comes at the expense of the existence of thousands of languages. A recent Op-Ed in the Wall Street Journal nicely sums up the feelings of many people, when it calls the current decline in language diversity “a trend that is arguably worth celebrating”. The author justifies this by saying, “A growing number of people are speaking a smaller number of languages, meaning that age-old obstacles to communication are collapsing. Surely this is a good thing” (Miller 2002:W13).

Indeed, some linguists even question the moral validity of supporting the preservation of endangered languages. Peter Ladefoged (1992:810), in an opinion piece that generated enormous controversy within the Linguistics community, argued that “...[i]t is paternalistic of linguists to assume that they know what is best for the community. One can be a responsible linguist and yet regard the loss of a particular language, even a whole group of languages, as far from a ‘catastrophic destruction’.” Sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (1991:2) has also raised the following difficult questions: “...Is this the time to worry about ‘sickly languages’... when cities the world over are crumbling due to crime and pollution, when drugs are decimating the

young, when poverty and incurable illness are ravaging hundreds of millions throughout the world, when natural resources are being destroyed at an awesome rate, when totalitarianism... still dominates such sizeable proportions of mankind... Is this the time to worry about threatened languages whom history and the majority of their former speakers have apparently consigned to the dustbin?"

Many linguists are in fact answering 'yes' to the above question. An early influential proponent of linguistic diversity was the eighteenth-century German theologian and language philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, who wrote that the world needs a multiplicity of languages "for its greater creativity, for the more certain solution of human problems, for the constant rehumanisation of humanity in the face of materialism, for fostering greater aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional capacities for humanity as a whole, [and] indeed for arriving at a higher stage of human functioning" (Fishman 1982:6; see section 4.5.2). Fishman (1991) himself believes that the process of language loss is not an independent issue but is indicative not only of social disorganization but of social injustice as well. Ken Hale (1993) calls attention to the current loss of linguistic diversity because it forms part of a bigger picture of a decline in cultural and intellectual diversity, which should be a matter of concern to all people. Marianne Mithun believes that "the loss of language diversity will mean that we never even have the opportunity to appreciate the full creative capacities of the human mind," and that in losing language we lose the vehicle that represents "the distillation of the thoughts and communication of a people over their entire history" (Mithun 1998:189). David Crystal (2000) believes we should care about dying languages for five important reasons: because the human race needs diversity, because language expresses identity, because languages are

repositories of history, because languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge, and because languages are interesting in themselves. Leanne Hinton addresses the social and political factors underlying language loss in arguing that “[t]he decline of linguistic diversity in the world is linked to the world political economy which invades and takes over the territories of indigenous peoples, threatens the ecosystems in which they live, wipes out their traditional means of livelihood, and (at best) turns them into low-caste labourers in the larger society in which they must now live on the margins” (Hinton 1999, quoted in Hinton and Hale 2001: 4). Many languages even have persuasive arguments of their own in the form of proverbs, such as the saying in Romani *varesave foci nai-len pengi nogi chib, si kokoro posh foci*, which translates as “a people without their own language is only half a people,” and the Welsh proverb *Cenedl heb iaith, cenedl heb galon*, which means “A nation without a language is a nation without a heart” (Nettle & Romaine 2000:23). Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) also argues that asking difficult ‘why’ questions that deal with the moral and ethical aspects of language research is a responsibility academics must shoulder. She eschews the positivist tradition which says that a researcher’s feelings and moral and political value judgements have nothing to do with research, and calls upon linguists and other scholars to confront and denounce the paradigms of inequality, oppression and powerlessness which characterise language shift situations around the world.

Interest in the fate of the world’s disappearing languages has been continually growing over the past fifteen years. In the academic world, ‘Language Endangerment’ was the subject of plenary sessions of the annual meetings of the Linguistic Society of America and the International Congress of Linguists in

Chicago and Quebec in 1992. The LSA subsequently established a Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation. Also in 1992 the Permanent International Committee of Linguists, a constituent organization of UNESCO, held a meeting in Paris to plan the International Clearinghouse for Endangered Languages, which is now situated in Tokyo, and to launch a project called the “Red Book on Endangered Languages”, which catalogues information on thousands of endangered languages. In 1994 Doug Whalen at Yale University established an organization called the Endangered Languages Fund with the goal of raising funds specifically for research. Also in the early 90s the *Arbeitskreis für Bedrohte Sprachen* formed in Germany, which in conjunction with the VolkswagenStiftung (of car fame) has launched a project to fund multimedia documentation projects of severely endangered languages. In Britain the Foundation for Endangered Languages was founded by Nicholas Ostler in 1995, which in addition to holding an international conference on endangered languages each year, funds fieldwork, publishes bulletins, and works to raise public awareness on the issue. Conferences on endangered language issues have also been held more recently at MIT and Dartmouth College (both 1995), in Hong Kong (1996), Barcelona (1996), Berkeley (1996), Edinburgh (1998), Maynooth (1999), Helsinki (2001), Broome (2003), and at Georgetown University (2006), among others.

And outside of the academic world? The fact of an article in the Wall Street Journal devoted to the issue of endangered languages surely speaks to some kind of growing public awareness. A number of books on the topic have even reached high street booksellers in both Britain and the United States: *Vanishing Voices* by Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine (2000), *Language Death* by David Crystal (2000),

*Mother Tongues: Travels through Tribal Europe* by Helena Drysdale (2001) and *Spoken Here: Travels among Threatened Languages* by Mark Abley (2003). And a search in the archives of mainstream newspapers in the U.S. and Britain reveals that literally dozens of articles on disappearing languages have reached the eyes of the public sector over the last few years<sup>2</sup>.

#### **2.1.4. English and the Challenge of Globalisation**

Despite increasing awareness on both popular and academic fronts, however, the realities of the modern world seem to be far from hospitable for small-language maintenance. In many countries, particularly in the developing world, small and minority languages are being actively wiped out, through processes of forced assimilation, oppression, and genocide. However, in most countries the pressure is of a much more subtle nature. Globalisation, in the form of better communication, faster travel, less physical isolation, more political cooperation and economic dependence are leading to the dominance of a select few ‘languages of wider communication’, which enjoy enormous prestige. According to Matthias Brenzinger (1998), for example, in non-Arabic speaking Africa it is impossible to complete secondary education in any of the approximately 1200 indigenous languages, as all instruction is done through the elite languages of the former colonisers (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese). The export of culture from wealthy monolingual countries in the form of television, films, and pop music is having an equally devastating impact on languages around the world. Michael Krauss (1992:6) goes as far as to identify television as one of the biggest threats to indigenous language and

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. NY Times 15/8/98 “Too Late to Say ‘Extinct’ In Ubykh, Eyak or Ona: Thousands of Languages Are Endangered”; Newsweek 14/9/98 “Say What? Preserving Endangered Languages”; Guardian, 25/10/99 “Death Sentence”; U.K. Independent 10/3/02 “Linguicide: the Death of Language”

culture, calling it “an incalculably lethal new weapon,” which can be likened to “cultural nerve gas”.

The dominance of English world-wide is having a particularly dramatic effect, and one much greater than any other single language. While certainly languages have expanded and contracted throughout history, and there are many languages that are currently expanding at the expense of other languages<sup>3</sup>, the way English is impacting globally is unique. Its advance has major implications for speakers of all other languages, for education systems and professional qualifications, for the economy, and for the vitality of cultures big and small. The numbers are quite simply astounding:

English is used as an official or semi-official language in over 60 countries, and has a prominent place in a further 20. It is either dominant or well-established in all six continents. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music and advertising. Over two-thirds of the world’s scientists write in English. Three quarters of the world’s mail is written in English. Of all the information in the world’s electronic retrieval systems, 80% is stored in English. English radio programmes are received by over 150 million in 120 countries. Over 50 million children study English as an additional language at primary level; over 80 million study it at secondary level (Crystal 1997a:360).

Sassen (1995), in particular, argues that the spread of English is responsible for creating a new ‘geography of power’, in which the rise of transnational companies, the shift of political power from the state level to the supra-national level and the private sector, and the information revolution are all helping to secure its unquestioned place as the language of the new global economy. There is widespread agreement that not only did “the spread of English [go] parallel with the spread of the culture of international business and technological standardization” (Ndebele

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<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in many parts of the world where English is spreading as an L2, there is a local prestige variety which is far more directly responsible for the shift away from smaller languages than English (e.g. Spanish in Latin America, Bahasa Indonesia in the Indonesian archipelago, etc.).

1987:4), but that this was the result of active policymaking on the part of British and American governments in their attempt to promote their own business interests (Pennycook 1992, Phillipson 1992 and Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1994a).

Of course states, enterprises and individuals are pushed to globalise by powerful interest groups, but there are also powerful pull factors at work as well. In particular, for many people globalisation and English represent the path to a more open social and economic playing field and an increase in personal freedom. As May (2001) explains it, a consequence of this increasing global ascendancy of English is that the language has come to be linked inextricably with modernity and modernisation, and the associated benefits which are available to those who speak it. Particularly for speakers of minority languages, who have historically been the object of scorn or persecution for their adherence to antiquated ways, the lure of English is strong, as it is often seen as an alternative path to economic and social advancement that sidesteps the negative and (often) politically-charged connotations of the local majority or prestige language<sup>4</sup>. Whether the adoption of English does bring about increased opportunity and wealth on an individual level is debatable; on a global level, however, the expansion of English in recent decades has occurred simultaneously with a widening gap between haves and have-nots, and with a consolidation of wealth and power globally in fewer hands (Phillipson 2000).

Any success at stemming the tide of endangered languages, then, will have to confront the difficult issue of English and globalisation head-on. It is probably too idealistic to assume that any more equitable balance of language power will be

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<sup>4</sup> This is not to imply that English is actually functioning as a substitute for the local majority language in these communities. The case is rather that many minority language communities enthusiastically embrace the teaching of English because of what it represents – namely a powerful, high-status competitor for the majority language, despite the fact that the encroachment of English may be eroding minority language vitality as much, or more, as the local prestige variety.

achieved before many of these languages are far down the road to extinction, but the current widespread attitude that English is the only way forward must be dealt with. The best hope of language revivalists is probably to promote the maintenance of language and culture parallel to the acquisition of English, in other words to emphasise that ‘modernisation’ and ‘tradition’ are not mutually exclusive<sup>5</sup>. Likewise, there is a need to find a way to turn current social realities (e.g. global information exchange, decreasing isolation, more language awareness) into something beneficial for small-language maintenance. The success of this will surely depend for a large part on a thorough understanding of the factors that influence language vitality.

## **2.2. LANGUAGE VITALITY**

### **2.2.1. Definitions**

The concept of language vitality on a general level probably needs no definition; it is, like human vitality, an idea about the present state of ‘health’ and the likelihood that existence will continue. This analogy can be problematic, however, because languages have neither a fixed life span nor an intuitively recognizable set of symptoms which characterise its present condition, which explains why there have been so many different conceptions about what exactly ‘vitality’ implies. Let us first examine some different conceptions of vitality, and then focus on the various factors that have been identified as being crucial to these definitions.

The term ‘ethnolinguistic vitality’ was introduced by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977:308) and defined as follows: “The vitality of an ethnolinguistic group is

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<sup>5</sup> This has been, for example, a major thrust of the language revitalisation campaign in Ireland (cf. Cotter 1999).



that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group relations.” Their model of ethnolinguistic vitality is separated into three constituent parts, namely: *status* – pertaining to a configuration of prestige variables (i.e. economic, social, historical), *demographic* – relating to the numbers of group members and their distribution, and *institutional support* – referring to the extent to which a language group receives formal and informal representation in bodies such as the media, education, government, and religion. In a subsequent paper, Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal (1982) further refined their model of ethnolinguistic vitality by saying that an equally important component of language vitality should be the speakers’ subjective perceptions, and that a complete assessment of vitality would include an analysis of both objective and subjective aspects. The relationship between these two measures was later tested in a study done by Allard and Landry (1992), where there were found to be extremely close correlations between objectively assessed vitality and the subjective perceptions of vitality among French and English-speaking high school students in Canada, confirming their hypothesis that an examination of beliefs can be used alone as an extremely accurate measure of many aspects of language vitality.

The work of Giles et al. has suffered its share of criticism. Husband and Khan (1982:194) argue that the dimensions of vitality outlined are ambiguous in their specification, and “gross and inexact tools of analysis in their application”. They say that the three domains (status, demographic and institutional support) are conceptually ambiguous and not readily derivable from sociological and demographic information, as well as complexly related and interdependent among themselves. Also, they criticise the lack of a theory to conceptually analyse and ‘sift

and weigh' the variables they have listed. While most of their criticisms are valid, this definition of vitality has provided a starting point for many further refinements and expansions, and as we shall see in a moment, there is still a notable absence of a better theory for analysing the variables more than twenty years later.

The concept of vitality is intimately linked with theories of the complementary processes of *language maintenance* and *language shift* (or *loss*), various paradigms of which have been developed by different scholars. Nahir (1984:315) defines *language maintenance* as, "the preservation of the use of a group's native language, as a first or even as a second language, where political, social, economic, educational, or other pressures threaten or cause (or are perceived to threaten or cause) a decline in the status of the language as a means of communication, a cultural medium, or a symbol of group or national identity." Similarly, Marshall's (1994:24) definition also implies planned efforts in the face of adverse condition, and emphasises that language maintenance consists of efforts "to counteract slippage in number of speakers".

According to Barth (1969), where a language is maintained, it is for three major reasons: (a) self-imposed boundary maintenance, always for reasons other than language, most frequently religion, e.g. the Amish and the orthodox Jewish Hassidim; (b) externally-imposed boundaries, usually in the form of denied access to goods and services, especially jobs, or geographic isolation, e.g. the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Iran; (c) a diglossic-like situation where the two languages exist in a situation of functional distribution where each language has its specified purpose and domain, and the one language is inappropriate in the other situation, as with Guaraní and Spanish in Paraguay.

It has also been said that successful language maintenance occurs when a stable bilingualism develops, in other words where the members of a minority community are able to integrate both majority and minority languages into their daily lives. Bratt-Paulston (1992), however, believes that stable group bi- and multilingualism is the exception rather than the norm. As she says, the norm for groups in prolonged contact with a nation-state is for the subordinate group to shift to the language of the dominant group, whether over a couple of generations or over several hundred years. Where shift does not take place, there are identifiable reasons of which the major two are lack of incentive (usually economic) or lack of access to the dominant language; another one is that the political unit may not be a nation-state as is the case with the federated societies.

*Language shift or loss*, in contrast, means that a particular group ceases to maintain its language and that the “community gives up a language completely in favour of another one” (Fasold 1992:213). The language shift paradigm is particularly associated with Fishman (1966, 1985) and the sociology of language. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) note that language shift may refer to either minimizing or maximizing influences on a particular language. Thus, language shift is a term that, at least in theory, is as applicable to language revitalisation as it is to language loss. Nevertheless, probably due to the fact that from a minority perspective there seem to be many more instances of ‘negative’ than ‘positive’ language shift, the term is usually used to imply subtractive shift, i.e. language loss (Fishman 1990).

Weinrich (1953:68) was the first to explore the concept of language shift in a systematic way and defined it as “...the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another...” Although this is a useful first definition, it does not

address the issue of choice which is an inherent part of the shift paradigm. Many immigrants, refugees and other minority group members have no alternative in this matter: if the number and proximity (geographic as well as social) of others sharing their language is insufficient, they will have to change their habitual language to that of the surrounding community. Such shift can also be a result of direct or indirect coercion in which incentives are given by the majority group for those who do shift language (e.g. economic and/or social advancement). There are, however, many settings in which members of language communities do have a choice. While they generally must be able to communicate in the majority language in their daily life, they may have the option of using their own language in such domains as with family and friends, etc. This apparent free choice, however, is not usually what it seems; even members of the community will be split as to tendencies toward language shift or maintenance (De Vries 1995).

The end-point of language loss is *language death* (Brenzinger 1992, 1998; Jones 1998). The language death paradigm, originally concerned with socio-political factors (Kloss 1969), has been extended (Dorian 1977, 1981) to a subset of language shift in which a language is being lost in the only, or last remaining, community of speakers that uses it. Language death can be conceptualised in two ways. First, a language is said to have died when there are no longer any living speakers of that language. This is the most common way in which the term is used, and many famous cases exist of a 'last speaker of a language' dying. However, the concept of language death can also be applied in a second manner: to describe the end result of language loss within a particular community. Fasold (1992:213), for example, seems to adopt this second stance, defining language death as that which "occurs when a community

shifts to a new language totally so that the old language is no longer used". In this case there may be people alive who understand the language or who even possess speaking competence, but who have stopped using it in any form in their day-to-day lives for communicative purposes.

A final definition for a concept widely used in discussing language shift and maintenance is that of language *domains*, or areas of life in which a particular language is used. The idea of domains was developed most completely by Fishman (1965), though several others have contributed as well (e.g. Weinrich 1953). In sociology, a comparable distinction is made by the term "social institutions" – namely, subsystems of a community or society, with their own structures of social status positions and their own functions. Whether we use the term "social institutions" or "domains", we can identify such categories as: the family, the community, the economy, the government (or public offices), the church, education, and the media, among others. The literature on domains does not show a strong consensus about the exact number of domains; most sources mention between five and seven different ones, though these can be broken down into a seemingly infinite number of sub-domains as well.

A basic explanation of the function of domains is this: especially in industrial and post-industrial societies, individuals may have quite different positions in different spheres of life; consequently, language use may differ between them. A typical example would be immigrants who use the majority language at work, but their mother tongue at home. More complex patterns can be found in cases where for example the children of immigrants have already shifted to the majority language, which they use with their siblings but not with their parents. Minority languages, in

fact, often suffer from a lack of domains in which they can be used, and the domains in which they can tend to be limited to less visible/prestigious ones like the family and immediate social circles, but not official or public ones (De Vries 1995).

The concept of domains is particularly relevant when tackling the issue of the degree of shift in language behaviour, as the number of domains in which a language is used directly relates to its objective vitality. Although there are no hard and fast rules, the presence of the language in more public domains tends to indicate a higher vitality than a presence only within personal domains like the home and community, though in all cases, the fewer the number of total domains – no matter how public and private they are – the more likely that current trends will result in complete shift unless a major intervention occurs.

### **2.2.2. Factors in Language Shift**

Uncovering and understanding what factors contribute to language maintenance and shift has been a major thrust of endangered and minority language research. While it seems to be universally agreed upon that these paradigms of language maintenance, shift and death are the result of many variables, there are many differing opinions on how to identify and categorise these factors as well as their relative importance to language behaviour. The main problem is that we currently have no comprehensive model that can accurately assess or predict whether a particular language will expand or contract. Such a model would not only provide a means of organising relevant variables, but a system for weighing them, both individually and collectively, in order to predict the outcome of a particular sociolinguistic situation. According to Bratt-Paulston (1994:6), “The difficulty is that we have a very poor grasp of what the

relevant social forces are and what the corresponding educational, social, and cultural outcomes will be. The major point to understand about language as group behaviour is that language is almost never the causal factor, never the factor that gives rise to, brings about, and causes things to happen, but rather language mirrors social conditions.” Likewise, Fasold (1992:217) believes that conceptualising these variables as part of a causal relationship tends to mask the fact that there are also “numerous and intriguing divergences from the typical scenario for language loss: individual speech communities which have resisted language shift against all expectations, as well as regions of the world which do not fit smoothly in the general picture”.

Nevertheless, some kind of awareness of both the variables and their relative importance in language shift is necessary, and many scholars have attempted to build theories around what they believe to be the most effective way of analysing these. Ammon (1991) believes that language shift can be analysed according to the following components, though does not provide a weighting for them in his schema: (1) numerical strength of speakers; (2) social character of the language (i.e. social class affiliation, economic status, sex, etc of speakers); (3) functions of language (i.e. domains of use); (4) geographic distribution of speakers; (5) legal status of the language (either locally, nationally or supranationally); (6) estimation (i.e. attitudes which relevant groups holds towards the language or towards its use in different domains); (7) scientific function (i.e. the extent to which a language is used in research and/or technical domains); and (8) teaching as a foreign language (outside of the region in which it is spoken as a mother tongue).

Taking a slightly different approach, Hyltensam and Stroud (1996:569) present a thorough study of the “extra-linguistic framing conditions that might propel a speech community along the path of language shift or impede such a shift.” Their framework details factors at three levels: (1) those which describe the relationship between the minority and majority speech community (e.g. economic conditions, educational systems, political and legal situations); (2) those which refer to the speech community itself (e.g. demographic factors and language characteristics); and (3) those which characterise individual members of the speech community (e.g. patterns of language choice, patterns of child language socialisation). In their framework, both within and across the three levels, these factors interact “in various ways to promote language maintenance or contribute to the tip of scales in favour of a language shift”.

Perhaps the most thorough framework was that proposed by John Edwards (1992), which was an attempt to identify a number of key ‘variables’ (many of them language domains) and investigate how they function at different meta-levels. The situational variables he identifies are 1. demography, 2. sociology, 3. linguistics, 4. psychology, 5. history, 6. politics/ law/ government, 7. geography, 8. education, 9. religion, 10. economics, and 11. the media. Each of these is cross-indexed for three levels: speaker, language, and setting, leading to a total of 33 variables which he believes reflect a near-complete qualitative assessment of a language’s vitality. The variables, formed as questions, are listed below.



### *Speaker*

1. Numbers and concentrations of speakers?
2. Socioeconomic status of speakers?
3. Linguistic capabilities of speakers?
4. Language attitudes of speakers?
5. History and background of the group?
6. Rights and recognition of speakers?
7. Geographic type (unique, cohesive, adjoining)?
8. Speakers' attitudes and involvement regarding education?
9. Religion of speakers?
10. Economic health of speaker group?
11. Group representation in media?

### *Language*

1. Extent of the language?
2. Degree and type of language transmission?
3. Degree of language standardization?
4. Aspects of the language-identity relationship?
5. History of the language?
6. Degree and extent of official recognition of language?
7. Geographic type (see 7 above)?
8. Type of school support for language?
9. Type and strength of association between language and religion?
10. Association between language and economic success/mobility?
11. Language representation in the media?

### *Setting*

1. Rural-urban nature of setting?
2. Nature of previous/current maintenance or revival efforts?
3. Nature of in- and out-migration?
4. Attitudes of majority group towards minority?
5. History of the area in which group now lives?
6. Degree of autonomy or 'special status' of the area?
7. Geographic type (see 7 above)?
8. State of education in the area?
9. Importance of religion in the area?
10. Economic health of the region?
11. General public awareness of area?

While Edwards' model is certainly comprehensive, there is still the lack of a theory to explain how assessment of the different variables actually reflects different levels of language vitality and how vitality can be effectively compared cross-linguistically using this framework. Also, his framework still ignores interrelationships between different variables (e.g. between attitudes and prestige, or between prestige and

economics), and gives no suggestion as to which variables, out of 33, might be more important than others.

Susan Gal (1979:3) argued more than two decades ago that a satisfactory understanding of language shift would not be gained by building larger and more complex models such as those outlined previously, but rather through placing language shift “within a broader framework of expressive and symbolically used linguistic variation”. Such an approach to language shift has been adopted by other scholars combining linguistics and anthropology, most notably Dorian (1981), and Kulick (1992). These works are part of the move away from attempts to uncover universal explanatory factors and towards the conceptualisation of language shift as the result of changes in individual and group values and goals. Within this anthropological framework, “the study of language shift becomes the study of a people’s conceptions of themselves in relation to one another and to their changing social world, and of how those conceptions are encoded by and mediated through language” (Kulick 1992:9).

I personally believe that a combination of the two approaches is the only way an accurate and comprehensive understanding of language shift can be built. While a more anthropologically-driven approach is useful for understanding the unique forces at work in particular language communities, such a narrow focus masks the fact that there are commonalities across most, if not all, language shift situations. A useful model, thus, would not only weigh the myriad of potential factors against each other, but it would be flexible enough to accommodate particularities to each community based on their history, present situation and shared goals.

A tangible result of the inherent difficulties in identifying the factors affecting language maintenance and shift has been the difficulty in devising a scheme that allows a classification of current language vitality. As many organisations that fund research into endangered language research require estimates of language vitality in order to prioritise funding, this is one of the most pressing needs in this area. Nevertheless, it remains one of the most under-developed. The scales that have been developed attempt to classify languages do it based on an extremely limited number of variables, and base their thresholds upon different criteria. Another crippling problem is that these scales cannot draw upon any universally-agreed upon terminology, and instead use the same terms to classify different things. In this summary of classification schemes proposed by Krauss (1992), Kincade (1991), Wurm (1998) and UNESCO (for their Red Book on Endangered Languages), there is considerable difference of opinion both in the number and scope of the categories, and in the appropriate terminology.

<i>Author</i>	<i>Language Classification Terms (grouped according to conceptual similarity)</i>
Michael Krauss Dale Kincade UNESCO	<b>Safe</b> - has more than 100,000 speakers and official state support <b>Viable</b> – has population bases that are sufficiently large and thriving to ensure long-term survival <b>Not Endangered</b> – has safe transmission to new generations
Dale Kincade	<b>Small but Viable</b> – has more than 1000 speakers, spoken in communities that are isolated/have strong internal organization, and language represents a marker of identity
Stephen Wurm UNESCO	<b>Potentially Endangered</b> – child speakers exist but are declining, the speakers are socially and economically disadvantaged, and the language is under heavy pressure from a large metropolitan language whose speakers promote monolingualism <b>Potentially Endangered</b> – has large number of child speakers but no official or prestigious status
Dale Kincade Michael Krauss	<b>Endangered</b> – spoken by enough people to make survival a possibility, but only in favorable circumstances and with a growth in community support <b>Endangered</b> – is still being learned by children, but if present conditions continue, will cease to be in the future
Stephen Wurm UNESCO	<b>Endangered</b> – has few or no children are learning the language and the youngest good speakers are adults <b>Seriously Endangered</b> – has a substantial number of speakers but very few children
Stephen Wurm	<b>Seriously Endangered</b> – the youngest good speakers are 50 or over
Michael Krauss Stephen Wurm Dale Kincade UNESCO	<b>Moribund</b> – no children learn the language <b>Moribund</b> – have only a handful of good speakers left, mostly very old <b>Nearly Extinct</b> – thought to be beyond the possibility of survival, only a few elderly speakers left <b>Nearly Extinct</b> – has maximally tens of speakers, all elderly
UNESCO	<b>Possibly Extinct</b> – no reliable information about remaining speakers
Stephen Wurm Dale Kincade UNESCO	<b>Extinct</b> – has no speakers left <b>Extinct</b> – has no fluent speakers left, and no sign of revival <b>Extinct</b> – has no speakers left

**Table 2.1.** Ways of classifying language vitality. Based on Krauss (1992), Kincade (1991), Wurm (1998) and UNESCO (Red Book on Endangered Languages).

As we can see, apart from the ‘safe’ and ‘extinct’ categories, there is very little agreement among these different proposed scales. Unfortunately, the lack of a comprehensive theory for ranking language vitality is undoubtedly having an impact on the effectiveness of language preservation efforts, as prioritising work is very difficult. Although many areas in minority and endangered language research suffer

from a lack of theoretical consensus, this is perhaps one of the most crucial, as it affects decisions made not just in academia, but ‘in the field’ as well.

### **2.2.3. Language Revitalisation**

Along with characterizing and measuring language vitality, a significant amount has been written on the instrumental processes involved in *revitalising* language, also called *language renewal* and, to borrow the term made famous by Joshua Fishman (1991) *reversing language shift* (see below). The studies surrounding revitalization focus on the actual processes involved in improving the relative position and extent of the domains in which the language is used, and entail a thorough understanding of the above factors that influence language vitality. It can be carried out through the initiative of the speakers themselves, or by an outside group that seeks to educate and empower the local minority community (cf. Fishman 2001 for examples).

As Kendall King (2001) defines it, language revitalisation is the attempt to add new linguistic forms or social functions to a threatened minority language with the aim of increasing its uses or users. Most specifically, language revitalisation, as conceptualised here, encompasses efforts which might target the language structure as well as uses and users of the language (also called *corpus* and *status planning*; see section 2.5.2). Somewhat similarly, although more focused on home-family use of the threatened language, Spolsky (1995:178) views language revitalisation as a process of restoring vitality which may add “both a new set of speakers and a new function, spreading the language to babies and young children who become its native speakers... At the same time, it adds the functions associated with the domain of home and family, resulting in various kinds of informal and intimate language use

and the related emotional associations of the language.” Spolsky’s definition – specifically his focus on the restoration of the language as a mother tongue – holds much in common with Fishman’s concept of reversing language shift. Bratt-Paulston et al. (1993:276) define language revitalisation as the act of “imparting new vigour to a language still in use, most commonly through the expansion of domains”. While their definition includes efforts to move the language into new domains for new uses, it excludes overt attempts to introduce the language to new speakers, as well as the addition of new forms of the language, both of which seem to be important aspects of language revitalisation efforts.

Closely related but taking a more systematic approach to the concept of language revitalisation is Fishman’s (1990; 1991) *reversing language shift* (RLS). Fishman’s concept of RLS, which caught on widely in both scholarly and lay circles, functions as essentially a guide to language empowerment for those working on language revitalization from both within the community and without. First and foremost, RLS aims to reinstate intergenerational transmission of a particular language-in-culture pattern (Fishman, 1991). In Fishman’s view, restoration of a threatened language entails reinstating it in the home as the primary language of parent-child communication. As Fishman emphasises throughout his writings on the topic, all efforts which fall short of this critical aim are short-term gains which merely bide time before the inevitable loss of the language; for him, the only real, lasting, and significant gain is reinstatement of mother-tongue transmission of the language. Although the expansion of use of the language into new domains might well be an important aspect of the process of RLS, the primary and critical aim is reinstatement of home and family transmission of the language.

An important component of Fishman’s concept of RLS has been his Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), a framework meant to act as both a diagnostic tool and a guide for sequencing RLS efforts. Essentially the GIDS describes the progression of domains into which the minority language should be introduced based on the current level of vitality (and is to be read from the bottom up). Fishman’s scale is designed to provide a means of assessing (1) the status of a language, (2) the prospects for intergenerational transmission of the language, and by implication (3) the level of success of efforts to maintain and revitalise the language. In addition, the GIDS is also a heuristic device, or in Fishman’s (1990:18) words, a “graded series of reversing language shift priorities for an analysis of the process”.

*(N.B. to be read from the bottom up)*

<i>Stage 1</i> – Education, work sphere, mass media and governmental operations at higher and nationwide levels.
<i>Stage 2</i> – Local/regional mass media and governmental services.
<i>Stage 3</i> – The local/regional (i.e. non-neighbourhood) work sphere, both among speakers and non-speakers of the minority language.
<i>Stage 4b</i> – Public schools, which will offer some instruction in the minority language, but will be substantially under dominant-language speakers’ curricular and staffing control.
<i>Stage 4a</i> – Schools in lieu of compulsory education and substantially under minority group curricular and staffing control.
<b><i>II. RLS to transcend diglossia, subsequent to its attainment</i></b>
<i>Stage 5</i> – Schools for literacy acquisition, for the old and for the young, and not in lieu of compulsory education.
<i>Stage 6</i> – The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community: the basis of mother-tongue transmission.
<i>Stage 7</i> – Cultural interaction in the minority tongue primarily involving the community-based older generation.
<i>Stage 8</i> – Reconstructing the minority language and teaching it as an adult second language.
<b><i>I. RLS to attain diglossia</i></b>

**Table 2.2.** Fishman’s Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (from Fishman 1991:395)

Because the scale is implicational, meaning each level incorporates the characteristics of all lower levels, it is again problematic as a way of characterizing current language vitality, since not all threatened languages fit neatly into one level. Irish, for example, has strong institutional and educational support (level 1) but very few child speakers (level 7) (cf. Ó Riagáin 2002). In its function as a guide for prioritising revitalization tasks, however, GIDS is very valuable, recognizing the need to have secure transmission of the language in the home before gains are sought in public or institutional domains.

David Crystal (2000) has drawn from existing data on revitalization efforts to develop a theory of language revitalization. He presents it in the form of six independent postulates which reflect the most crucial areas in which change must occur in order for the language to increase in vitality (which he calls ‘progress’):

1. *An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community.*
2. *An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community.*
3. *An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community.*
4. *An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system.*
5. *An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down.*
6. *An endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology.*

Unfortunately, no model developed up to this point has the capacity to single-handedly inform language revitalization efforts. As King (2001:17) reminds us, “[While these models] provide an outline of the factors which are important for language survival across contexts, as well as suggestions concerning how these factors might best be organised or prioritised, we still have limited understanding of how they should be weighted individually and measured together to form a



comprehensive model. And although these and other attempts to devise a model which predicts language shift have made important strides, sociolinguists are still quite far from developing a model which can not just offer post hoc explanations, but can also systematically predict societal-level language shift.”

Are there in fact any success stories in language revitalization? It is a very complex issue. There are languages that have no doubt made gains with regards to their number of speakers, the extent of domains in which they can be used, and even their relative prestige. Some oft-quoted examples are Maori in New Zealand, Catalan or Basque in Spain, Navajo in the US, Welsh in Britain and Irish in Ireland (see e.g. Fishman 2001; Hinton and Hale 2001). None of these languages, however, perhaps with the exception of Catalan, would fit into anyone’s idea of the ‘safe’ category. Optimists would say that if some gains can be made, then others will surely follow if the right steps continue to be taken; pessimists would argue that the best revitalization can do is postpone death for another generation or two. Before we can know which of these is true, more in-depth evaluations will need to be made of existing revitalisation efforts.

## **2.3. DEFINITION AND TYPES OF MINORITY LANGUAGES**

### **2.3.1. Definition of ‘Minority’**

The first stumbling block in any study of minority languages is probably going to be the working definition of the term *minority*. The term at its most basic level refers to percentages, but academic discourse on minority languages (and minority groups), has rarely ever used this as the full extent of the meaning. In fact, defining the term ‘minority’ in the context of language is anything but a simple task, like so much in

this area of research, yet the definition chosen often holds great consequences for support, funding and recognition for languages in question. To make matters more complicated, there is often confusion and overlap in the literature between the terms *language* (or *linguistic*) *minority*, and *minority language*.

What is a *minority*? This most basic term, which encompasses groups of people who define their differences based on one or more of many factors (possibly but not necessarily including language), is the most widely explored in the literature because of its importance in international legal documents. Most definitions, it seems, use as defining characteristics a combination of the following: numbers or percentages; issues of power or dominance; a wish to safeguard, preserve, or strengthen the distinguishing characteristics (including language) of the group; and citizenship/nationality in the state concerned (particularly relevant for definitions that have legal implications, i.e. minorities are defined so as to give national or regional minorities more rights than to immigrants and refugees). The Capotorti Report, done in order to clarify the scope of Article 27 of the UN's *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (see section 2.6.4), contains a definition of minority widely circulated in minority language literature:

A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the state – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language (Capotorti 1979:para 568).

This is a useful starting point but nevertheless a somewhat restrictive definition, in that it limits the definition of minority to only those considered 'nationals' of a state. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:491) offers a broader definition which differs most significantly by its mention of the element of choice:

A group which is smaller in number than the rest of the population of a State, whose members have ethnic, religious, or linguistic features different from those of the rest of the population, and are guided, if only implicitly, by the will to safeguard their culture, traditions, religion or language. Any group coming within the terms of this definition shall be treated as an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority. To belong to a minority shall be a matter of individual choice.

Given this, then, what is a *minority language*? Simply put, it is a language spoken by a minority of people in a state, otherwise known as a *language* (or *linguistic*) *minority*. Although it would seem that these two terms are nothing but a difference in perspective (i.e. the language vs. the people who speak it), in fact the choice of term can be significant. Haberland (1991) frames it as the difference between the language rights of an individual or a group, and the rights of the language itself. He says, “[the] tendency to grant privileges and protection to languages rather than minorities is quite common... But if this tendency exists it requires that we keep minority languages and linguistic minorities apart conceptually. There are even cases where these two do not match: cases of a language minority without a minority language [like the German minority in Italy or Demark], and cases of a minority language without a language minority [like Sanskrit in India or Irish in Ireland]” (1991:181).

In the literature, a wide variety of definitions for minority language can be found. Simpson (1981:235-7) takes a language-centred approach in order to compile a quite comprehensive list of minority languages characteristics, summarised below. In his view, a minority language can be defined by the following:

- It is not the language of all areas of activity indulged in by its speakers.
- It may live in the shadow of a culturally dominant language.
- It may be at risk from opponents dedicated to its extirpation (and these may even include native speakers).

- It may lack areas of vocabulary found in other languages, and its vocabulary may be influenced by that of the dominant language to the extent of accepting borrowings where native terms exist.
- Bilingualism is a characteristic of its speakers.
- There may not be a recognised norm for communication in the minority language.
- There may be reluctance on the part of native speakers to speak the language to learners.
- The cause of minority languages may be taken up by proponents who are not native speakers, particularly those with a nationalist agenda.
- It is not well represented in education, or when it is, there controversy surrounds its use.

Nic Shuibhne (2002), in a more policy-based definition, says that a linguistic minority is a group that has, among other cultural features, a separate language from the rest of the population of a given political entity which they use as a primary means of communication. Her definition is useful because it draws attention to two very different types of minorities: *autochthonous*, or minorities that have a long-established 'home territory' within the state in question, and *allochthonous*, or minorities of relatively recent arrival. Most allochthonous groups are different from autochthonous groups in that they have a home territory in another state which often (but not always) corresponds with the majority group in that country. She points out that there are structural, social, political and legal differences between autochthonous and allochthonous language communities, which is not meant to imply greater legitimacy for the claims of one over the other, but that they should be

conceptualised as different types of entities. For example, a major difference is that allochthonous groups usually have an external source of language stability, standardisation and reproduction support which autochthonous groups do not have, and also do not necessarily face threat of language extinction if language shift happens in the minority community. For this reason most minority language research and support initiatives tend to target only autochthonous groups, and why institutions like the *European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages* (see below, section 3.3.1) only deal with autochthonous minorities<sup>6</sup>.

De Vries (1986), focussing on group characteristics, identifies two different ways of defining minority groups, the *demographic* and the *sociological* approach. The first stresses the importance of numbers, and considers every mutually exclusive language group that is numerically smaller in size than another group in the same state to be a minority. The second approach defines minority status in terms of domination and/or subordination, which may take the form of military might (as in many former colonies), political power (as in many contemporary multilingual states) or economic power (again, as seen in many advanced industrial societies).

O'Reilly (2001) advocates the use of the latter definition, arguing that the primary issue for defining a minority is relative power. She draws attention to the fact, however, that the term 'minority' can be considered oppressive in itself, implying deviance from the norm or inadequacy. On the other hand, as Haberland (1991) points out, *not* using the term minority can also be oppressive as well, especially when the group in question is seeking to establish a separate identity.

Deliberately not using the term can be a means to define a group out of existence, for

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<sup>6</sup> This bias has proven far from uncontroversial, however, as it is indisputable that a large number of modern-day social problems (particularly in industrialised countries) arise from the lack of recognition and accommodation afforded to allochthonous (i.e. immigrant) minority groups.

example when the Turkish authorities refer to Kurds as ‘Mountain Turks’. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) addresses this issue in her definition of minority, which stresses the necessity of personal choice.

Occasionally a difference is drawn between *regional* and minority languages (cf. the Council of Europe’s *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, see section 3.3.2), with the term ‘regional’ usually referring to those languages with a fairly large territory in which they are not technically a minority (e.g. Catalan), and ‘minority’ to those with a small territory and a clear linguistic subjugation (Tabouret-Keller 1991). The problem with creating a distinction between them is the difficulty in defining the precise distinguishing characteristics between the two, and its rather simplistic assumption that languages that are not technically in a minority in a specific region are in a substantially different position than languages that are not (although even this is up to interpretation, as the size and nature of the region is not defined).

To round out this section, I believe a word on my own choice of terminology is in order. I have decided to stick with the traditional use of ‘minority’ throughout this thesis, despite the differences of opinion, as I believe it best encapsulates the multitude of demographic, sociological, political, cultural and economic issues that separate a group of speakers of one language from that of another. I also have limited my inclusion in the category of language minorities only what are typically defined as ‘autochthonous’ minorities, which within the context of Europe represent groups that have been resident in their current territories for significant lengths of time, in most cases at least several centuries. By doing this I have no intention of making an implicit statement of which type of minority has a higher sociopolitical priority; I

simply intend to narrow the focus of my investigation, as I believe these two types of minorities are facing fundamentally different challenges.

### **2.3.2. Characteristics of Minority Language Situations**

#### *2.3.2.1. Geographical Characteristics*

Minority language situations vary widely in terms of their specific circumstances. In fact, although the image is often of isolated and unique language communities, relatively few fall into this category. John Edwards (1991; 1992), and Paul White (1991) are both known for their work on their minority-language typologies in which languages are classified according to geographical characteristics. Under this scheme, the languages are categorised according to:

- Whether a minority is in a majority position in any other state, or whether it is a minority everywhere (*local* vs. *absolute* minorities, e.g. German in Italy and Germany vs. Catalan in Spain and France);
- If it is an absolute minority, whether it is *unique* or *non-unique* (i.e. whether the minority group exists as a minority in another state as well, e.g. Breton vs. Basque);
- In the case of non-unique minorities, whether the group is *contiguous* or *non-contiguous*, with contiguity indicated by whether or not the minority language group is located against a border that permits access to similar speakers in another state (e.g. Basque vs. Romany);
- Whether the ‘internal’ geographical structure is *close-knit/cohesive* or *diffuse* – the former suggesting greater possibilities for language use within the minority language community (e.g. Welsh vs. Saami).

De Vries (1995) has a similar approach, despite preferring the terms ‘polycentric’ or ‘monocentric’ to characterise the uniqueness of specific groups, and adding the distinction of whether or not the language community is multilingual or monolingual.

These geographical categories, while somewhat simplistic, are useful conceptualisations because they can reflect fundamental differences in language status and prospects. For example, an absolute minority faces different revitalisation challenges than a local one, as the latter has many of the resources (and often a built-in voice of support) of a larger body of speakers living elsewhere. Likewise building up a community of speakers is much more difficult for a diffuse minority than in a cohesive one, where speakers live in close proximity to one another and come into contact socially with one another frequently. While the individual situations are more or less permanent (as long as the minority survives), an awareness of the implications of these different geographical circumstances can focus attention on more effective revitalisation strategies.

#### *2.3.2.2. Diglossia*

Another important characteristic of many – if not most – minority language communities is the presence of *diglossia* in the community. Charles Ferguson (1959) is credited with first using the term diglossia, in which he identified four speech communities, Arabic, Greek, Haitian Creole and Swiss German, as being prime examples. He argued that diglossic speech communities have a high or ‘H’ variety that is very prestigious and a low or ‘L’ variety with no official status that are in *complementary distribution* with each other, that is, they are each used in an exclusive set of domains in which the other variety is not used. His original



definition of diglossia also stated that the two varieties in a diglossic relationship are closely related varieties of the *same language*. In his defining examples he points out that the H variety is always an acquired form (usually learned in school), and that some educated native speakers might even deny that they ever use the L variety. An important component of his definition of diglossia is that the speakers have the personal perception that the H variety is the "real" language and that the L variety is "incorrect" usage.

In later years, however, the definition of diglossia has been expanded to encompass any two languages which exist in a functional distribution, regardless of the linguistic distance between them. Fishman (1967), in particular, pioneered the notion that diglossia could be extended to situations found in many societies where forms of two genetically unrelated languages occupy the H and L niches, such that one of the languages is used for religious, educational, literacy and other such prestigious domains, while another language is employed for more informal, primarily spoken domains. In his words, "diglossia exists not only in multilingual societies which officially recognise several languages and not only in societies that utilise vernacular and classical varieties, but also in societies which employ separate dialects, registers or functionally differentiated varieties of any kind" (1972:92).

Diglossia is frequently found in minority language situations, where the different domains of use reflect power dynamics of the two language groups. In these communities the minority language is nearly always found in the L position, fulfilling a role in private and personal domains (e.g. home, friends, community activities) while the majority language is used in official and educational contexts. It is important to note here, however, that whereas in situations of 'traditional'

diglossia everyone in a given society is affected by it (as the H language is, by definition, acquired), in a situation of minority-language diglossia it is only members of the minority group who are affected. Majority group members are free to use the same language in all domains. One last point relevant to minority language situations is that extended diglossia (i.e. two separate languages) is usually unstable, with the H variety gradually gaining ground at the expense of the L (Fishman 1967). In other words, in the majority of situations of minority-language diglossia, the minority language is in a state of active shift or loss.

#### *2.3.2.3. Centre-Periphery Paradigm*

A strand in European macro-sociology that relates to language minority situations is the 'centre-periphery' paradigm. The main theoretician on this topic was the Norwegian sociologist Stein Rokkan, who utilised this typology in his analyses of nation-building in Europe, the development of political structures and cleavages in multi-party Western societies and other comparative subjects (for more detailed discussions see Rokkan et al., 1987; Rokkan and Urwin, 1983). In this paradigm, the *centre* and *periphery* are regions under the control of the same authority. The former is a type of region which exercises control in a variety of spheres, including political/administrative, economic, and cultural. The latter is a type of region for which at least some control is exercised outside the region, for example, political decisions made in a state capital not lying in the peripheral region, but affecting it; ownership of the means of production by capitalists who are not resident in the area; and language and cultural policies denying or restricting linguistic/cultural rights to

the regional population. While it is clearly the case that some regions are peripheral in all aspects, others are peripheral in some aspects only, but not in others.

The idea of ‘periphery’ suggests a geographical characteristic as well, but this is not necessarily the case. The main distinction made by Rokkan is that between *seaward* peripheries and *interface* peripheries. The former is clearly a type of region which is geographically as well as socially peripheral (e.g. Galicia in Spain), while the latter is a peripheral region sandwiched between two ‘centres’. Interface peripheries are, in fact, far from geographically peripheral. Their defining characteristic is that they are often dependent in different ways upon two or more centres, both or all of which are usually contiguous to the interface periphery. He also makes a cultural/linguistic distinction between those interface peripheries which by virtue of their language and/or culture are associated with one of the centres (e.g. Alsace, South Tyrol) and those which are ‘isolates’ in the sense that they are linguistically and/or culturally distinct from either centre (e.g. Basques in Spain and France).

The paradigm can be useful when applied to minority language situations on a supra-national level as well. For example, when we apply this typology to the various language communities in Europe, we find that official languages are found mostly in ‘centres’ (which are defined in terms of control in political/administrative, economic and cultural/linguistic matters), whereas minority languages overwhelmingly tend to cluster on seaward peripheries and interface peripheries. Though there are some weaknesses in the paradigm (e.g. Iceland and Portugal being peripheral and among the most linguistically homogenous in Europe), it offers a valuable addition to typological theories and is worthy of further development.

### **2.3.3. Language vs. Dialect**

One final aspect of minority language definition and typology that is crucial to the analysis of minority language situations is the often unreliable criteria for determining what is even to be considered a minority language, as opposed to a dialect of a majority language. Unfortunately this is not just an academic debate – in fact, policy and funding decisions are made every day that privilege some forms of speech and disadvantage others as a result of this distinction. Einar Haugen (1966:922), one of the first scholars to draw attention to this issue, said, “the taxonomy of linguistic description – that is, the identification and enumeration of languages – is greatly hampered by the ambiguities and obscurities attaching to the terms ‘language’ and ‘dialect’, and provide one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the discussion of minority language issues”.

Many people assume that these two terms, which are both popular and scientific in their use, refer to actual entities that are clearly distinguishable. The truth, however, is that the line drawn between these two is one of the most problematic in all linguistics (and in fact many linguists have given up trying to draw one and simply refer to different linguistic ‘varieties’). Aside from the fact that a great many, perhaps most, languages and dialects have not yet been adequately studied and described, the terms language and dialect represent an attempt to dichotomise what is in fact an extremely complex continuum. In a descriptive, synchronic sense ‘language’ can refer either to a single linguistic norm, or to a group of related norms. In a historical, diachronic sense ‘language’ can either be a common language on its way to dissolution, or a common language resulting from unification.

A 'dialect' is then any one of the related norms comprised under the general name 'language', historically the result of either divergence or convergence (Haugen 1966).

Haugen (1966) argued there are two clearly distinct dimensions involved in the various usages of 'language' and 'dialect'. One of these is *structural*, that is, descriptive of the language itself; the other is *functional*, that is, descriptive of its social uses in communication. The *structural* dimension involves assessment of mutual comprehensibility, and categorises language versus dialect on a continuum of intelligibility, with clear 'dialects' being mutually comprehensible and clear 'languages' not. However, between those two ends of the spectrum there are a lot of grey areas, where languages may be partly intelligible and partly not. In the *functional* use of 'language' and 'dialect', the overriding consideration is the uses the speakers make of the codes they master. A 'language' is functionally defined as a superimposed norm used by speakers whose first and ordinary language may be different. A 'language' is the medium of communication between speakers of different dialects. A corollary of this is that a 'language' is usually more prestigious than a 'dialect'. When used in this sense, a dialect may be defined as an undeveloped (or underdeveloped) language.

To this, De Vries (1995:135) would add that there is a *political* dimension to separating language and dialect, which has nothing to do with either structure or function. Languages are classified as languages because they are decreed as such by administrative bodies, such as in the case of Norwegian, Swedish and Danish where the recognition of each as a separate language on the world stage is the result of being the official language of three separate states, none of which wish to call their

language the same thing. This is the angle that Skutnabb-Kangas prefers, arguing that the criteria for differentiating between a language and a dialect are anything but linguistic: “In fact, the main criterion for whether something is a dialect of another language or a separate language is the relative political power of the speakers of that language or dialect. The decisions about what are ‘languages’ and what are not are thus political decisions.... A language is a dialect promoted by elites” (2000:15).

We can appreciate now the difficulties inherent in trying to classify languages and dialects, and the very ambiguous and haphazard nature of the job. This debate has enormous implications for the recognition and protection of minority languages, however, which is why it is worth spending some time explaining. In fact, depending on where the line is drawn, the number of languages in the world could double if the criteria for ‘language’ were relaxed. The same is true for Europe: although there are 20 or so ‘official’ minority languages in the original 15 member states, there are other groups who insist that they too are deserving of recognition as a separate language, as their vernacular differs linguistically from the standard and their speaker bases are as large as other ‘recognised’ languages. Whether or not certain dialects are recognised as languages or certain languages are even recognised at all is usually an indicator of both the political power of the speakers in question, and of the politics of the state insofar as they wish their minorities to be visible. In any case, the most popular distinction between language and dialect for the majority of people is simply acceptance of the *de facto* situation of language officialdom. Perhaps the only truism in the contested terrain of defining language and dialect is the saying from the Yiddish linguist Max Weinrich, “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy”.

## 2.4. LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND NATIONALISM

### 2.4.1. Introduction

Let us now turn to a discussion of some of the issues of identity and nationalism and how they relate to minority languages. Although the link between language, identity and nationalism is in many ways far more amorphous than other factors influencing minority language survival, it is nonetheless a crucial factor in understanding political, social and cultural facets of minority group interaction, and is intricately connected with facets of minority language survival or decline. First, it is important to understand why language is so often central to issues of identity and therefore nationalism. As Skutnabb-Kangas explains, language is a crucial factor in the identity of most groups, whether or not they consciously realise it. It is “central for seeing, interpreting, understanding and changing the world, and indeed in creating it. The right to naming one’s own world, having the right to define how one sees oneself and the rest of the world, is realised through language” (2000:202). Indeed, language “has ... become an important means for... seeking self-determination at several levels, psychologically, educationally, [and] politically” (2000:202). Joshua Fishman likewise believes that when a group is confronted with language decline, it is akin to witnessing a decline in the very fabric of their identity and implies a “concomitant destruction of intimacy, family and community” (1991:4).

Identity, of course, functions at many levels and humans have an almost infinite capacity to identify themselves in different ways based on facets of their physiology, background and beliefs. Although a full discussion of identity theory is beyond the scope of this thesis, as it relates to speakers of minority languages and nationalism it is worth highlighting two different types, namely *ethnic* (or *cultural*)

identity, which is focused on common descent and cultural heritage, and *national* identity, which is focused on political borders and matters of autonomy (Joseph 2004). Although many minority groups seem content to maintain these two separate identities, for many more groups, particularly those with a nationalist agenda, they are converged into one, and here language often becomes a facet of particular importance.

The exact nature of this link between language and identity is certainly not universally agreed upon, however. The fact is that not all groups react to language decline in the same way, and it seems that the very strength of the link between language and group identity differs from group to group, resulting in varying consequences in the social, political and linguistic spheres. It is worth looking in detail at some of the theories that have been put forward concerning the complex relationship between language, culture, nationalism and minority-group identity.

#### **2.4.2. How important is language to minority group identity?**

Particularly in recent history, language has often been evoked as the main feature upon which claims to a separate ethnic or cultural identity were founded; this link, for example, has formed the basis of nearly every campaign for statehood across Europe over the last few centuries (Haarmann 1999; see also next section). Considering this, however, there is today a tremendous amount of variance to be found in the strength of the link between language and identity, and it is well documented how language may be a salient marker of identity in one instance but not another. As May (2001:129) asserts, “while a specific language may well be identified as a significant cultural marker of a particular ethnic group, there is no



inevitable correspondence between language and [identity]”. In effect, he claims, linguistic differences do not always correspond to ethnic ones – membership in one group does not necessarily entail association with a particular language, either for individual members or for the group itself. Likewise, more than one ethnic/cultural group can share the same language while continuing without difficulty to maintain their own distinct ethnic (and national) identities.

Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that while language may not be a *determining* feature of ethnic and national identity, it remains nonetheless a *significant* one in many instances. In other words, to say that language is not a necessary feature of identity is not the same as saying it is unimportant. As May argues, language may not be intrinsically valuable in itself but it does have strong associations with ethnic and national identity from the perspective of its speakers. As such, “language cannot be relegated, as some commentators would have it, to a mere secondary or surface characteristic of ethnicity” (2001:129).

David Crystal (2000) believes that there are two prevalent viewpoints that can be found among members of ethnic minority communities, namely language as an *obligatory* feature of cultural identity, or language as an *optional* feature. The obligatory stance posits that there is a fundamental link between culture and language, and in order to consider oneself a member of this community, the minority language must be spoken. If members lose the language, they are in effect excluded from membership in the group, even if they continue to maintain other characteristics of the group such as dress, religion, etc. The optional viewpoint is that there are other, equally important indicators of cultural identity which continue to provide membership in the group even when language is lost. Crystal stresses, however, that

there is often a split in opinion between members of the same community as to which standpoint is correct, and that this split often runs exactly along the divide between speakers and non-speakers. Nancy Dorian certainly found this to be the case in Scotland:

I found that when I asked speakers of Scottish Gaelic whether a knowledge of Gaelic was necessary to being a 'true Highlander', they said it was; when I asked people of Highland birth and ancestry who did not speak Gaelic the same question, they said it wasn't (1998:20).

It is clear that language, as a marker of cultural identity, serves an important *boundary-marking* function for many minority language communities (Edwards 1985, Tabouret-Keller 1997). Barth (1969) identified specific boundary markers as particularly important to the preservation of cultural identity because their existence allows the culture defined by them a certain amount of evolutionary leeway. In other words, as long as the boundary markers themselves remain intact, the culture is regarded as intact. May (2001) argues that this process of demarcation may be more salient for minority-language groups since such groups are likely to be more conscious of the need for clear linguistic boundaries in relation to a surrounding dominant language and culture. The usefulness of linguistic demarcation may also thus help to explain why language often has a heightened sense of saliency in relation to identity when its role as only one of a number of cultural markers might suggest otherwise.

Fishman (1966, 1985, 1991, 1999) has been one of the most prolific theorists on language and identity from a minority perspective. In his volume *Reversing Language Shift* (1991), he argues that language and cultural identity are crucially linked in three key ways: indexically, symbolically, and in a part-whole fashion. The indexical link, Fishman explains, implies that at any particular point in time the

traditionally-associated language is “best able to name the artefacts and to formulate or express the interests, values and world-views of its culture” (1991:20). This is not to say that other languages might not be able to replace this traditional link in the longer term, only that in the short term, “no language but the one that has been most historically and intimately associated with a given culture is as well able to express the particular artefacts and concerns of that culture” (1991:21). Fishman also holds that language and culture are also linked symbolically; that is they come to stand for, or symbolically represent, the particular ethnic and/or national collectives that speak them. In effect, the social and political circumstances of those who speak a particular language will have a significant impact on the symbolic and communicative status attached to that language, such as the power and prestige ascribed to English, which in actuality is a reflection of the status of speakers of English on the world stage. Finally, the part-whole link suggests that there are parts of every culture that are expressed, implemented, and realised via the language with which that culture is traditionally related. For example, we find that even in communities where shift has occurred, things like songs, prayers, proverbs, philosophy and teachings continue to be imparted in the original language in which they were devised, as they are seen to have an intrinsic association.

The difficulty of identifying this link as a significant feature of identity is that there are in fact many minority groups and individuals for whom language does not appear to be important at all. How do we account for this? The theory that has been developed to deal with this discrepancy identifies what are termed ‘core cultural values’.

### **2.4.3. Language as a Core Cultural Value**

The *core cultural value hypothesis* has been developed and refined by Jerzy Smolicz over a period of several decades (1979, 1992, 1993). According to this theory, each group has a certain set of cultural variables which are crucial to maintaining group identity, and that some items may be drastically altered, or even shed altogether, without undermining the stability of the group. At the same time, there are other aspects of culture which are of such fundamental importance for its continued viability and integrity that they can be regarded as the pivots around which the whole social and identificational system of the group is organised. Removal of such pivots, through, for example, enforced assimilation to the dominant group, would result in the entire edifice crumbling to pieces. Such pivots have been referred to as *core values*, in so far as they form the most important aspects of a group's culture, and act as identifying values that are symbolic of the group and its membership. It is through core values that social groups can be identified as distinctive cultural communities. A group's loss of its core values results in its disintegration as a community that can perpetuate itself as an authentic and creative entity across generations. As Smolicz (1992) himself concedes, however, core values alone cannot ultimately account for a community's decision to shift or maintain. Additionally, different sections of the community, not to mention individuals, will have different relationships to their language(s) for a variety of political, social and/or religious reasons, thus significantly weakening the core-value explanation.

In light of this criticism, a more nuanced approach to core cultural values has since been attempted. While still holding that some cultures are more language-centred than others, Smolicz and Secombe (1988) differentiate four broad

approaches to minority languages that are evident between and within ethnic-minority groups. These comprise:

- negative evaluation of the language;
- indifference: seeing no purpose in language maintenance and showing no interest in it;
- general positive evaluation: regarding the language as a vital element of ethnicity but not being prepared personally to learn it;
- personal positive evaluation: regarding the language as a core cultural value and putting this language commitment into practice.

In a more recent paper Smolicz (1993) proposes that societal factors such as the way the majority group perceives the language in question, and on their tolerance for linguistic pluralism in the society as a whole, can have a marked influence on this as well.

While the core cultural value hypothesis may not be capable of explaining every maintenance or loss outcome, I believe that in conjunction with an analysis of group-external factors it provides a very useful theoretical tool in the complex field of language and identity. It may help us to understand the different motivations minority groups can have to keep their language alive as well as why language seems to be a pivotal cultural element for some while for others it forms only a small part, and although it may have limited usefulness to predict the strength and durability of the link, it does provide a framework within which to assess the situation in individual language communities.

#### **2.4.4. Language and Nationalism**

Intimately related to the strength of the link between language and identity is the subject of nationalism, as many minority language groups use the threat of language shift as the catalyst for political change. As history has witnessed repeatedly, when groups with a strong language-identity link feel their language and culture are under pressure they often call for cultural or political autonomy. When the demands are political, they are usually expressed in the form of demanding a separate administrative structure for the region in which the language is spoken, or in extreme cases, calls to break away completely from the majority state. At this stage the minority group is said to have nationalist aspirations, and want a state structure to support their separate national status.

O'Reilly (2001) calls this the 'ideal of the nation-state', whereby minority groups perceive a separate state as the only way to ensure the vitality of their language and culture. Even where the goal falls short of establishing an independent state, this ideal forms the basis of ethnic revivalist claims to linguistic and cultural rights and access to power within existing states. This seems to many observers counterintuitive, as the reality of most modern nation-states is a mixed ethnic, linguistic and cultural population. Given this, how is it that for minority groups the ideal of the ethnic nation-state persists in the face of such a heterogeneous reality, and why does a separate state seem like the only logical step?

The answer lies in the nature of the modern state itself, and the ideal of the nation-state as a homogeneous, democratic, and progressive entity. The traditional stereotypical image of a nation-state saw it as a product of an evolutionary process, starting with small tribal societies and developing via many phases towards higher

forms of social organisation which reached its culmination in the nation-state (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). A nation-state comprised one ‘nation’ and this ‘imagined community’ (cf. Anderson 1983) was ideally seen as united by one single language (cf. discussion of French nationalism in section 4.3). Other nations within this nation would then either be seen as disruptive, as an anomaly, or, if they are very small in numbers and insignificant in terms of power – as most indigenous nations/peoples have until very recently been seen to be – they could be seen as colourful, non-threatening remnants from an earlier phase. But in order not to be seen as disruptive, they have to accept that they are “small and backward” (Hobsbawm 1991:34).

Since the ‘natural’ development would be for every ‘nation’ to have its own nation-state with its own language, the existence of unassimilated minority groups has been feared because it is seen as leading to fragmentation: a complete or partial disintegration of the nation-state, with the formation of several new nation-states as the result. Yet, as many state constitutions proclaim, a nation-state is indivisible (cf. Turkey, France), which seems to point to inevitable conflict (O’Reilly 2001). Not surprisingly, it is in countries that espouse this indivisibility the strongest that often have the worst record of accommodating minority group needs.

With such a perceived fundamental link between nation and language, the process works both ways. Just as language groups feel they merit their own nation, existing nations feel they need a national language. This usually leads to the selection of one variety as the official one, a variety given the prestigious title of ‘language’ while everything else is reduced to the ‘dialect’ level. Having a language thus becomes symbolic of a nation and a state, and the problem then becomes what to do with the other languages which are spoken within its borders. The reaction of the

ruling regime varies widely, and runs the gamut from active maintenance and promotion of those 'non-state' languages, to outright hostility and oppression (see next section).

Another element in an explanation of the persistence of the nationalist ideal of the state can be found within a major philosophical strand of modernism (see, in particular, Gellner 1983; Smith 1986, 1991; Williams 2000; O'Reilly 2001). As O'Reilly explains it, the modernist dichotomy saw reason, progress and civilization on one hand, and emotion, tradition and the state of nature on the other, and as a result of this certain languages came to be seen as the vehicles of rational thought while others were deemed 'emotional', irrational and backward. It was naturally the languages that had the capacity to promote reason which came to be linked to the ideal of the modern state, while the others remained 'stateless' and linked to the realm of the traditional. Because the 'stateless' languages represented the antithesis of modernity, they were often perceived as a threat to the state and became the subject of neglect or outright hostility. Language came to be seen as a significant marker of the boundaries between societies and between states, and an idea of homogeneity within states emerged to the tune of 'one state, one language'. Over time, the logic of language, nation and state became circular – each language group must constitute a nation, each nation should have a state, each state should have just one language. Of course, under this view there is no room for stateless languages; speakers of these languages must either be assimilated into the dominant language and culture, or they might make a claim to nationhood in their own right, thus threatening the integrity of the existing nation-state.



Even though this seems unnecessarily prescriptive, the reality for most modern nation-states very closely resembles this ideal. Very few nation states today recognise or grant any significant cultural or linguistic allowances to their minorities, despite the fact that nearly every state in the world has them. To grant minorities the freedom to continue to propagate their culture and language is seen by many states as simply too divisive and potentially weakening, when in reality the lack of this freedom has usually proven to be more divisive (for examples, see Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). This discussion provides a natural lead-in for our next section, which deals with the way states regulate language and the types of relationships governments cultivate with their minority groups.

## **2.5. LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING**

### **2.5.1. Introduction**

Without a doubt, one of the most crucial factors influencing minority language vitality is the type and amount of support a language gets from its host state, and specifically, the way this support is translated into language planning and policy. What sets language policy and planning apart from other factors influencing language vitality is that it is inherently modifiable – in other words, it is difficult to enhance vitality by changing geographic or demographic factors of the language speakers, but it is relatively straightforward to implement policy and planning designed to bolster language use and status. Consequently, from a group-external perspective, this has been one of the most studied aspects of language shift.

### 2.5.2. Definitions

The concepts and practice of language policy and planning have only existed formally for a few decades, and Haugen (1950) is generally credited with the first scholarly treatment of this topic. Although even today the two terms are often used side-by-side and sometimes even synonymously (Schiffman 1996), language policy and language planning encompass two different sets of activities. Bugarski provides a useful working definition of both:

The term *language policy* here refers [...] to the policy of a society in the area of linguistic communication – that is, the set of positions, principles and decisions reflecting that community's relationships to its verbal repertoire and communicative potential. *Language planning* is understood as a set of concrete measures taken within language policy to act on linguistic communication in a community, typically by directing the development of its languages (Bugarski 1992:18, cited in Schiffman 1996:3).

Put simply, the difference can be seen as between *language policy* as decision-making from *language planning* as implementation. Language planning encompasses all activities that have as their goal “*deliberate*, although not always overt, *future oriented* change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a societal context” (Rubin and Jernudd, 1971b, quoted in Kaplan and Baldauf 1997:3), whereas language policy is the way in which language matters, both planned and unplanned, are *institutionalised* in law and/or common practice.

*Language planning* is generally thought to encompass two types of activities – those that are concerned specifically with attempts to modify language itself, designated *status planning*, and those that are concerned with attempts to modify the environment in which a language is used, called *corpus planning* (Kloss 1969). Two issues often confronted in status planning efforts are *language selection* (i.e. the choice of a national language by/for a society through its political leaders) and *language implementation* (i.e. the adoption and spread of a language through

institutions such as the educational system). Corpus planning, on the other hand, deals with those aspects of language planning which are primarily linguistic, such as orthography and spelling reform, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary expansion (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997). Haugen (1966) prefers to divide language planning activities into two slightly different categories: those activities related to the establishment of *norms*, and those related to the extension of the linguistic *functions* of language. In his model Haugen labels the former category *codification* (or standardisation) procedures, and the latter *elaboration* (or the functional development) of language.

Several authors have attempted to add to the basic two-pronged language planning model. Haarmann (1990), for example, argues that *prestige planning* represents a separate range of activities. Whereas corpus and status planning are productive activities, prestige planning encompasses the tailoring of corpus and status planning activities to specifically affect perceptions. He argues that the various levels at which planning is carried out (i.e. governmental activities, activities of agencies, group activities and activities of individuals) represent different types and qualities of prestige and that these may affect the success of the language plan. Cooper (1989) also adds another category, *acquisition planning*, which deals with 'increasing the number of users of a language, speakers, writers, listeners or readers'. While overlapping with some of the stated aims of status planning, this category is perhaps useful in that it allows this particular activity to be given more focused attention. Finally Mar-Molinero (2000) would add to these the concept of *normalisation* planning. This concept, developed by Catalan sociolinguists, overlaps with both status and acquisition planning and aims at empowering the speakers of the

minority language by increasing the domains and functions of language use, the geographic area where it is spoken, and the language competence of the speakers (note that the term is also widely found in Irish language-planning literature).

### **2.5.3. Typology of Language Policies**

The types of planning and policy states engage in are, of course, highly variable. According to Schiffman (1996), both language planning and policy run the gamut from highly regulated and defined to 'laissez-faire'. However, as he argues, there are a number of problems which complicate the assessment of a particular state's overall policy. For one thing, there is usually a difference between the policy as stated (the official, *de jure* or overt policy), and the policy as it actually works at the practical level (the covert, *de facto* or grass-roots policy). Another problem is that the possession of one or another kind of language policy is not only a characteristic of nation states, but also of smaller administrative or territorial divisions within them – such as states or provinces in federalised polities – meaning that there can be different policies at different levels. Beyond that, even at the same level we may find differing policies, in educational institutions, in the judiciary, in different levels of state bureaucracy, as well as in non-governmental bodies such as churches, labour unions, etc. These levels of complexity obviously make generalization about policies problematic; nevertheless several ways of typologising have been proposed.

Esman (1977) believes that central governments have a range of possible responses to the claims of linguistic minorities that can be grouped into the following categories. Note that his typology differentiates more on the repression end of the scale than on the accommodation end:

- *Studied neglect*: the state either ignores the language problem altogether, or denies the legitimacy of claims for language rights.
- *Ridicule*: the government recognises the minority group, but does not take their claims seriously, often labelling their language a ‘dialect’ and labelling the community itself as backward, provincial, etc.
- *Repression*: the state exercises negative sanctions against the use of a language, including imprisonment, fines, or worse.
- *Accommodation*. This can take two forms:
  - a. *Concessional accommodation*: the state recognises minority language claims, often involving the granting of language rights in various domains (e.g. in education or in government/public services).
  - b. *Structural accommodation*: the state changes the structure of society to accommodate language claims (e.g. granting regional autonomy to specified regions, the construction of a federal state, devolution, etc).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) offers a similar taxonomy of state policy toward languages (following Cobarrubias 1983), however expanding the category of support to encompass two levels:

- Attempting to kill a language.
- Letting a language die.
- Unsupported coexistence.
- Partial support of specific language functions.
- Adoption as an official language.

Colin Williams (2000) draws upon examples from Europe to characterise different types of policy and planning regimes. According to him, we can identify four types of language policy implicated in the processes of European state formation:

- Giving primacy to one language at the national level. This is the most common type – found, for example, in France and Britain.

- Using language to define regional associations rather than state citizenship, as part of an attempt to maintain cultural pluralism. This is best exemplified in Europe by Switzerland's cantonal system, and the rigidly enforced division of Belgium between its Walloon- and Flemish-speaking populations.
- Granting a recognised minority some degree of geographical distinction, based upon the territoriality principle of language rights. Finland, for example, due to the high concentration of Swedish-speakers on its west coast, has accorded the Swedish language official status.
- 'Modernising' an indigenous tongue, which is characteristic of societies disengaging from colonial relationships and the cultural hegemony of a dominant state. This form of language planning was undertaken in Hungary, Ireland, Finland, and Norway prior to independence, and remains central to the political programme of nationalists in many minority-language areas in Europe today.

Some argue that the best minorities can hope for under most regimes is something along the lines of 'studied neglect', with the remainder of the burden of language promotion falling to the language communities themselves. However, Kymlicka (1995:113) argues that the whole idea of something like 'benign neglect' "...reflects a shallow understanding of the relationship between states and nations. In the areas of official languages, political boundaries, and the division of powers, there is no way to avoid supporting this or that culture, or deciding which groups will form a majority in political units that control culture-affecting decisions regarding language, education and immigration". Government decisions thus unavoidably involve recognising, accommodating, and supporting the needs and identities of particular ethnic and national groups. However, "[t]here is no reason to regret the existence of official languages... The only question is how to ensure that these unavoidable forms of support for particular ethnic and national groups are provided fairly – that is, how to ensure that they do not privilege some groups and disadvantage others (115)".

In fact, fairness is an elusive and relative concept, usually perceived by policymakers and state administrators very differently from minority groups, and unfortunately there is typically little recourse for a minority group whose state refuses to pass supportive legislation. The question of whether states are under any obligation to support their minority languages is, of course, a different matter, and one we will explore in the next section on language rights.

## **2.6. LANGUAGE RIGHTS**

### **2.6.1. Introduction**

Our discussion of language policy in the previous section leads us naturally into our final topic on the foundations of minority language research, namely, the status of language in a human-rights framework. The question of whether language rights and human rights are inseparable may seem like a purely academic one, but in fact the implications of this on state policy, and thus minority language prospects, are potentially profound. Essentially, the question being asked by many scholars is whether legally recognised minorities are being denied a basic human right if they are not allowed to perpetuate their language. There are, of course, many more dimensions to this issue which involve the definition of a recognised minority, the level of responsibility a state has to support a language in order to not violate a fundamental right, and the current scope of international rights protection.

### **2.6.2. Are Language Rights Human Rights?**

Human rights, as defined by international organizations like the United Nations, are in theory rights that are so fundamental that no state, regardless of national law,

should be allowed to violate them. Of course the reality is often far from the ideal, as without an international police to enforce these many states do continue to violate even the most basic human rights. Nevertheless, simply having a right recognised as fundamental is going a long way toward having it granted, as states do risk international pressure and sanctions for violating recognised human rights. Unfortunately, despite the amount of study and debate that has gone into defining human rights, language has typically remained a grey area, often alluded to but conspicuously absent from some of the more concrete international charters.

An examination of a state's responsibility to provide certain types of language policies and planning, however, is intimately bound up in the question of how far access to certain languages represents a fundamental right for speakers. Nic Shuibhne (2002), in her excellent analysis of European minority language policy, probes the basic question of whether the right to use a particular language for official or non-official purposes is a fundamental human right. She notes that classification of language rights as fundamental rights hinges ultimately on whether or not the term 'fundamental' can encompass degrees of rights. In other words, are some rights inherently 'more fundamental' than others? Accepting this premise would imply a priority of rights, which inevitably brings the issue of value judgements into play. In addition, she argues, different rights invariably clash with each other and are balanced against other (often relatively abstract) interests, usually societal – e.g. the requirements of the common good or of public policy – but also economic or political. And she reminds us that despite the fact that rights are based upon an idea of what is necessary for the common good, it is still the opinions of a minority of legislators that ultimately decide what rights are worth recognizing: "It is a basic truth



that rights evolve from common aims, from the eradication of tyranny and the achievement of justice. And there is a real danger that differentiating between ‘types’ of rights could lead to varying commitments in terms of enforcement and implementation, or even to the belief that norms at the ‘lower’ end of the scale do not really constitute rights at all. A conclusive definition of rights is thus elusive, and often subjective” (2002:188).

Nic Shuibhne also brings up the issue of the difficulty in determining to whom language rights should apply should they be considered fundamental. Other fundamental rights pertain to groups defined by immutable characteristics, such as gender or race. Language falls into a category of much less fundamental characteristics, being as it is socially constructed and also involving some element of choice (along with religion, for example). Considering this, she asks, should language rights protect anyone who speaks a minority language, regardless of whether they speak it as a mother tongue or have acquired it voluntarily? MacMillan (1989), for example, restricts the scope of language rights to “...a right to one’s mother tongue or native language...not simply a right to speak a language per se but rather the language of one’s heritage.” While probably true that in most cases the majority of those who claim the right to speak a minority language are native speakers of the language in question (with the exception of languages that have been heavily institutionalised, e.g. Irish, which is more widely spoken as a second language), nonetheless it is not clear why the language choice concept should exclude those who have acquired a minority language at a later stage in their lives and choose voluntarily to communicate through that language. There are many communities where language survival will be dependent on new non-native speakers

acquiring and passing on the language; why should they not be afforded the same right of opportunity to use it?

Several authors including Kymlicka (1995) and Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1994b) believe that minority rights cannot be subsumed under the category of human rights. They subscribe to the notion that traditional human rights standards are simply unable to resolve some of the most important and controversial questions relating to cultural minorities. These include, for example, which languages should be recognised in the parliaments, bureaucracies, and courts; whether each ethnic or national group should have publicly funded education in its mother tongue; whether internal boundaries (legislative districts, provinces, states) should be drawn so that cultural minorities form a majority within a local region; whether governmental powers should be devolved from the central level to more local or regional levels controlled by particular minorities; and whether political offices should be distributed in accordance with a principle of national or ethnic proportionality. The problem, phrased by Kymlicka (1995:5) is that traditional human rights doctrines often give no answer at all to these questions: “The right to free speech does not tell us what an appropriate legislative policy is; the right to vote does not tell us how political boundaries should be drawn, or how powers should be distributed between levels of government; the right to mobility does not tell us what an appropriate immigration and naturalisation policy is. These questions have been left to the usual process of majoritarian decision-making within each state. The result, therefore, has been to render cultural minorities vulnerable to significant injustice at the hands of the majority, and in many cases to exacerbate ethnocultural conflict.”

To resolve these questions fairly, these authors argue that we need to supplement traditional human rights principles with a theory of minority rights. They believe it is legitimate, and indeed unavoidable, to supplement traditional human rights with minority rights and so-called ‘linguistic human rights’, and that a comprehensive theory of justice in a multicultural state will include both universal rights, assigned to individuals regardless of group membership, and certain group-differentiated rights or ‘special-status’ for minority cultures.

Spolsky (2004) falls somewhere in the middle, arguing that linguistic rights are, to a large extent, not distinct from other human rights when dealing with things like the principles of non-discrimination and freedom of expression (see next section). These are straightforward enough when applied to the individual citizen; what adds complexity has been the recent extension of these rights to minority groups. The problem arises when one moves from the rights of an individual to use his or her own language to the requirement that the state both use and support the minority language.

It is thus by no means clear whether minority rights can or even should fall under the heading of fundamental human rights, and opinions strongly differ as to whether a stronger push should be made by minority groups to have language rights regarded as fundamental human rights or whether a special category of ‘minority rights’ taking precedence over general human rights should be made. In the next section we look at the types of rights that speakers of minority languages have according to the provisions of international human rights documents.

### 2.6.3. Types of Rights

The two human rights pillars in international documents that are most often cited as providing minority language rights with a foundation are: (a) the right to *non-discrimination* in the enjoyment of human rights; and (b) the right to the maintenance and development of identity through the *freedom of expression* to practise or use those special and unique aspects of their minority life – typically culture, religion and language (Phillipson 2003). A corollary to these is the very tricky issue of how these rights are to be interpreted, namely within a *positive* or a *negative* framework<sup>7</sup>.

The problem with both non-discrimination and freedom of expression is that they are often interpreted as *negative* rights, or rights that are upheld by the authorities simply by the absence of activity to suppress them, as opposed to *positive* rights, or rights which obligate the authorities to take action in order to not breach them. De Varennes (1996) explains the problems inherent in a negative rights framework in the context of non-discrimination. The basic premise here is that when a state employs one or more languages for various functions, even if it has no overt discrimination policy against other languages, it is not acting neutrally; those individuals who are fluent in the languages selected are automatically favoured and those outside are potentially within the arena of discrimination, since they are not being treated equally. In fact, one of the most frequent misconceptions involving non-discrimination is the belief that a state measure imposing a single language for all signifies that everyone is treated the same and that therefore there is no active differentiation being made between individuals (cf. *Wall St Journal* article, discussed in section 2.1.3). Many states that uphold the principles of non-discrimination insist

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<sup>7</sup> See also Berlin (1969) for a discussion of positive vs. negative liberties.

that since everyone can attend the same schools, or receive the same administrative forms and services, everyone is treated equally within the meaning of the principle.

Increasingly, however, this point is contested as being a fundamentally-flawed interpretation of the principle. The point of contention is whether public authorities, in doing this, are adopting a line of conduct by which a fundamental personal characteristic is being used in order to determine access to or the level of enjoyment of a public service, benefit or advantage. In other words, is the state using criteria based on language (or religion, race, etc.) in determining who has access to and how much they can benefit from government resources (such as employment and schooling opportunities)?

By adopting a one-language-for-all policy, a state is using a linguistic criterion in determining who will have the fullest access to public schooling or public employment opportunities. Even more importantly, it is also creating a distinction, based upon language, on the degree to which individuals will be able to enjoy and benefit from these activities or services: anyone who is not a native speaker of the state-favoured language will be more or less seriously disadvantaged, depending upon the type of service or activity involved, his level of fluency, and the language proficiency required by the state (De Varennes 1996:55).

Nevertheless, De Varennes reminds us that it is widely accepted that not all distinctions are necessarily discriminatory: equality and the right to non-discrimination require that individuals be protected against unreasonable or unacceptable differential treatment. How a society is to decide whether a particular distinction is acceptable or not is a difficult task, as it involves a balancing act between the interests and priorities of the government – usually represented by the majority group – and the interests and rights of affected minorities.

There is an alternative interpretation of non-discrimination, however, which follows an Aristotelian principle of treating equally what is equal and treating differently what is unequal. In other words, individuals whose primary language

differs from that of the majority should be treated differently in order to be treated equally. This approach is likely familiar to most people under the terms 'reverse discrimination' or 'affirmative action', as it has been popularly termed in the USA in relation to race-granted privilege. Another approach apparently favoured in some states is to focus upon the consequences of policy, in acknowledging that what is superficially equal treatment may in fact lead to very unequal outcomes due to factors such as different race, language or religion of the people affected. In other words, because people differ in a number of ways, a law which imposes the same requirements upon everyone may have very unequal consequences (De Varennes 1996). As we have seen with the debates surrounding affirmative action in the USA, however, differential treatment to achieve equality is often a hard sell to members of the majority group, and instead of resolving equality issues can quickly bring latent societal tensions to the surface.

The second pillar of minority rights, freedom of expression, though traditionally seen as more unproblematic in its 'negative rights' application to minority groups, is currently proving itself to be equally problematic as regards its positive or negative implications. De Varennes (1996) explains that in the past freedom of expression was thought to guarantee effective political and social debate essential for the proper operation of any democratic system. More recently, it has been considered individualistic in orientation, allowing people to freely communicate amongst themselves. Current human rights standards clearly establish that freedom of expression offers to individuals a measure of protection from undesirable state interference in private matters, and that states can uphold this right by simply not placing limits on minority groups' intragroup interactions. However, the inclusion of

duty-bound clauses in recent human rights instruments (particularly Article 27 of the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, see next section) has raised the question of whether positive rights might be implied by a state's duty to uphold freedom of expression. In fact, some scholars have concluded that upholding freedom of expression necessarily obligates states to provide positive action (usually in the form of financial assistance). Nevertheless, many others reject this interpretation, pointing out that all that can be required is a traditional promise of non-interference of the state in private community activities tied in with language, religious or cultural usage. As we will see in the next section, the problems surrounding the interpretation of these types of rights and their exact import have significantly hindered their treatment and consequent effectiveness, despite their long history of inclusion in international human rights documents.

#### **2.6.4. Language Rights in International Human-Rights Instruments**

According to Phillipson, “[i]n many of the post-1945 human rights instruments, language has been identified in the preambles as one of the most important characteristics of human rights purposes” (2003:153). Skutnabb-Kangas agrees that on the basis of numerous international covenants “language has been seen as one of the most important characteristics of humans in human rights principles in the key documents that have pioneered the post-1945 UN human rights effort” (2000:527), and can be found listed with other fundamental human characteristics such as gender, religion, political persuasion and race.

Nevertheless, moving beyond the preambles of the human rights instruments to the binding clauses, things change considerably. All or most of the non-linguistic

human characteristics are still present and get positive rights accorded to them; the clauses or articles about them create obligations and contain demanding formulations, where the states are obliged to act in order to ensure the specified rights are upheld. Here modifications, opt-out clauses and sliding-scale alternatives are rare. The same cannot be said, however, for language rights. Several new international declarations and conventions to protect minorities and/or minority languages have been passed since the 1990s, yet even in the new instruments language is conspicuously absent from the sections dealing with fundamental rights (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). A good example of this is the UN's 1995 *Copenhagen Declaration*. In the text itself, recognition and respect is granted to 'cultural, ethnic and religious diversity' but not 'linguistic diversity' (United Nations Report of the World Summit for Social Development, 1995:points 29/4/i, 66).

If language-related rights are included and specified, the Article(s) dealing with these rights, "in contrast to the demanding formulations and the few opt-outs and alternatives in the articles dealing with other characteristics, are typically so weak and unsatisfactory that they may be virtually meaningless" (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000:531). All or many of the other human characteristics get detailed, positive rights; that is, the clauses about them "create obligations and contain demanding formulations, where the states are firm duty-holders and 'shall' (i.e. are obliged to) do something positive in order to ensure the rights; there are few modifications, few opt-out clauses and few alternatives on a sliding scale. Many of the other characteristics get their own specific conventions (e.g. conventions to prevent racism or sexism, or to guarantee freedom of religion)" (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000:531). Language, however, does not.



Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) separates the history of international treaty-based language rights into five phases (see also Vilfan 1990; De Varennes 1996). In all of them, language rights are understood to be a type or subcategory of minority rights. In the first phase, which was pre-1815, language rights were occasionally mentioned in bilateral agreements but never in any international treaties, and more often than not were mentioned only in the context of guaranteeing freedoms for religious minorities. This process has in fact partially continued, she argues, and “even in cases where there is a more or less complete equivalence between linguistic and religious minorities, language rights have sometimes been subsumed under or can only be indirectly inferred from religious rights” (2000:507).

The second period began with the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which was “the first important international instrument to contain clauses safeguarding national minorities, and not only religious minorities” (Caportorti 1979:2); nevertheless, there was still no move to accord separate rights to linguistic minorities. It was not until the third period – the two decades between the World Wars – that linguistic minorities were recognised as separate entities. The peace treaties that concluded the First World War, for example, attempted to safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe. Many national constitutions also stipulated the rights of linguistic minorities. A gentle nudge encouraging states to protect the rights of linguistic minorities was even offered by the League of Nations in 1922:

The Committee expresses the hope that the States which are not bound by any legal obligations to the League with respect to minorities will nevertheless observe in the treatment of their own racial, religious or linguistic minorities at least as high a standard of justice and toleration as is required by any of the Treaties[.] (quoted in Andrysek 1989:20).

The fourth period, from 1945 to the 1970s, corresponded with the efforts of the United Nations to legislate for the protection of human rights. During this time

several ‘universal’ declarations cataloguing these rights were drawn up; nevertheless, as Skutnabb-Kangas argues, by focusing on individual human rights there was a relative neglect of the subject of minority rights, with the exception of broad formulations outlawing discrimination. As a result of the belief that codification of separate minority rights was unnecessary, proposals to include a provision on minorities in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* did not succeed, and the United Nations Charter does not mention minorities at all (U.N. Human Rights Fact Sheet 18, 1992:3-4).

The one significant gain for minorities during these years was enshrined in the UN’s *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966). Article 27 states the following: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.” While going further than any previous document in that it explicitly mentions language, its exact impact was still unclear – what exactly does it guarantee? There are essentially two distinct, diametrically opposed schools of thought as to the extent of the guarantees offered by Article 27, as De Varennes (1996) points out. On the one hand, scholars such as Capotorti (1979) and Thornberry (1991) have argued that the provision obligates states to provide positive action (see section 2.6.3) for linguistic and other minorities, such as “provid[ing] the means to ensure the actual survival and maintenance of their characteristics through appropriate financial assistance and a legal framework for institutions and activities vital to the minorities’ interests” (De Varennes 1996:150). On the other hand, many others believe that the wording of

Article 27 rather necessitates a promise of non-interference of the state in minority group activities (i.e. negative action); unfortunately it seems this interpretation has been the one to prevail within the United Nations system (De Varennes 1996).

The fifth and final period, from the early 1970s onwards, has gained much of its impetus from the decolonisation process and the granting of collective rights to formerly ‘oppressed’ groups. There has been a strong interest in the rights of minorities, including linguistic rights, evidenced at the international level by several multilateral declarations. The Capotorti report (commissioned by the UN in 1971 and published in 1979) solicited information on how minorities are treated – both *de jure* and *de facto* – from governments worldwide. As a result of the findings, Capotorti proposed the drafting of a declaration on the rights of members of minority groups; in 1992 this resulted in the UN’s *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*.

The *Declaration* goes considerably further than the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. In several clauses dealing with minorities, the Declaration replaces ‘shall not be denied’ with ‘have the right’, and prompts the states to “take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs...” (Article 4.2). It certainly represents an increase in visibility for linguistic rights, as well as in the codification of state obligation towards upholding these rights. Unfortunately, however, it is only a declaration, not a covenant, meaning compliance is voluntary, even now that the *Declaration* was reaffirmed by the UN World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

One stronger statement for linguistic rights was developed by a group of experts and approved at a meeting in Barcelona in 1996. The *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights* calls for full individual and collective rights for any community that has a common language, no matter the size, degree of political recognition or historical ties to the territory they inhabit. It criticises the tendency of most nations to discourage diversity, and highlights the social, economic and linguistic inequality brought about by the current international economic model. The declaration recognises collective linguistic rights to education, cultural services, media and government, and calls for the creation of a council of languages within the United Nations and a World Commission on Linguistic Rights. Nevertheless, the declaration remains nothing more than a rallying cry, with the majority of its provisions representing idealistic, yet unlikely-to-be-realised propositions.

Language thus gets much poorer treatment in human rights instruments than other important human attributes. Receiving protection from international law presupposes binding, codified, enforceable linguistic rights; however, as we have seen here, there are as yet no binding international covenants specifically on linguistic rights. Unfortunately, it is far from clear whether language rights can even be considered fundamental human rights. Until they are universally recognised as such, however, their inclusion in international rights instruments will probably continue to be shaky and unenforceable at best.

## **2.7. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have introduced the many fields of research in various disciplines that are relevant to the study of minority languages, all of which will lay the

groundwork for an analysis of my own research. I began by attempting to frame this overview of minority language research against the backdrop of the current situation today in which a mass extinction of smaller languages is set to happen within the next generation or two. I then presented the major strands of thought as they relate to concepts of vitality, identity, nationality and policy and attempted to identify where the theoretical strengths and weaknesses in each lie. I argued that it is necessary to adopt a holistic perspective when analysing patterns of language decline, as only by analysing the myriad of social, cultural, political and historical factors that motivate speakers can we hope to understand, and therefore predict, individual and group decisions to shift or maintain. I have, hopefully, demonstrated that across these various disciplines there exists a wealth of information that can inform and improve minority and endangered-language research, policy and planning. I hope I have also demonstrated that there is a necessary place for sociolinguists in this increasingly politicised field of study.

In the next chapter we will narrow our focus to Europe, in an attempt to see how integration is affecting political, sociological and linguistic structures across the continent. We will look at how the European Union, as the main force behind integration, has chosen to deal with language issues, both official and minority, as well as the extent to which it is being affected by the same forces of globalisation and linguistic upheaval as the rest of the world.

### 3. EUROPE, LANGUAGE AND MINORITIES

The evolution of the European Union over the past half-century reflects more than just a desire to stabilise Europe economically and politically – it signifies a commitment to increased protection for the individual as well. While laws harmonising policy, law and economy are a major thrust of the European Union, at the same time the EU is overtly careful to keep the needs of its citizenry in the forefront, and protecting their differences is often cited as one of the most important. This commitment to diversity, as it is phrased, is not as unambiguous as it seems, however, particularly as it relates to areas like language. Perhaps because language is such a divisive issue within states, and because it is one of the few areas of national identity that relate directly to interstate cooperation, it has been one of the proverbial thorns in the side of European integration from the beginning. As Nic Shuibhne (2002) argues, there have been, and still are, two prevailing but opposing views of the fact of linguistic diversity in Europe: it is either celebrated as a manifestation of humanity and free expression, an invaluable cultural asset; or it is denounced as a divisive obstacle, a hollow – and costly – ideal that thwarts the achievement of true European unity, in effect a conflict between “sentiment and efficiency”. Unfortunately, while the debate rages, language patterns across Europe are being irrevocably altered.

The problem is that despite the fact that the dynamics of integration are having a discernible impact on language use patterns throughout the Member States, there are actually relatively few European policies that deal specifically with language in any context other than its use in institutional business. The European

Commission has declared that no one should be penalised, either socially or economically, for using his or her language despite the demands of an increasingly multilingual world, but in reality the structure of modern Europe makes this an almost impossible ideal to uphold, as the ‘big’ languages continue to gain more ground. And if the effects of European integration on the security of even national languages and cultures can be corrosive, the consequences for speakers of regional and minority languages are even more acute. What the EU policymakers are slow to grasp, it seems, is that in reality there is no such thing as an absolutely neutral or non-interventionist policy – in other words, the current lack of policy is effectively pitting the EU against the supporters of linguistic diversity and particularly smaller languages.

The way the EU deals with the language questions – both now and in the future – has significant implications, both for international relations and for what happens in each member country. It is important to clarify what sort of Europe current policies are leading towards, and the criteria that could guide policies that permit speakers of different languages to communicate on a basis of equality. As Phillipson (2003:13) cautions:

In discussing such issues, great care is needed in distinguishing between language policy and practice in supranational EU institutions and in member states. Uncertainty about supranational language policy reflects uncertainty about the type of political entity that the EU is evolving into, and the relative fragility of channels of communication uniting people and civil society beyond national borders. At the level of the state, political unity builds on relatively strong bonds of identification, often mediated through a single dominant national language. If Europe is in a process of uniting politically and culturally, the role of its languages in supranational affairs is clearly a central, sensitive issue, especially if a single common language is emerging.

Likewise, the fate of minority languages in Europe is very much dependent on how European policymakers choose to tackle the language questions brought about by integration.

### **3.1. INTEGRATION AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

#### **3.1.1. Origins of EU Integration**

Any thorough understanding of the relationship between the European Union and its member states, particularly on thorny areas like language, relies on an understanding of the processes by which Europe has been formed. Indeed, over a span of fifty short years European nation-states – some of the most highly centralised and regulated in the world – have given up sovereignty over a remarkable amount of their affairs, relinquishing some degree of control over everything from trade barriers to agricultural standards to taxation. This had led to the creation of what many term a ‘super state’, as the governing functions of the European Union in many ways do resemble those of a single political entity. The analogy can only be taken so far, however, as there are still many areas in which the EU does not hold sovereignty, chief among them cultural matters. In fact, the discrepancy between what people believe the EU should regulate and what it actually does regulate lies at the heart of much of the debate surrounding support for minority languages.

Sue Wright (2000) gives an excellent overview of the history of integration and its implications for language use in Europe, upon which the following summary is based (see also Barbour 1996 and Tabouret-Keller 1999 for other language-related approaches to this topic). She points out how it is within the twin contexts of a very strong tradition of nation states and economic, political and cultural globalisation that



European integration has taken place over the last fifty years, and in fact, the origins of the European Union stem from attempts to counter both. The drive toward integration was motivated by a desire to limit the sovereignty of the nation state, in particular its capacity to make war on its neighbours, and also by a desire to build a regional economic entity which would compete with the United States and the Pacific Rim while at the same time conserving the traditional particularity and diversity of Europe. Due to the many different aims at stake, however, the process has inevitably been riddled with difficulties and tension.

Despite the fact that the European Union's influence today extends over a myriad of social, economic and political spheres, its origins lie in the formation of the much more restricted aims of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In 1951, with Europe just beginning to recover from the war, it was proposed that German and French steel production be formally linked, the idea being that industries essential to manufacturing armaments, if they were locked into joint development, would be unable to engage in conflict. There were also, even at this early stage, many who viewed this as the first step toward a full-fledged political integration in Europe (Urwin 1991), though ostensibly the union was to be primarily economic. The invitation to join the Coal and Steel Community was open to other European countries as well, and the Benelux countries and Italy both signed on. The Treaty of Paris, signed in April 1951, formalised the existence of this new Community, which was to be directed by a supranational body in the form of a High Authority.

Those pushing for closer integration, the Europeanists, were strongly backed by the American desire for a stable, integrated West German state (Urwin 1991).

They managed to strengthen their position during the 1950s and advanced plans for greater cooperation in defence, political and economic matters. In March 1957 The Treaty of Rome was signed, taking the Coal and Steel Community one step into the political sphere with the establishment of a 'Common Market' among the six partners, called the European Economic Community (EEC). The aims of the Common Market were primarily financial (to achieve sustained growth and economic prosperity in the six countries) and to a lesser degree social (to promote social equity throughout the six states), or as the treaty itself words it: "to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, to ensure the economic and social progress of their countries, [to have] as the essential objective of their efforts the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their peoples, to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development, [and] to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty" (*Treaty of Rome*, 1957:preamble). Although most of the Common Market's objectives were expressed in economic terms, it was clear that a political purpose lay behind them, and this was equally true of the two specific objectives listed by the treaty, a customs union and a common policy on agriculture (Urwin 1991). Such cooperation for mutual benefit, were it to be successful, would make secession difficult for individual Member States. The most ambitious Europeanists hoped that the constituent Member States would become irrevocably locked into the process and that the effect of the integration of individual sectors of the economy would aggregate, stimulate further cooperation and ultimately prove irreversible.

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a feeling that integration was stagnating, and the term 'Eurosclerosis' was coined to describe the

atmosphere (Dinan 1994). The introduction of the European Monetary System in 1979 was the first attempt to reinvigorate the integration process. In the commercial and industrial world, powerful lobbies argued for further progress towards economic integration, in particular the achievement of the single market. A proposal was launched to create a real single market in Europe, which contained concrete measures to remove all the remaining physical barriers (e.g. border controls), all the remaining technical barriers (e.g. a lack of common standards), and all the remaining fiscal barriers (e.g. differences in VAT) to a true common market. The proposal was accepted and signed as the *Single European Act* (SEA) in 1986. With this action, it was clear that Member States were now cooperating in areas that were clearly political rather than just economic.

The *Treaty on European Union* (TEU), which was negotiated in Maastricht during the winter of 1991-92 and which came into force in November 1993, in many respects represents the pinnacle of achievement in the decades-long attempt to transform the Community from an entity based on economic integration and political cooperation into a union of a political nature. Despite its shortcomings and ambiguities, the TEU reflects how natural the progression was from economic cooperation to political cooperation: “abolishing trade barriers makes it more likely that there will be a convergence of economic principles; abolishing internal frontiers causes a need for common policies on drugs and cooperation between police forces; sharing common external frontiers demands agreement on matters of asylum and immigration” (Wright 2000:114). The TEU took integration to new areas, including those of an economic nature, such as the European Monetary Union with a planned single currency by 1999; others were political (such as the Common Foreign and

Security Policy) or social (such as the Social Charter, which introduced the concept of common rights and conditions for Europeans in the workplace).

Structurally, the new European Union was organised into three ‘pillars’ (Borchardt 2000). The first is the economic pillar which pre-existed the TEU, its name changed from the European Economic Community (EEC) to the European Community (EC)<sup>8</sup>. The governance of this pillar is the supranational regime set up in previous treaties and acts. Within the framework of the EC, the Community institutions were given the power to draw up legislation which applies directly in the Member States and can claim precedence over national law. Policy areas for which the Community is responsible include: economic and monetary affairs; agriculture; asylum and immigration, taxation, employment, trade, education and welfare, culture, consumer protection and health, and the environment.

In the second and third pillars, the decision and policy making belong to the Member States’ governments and the Council of Ministers rather than the Commission. The second pillar is concerned with building a Common Foreign and Security Policy. Here the heads of Member States agreed to gradually develop a common foreign and security policy with the declared aims of strengthening the security of the EU and its Member States, securing world peace and increasing international security, promoting international cooperation, promoting democracy and the rule of law, and safeguarding human rights and basic freedoms. The third pillar is concerned with Home and Judicial Affairs, specifically cross-border cooperation between police and judicial authorities to combat crime (especially

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<sup>8</sup> Note that many legal specialists and political scientists, when discussing European policy, are careful to differentiate the *European Community* from the *European Union*. Technically it is the *European Community* that still constitutes the institutions that legislate on the European level, and although all policy issues should be discussed in terms of the *Community*’s powers, to avoid confusion, in later sections I will refer only to the *European Union* unless differentiation is required.

terrorism and illegal trafficking in drugs and people), racism and xenophobia, and its facilitation by the creation of a pan-European police force, Europol.

The other significant decision taken at Maastricht was the introduction of the concept of *subsidiarity*. Subsidiarity was defined as the need to keep decision making close to those most concerned. Under this principle, a) political power should devolve to the level of government best placed to make decisions on a particular area, and b) action at European level should only take place if it cannot be achieved by the Member States acting alone (TEU, article 3b, 1992). As we will see in the next section, the principle of subsidiarity has had a profound impact on the EU's willingness to tackle what it views as local concerns, including intrastate language regulation.

Subsidiarity appealed equally to groups who wanted to limit European integration as well as those who supported the process, because they interpreted it in very different ways. The concept was adopted enthusiastically by those who objected to European control over domestic matters because it seemed to provide a forceful argument against relinquishing anything more than minimal powers to supranational institutions. However, it was also championed by regional and local authorities as well as by integrationists in the European institutions. This second group saw it as a way of diluting the power of national governments by giving more decision-making power to regions that wished to increase their autonomy.

The Amsterdam Treaty, which was signed in June 1997, did not attract much attention or debate, mainly because it consisted primarily of revisions to the Treaty of Rome and the TEU. One radically new thing it contained, however, was that the Treaty stated that the EU would guarantee human rights and non-discrimination in

respect of sex, ethnic origin, religion, handicaps, age or sexual orientations. Language, significantly, was not included among these.

The final point in the evolving saga of European integration has been the drafting of a European Constitution. The Constitution, conceptualised and drafted in 2002, was the first ever document to explicitly mention language (see section 3.3.1 for a full analysis). In 2005, however, the first two countries to be given the chance to vote on the Constitution's acceptance – France and the Netherlands – turned it down, reflecting a widely-held belief that Europeans are becoming disillusioned with integration and were unwilling to hand over any more power to a higher level. In the months following the rejection the media was rife with opinions of the imminent demise of European unity, arguing that if France, the country historically at the forefront of the push to integration, rejects this step then surely integration has lost its impetus. Though this remains to be seen, many people are beginning to ponder the previously unthinkable: has European unity reached its final stage?

This short history of European integration illustrates how fast the nation states have relinquished elements of their sovereignty and how far the creation of a kind of supra-state has advanced. In the economic, political and juridical spheres, the EU has in fact achieved many of the attributes of a single polity. Nevertheless, the EU does not replicate the nation state in all domains and in linguistic and cultural matters, in particular, there has been no suggestion that control should be taken away from the state level. Since we now understand the foundation upon which European integration was laid, let us turn to a discussion of how current trends of globalisation are affecting political, economic and most importantly, linguistic structures on its territory.

### **3.1.2. Globalisation and Europe**

The catastrophe of the Second World War caused many Europeans to be receptive to the concept of political as well as legal internationalism, and provoked a profound desire for closer ties between European states in order to preclude the possibility of future wars. In effect, the desire to have history not repeat itself set the stage for Europe's subsequent embrace of internationalism and has made the powers of globalisation have a more pronounced effect on the continent than they might have otherwise.

The move to regional cooperation in late 1940s Europe was also prompted by the extent of the destruction that the continent had experienced (Stirk 1996). The necessity was to restore agriculture, rebuild homes, the infrastructure and the industrial base, and the need was on such a grand scale that it meant that many European states could only do this if they could have access to external sources of funding. A substantial part of this was provided by the US in the form of Marshall aid, which constituted enormous financial input into Europe and which the government of the US was unhappy to see diluted by competing national plans. The Americans demanded that the Europeans coordinate the administration and deployment of aid, and it was in response to this pressure that in 1948 the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation was set up to comply with this.

This outside pressure was in accord with the continuing strength of support for regional cooperation within the continent in the postwar years, fuelled now by capitalist-communist divisions as well as more traditional fears. As Wright (2000) explains, there were two conflicting groups in Western Europe – pragmatists and

minimalists on the one hand, who exhibited a preference for a milder form of collaboration, and the idealists and integrationists on the other, who believed that new close political and economic union in Europe would be the impediment to further wars. Both these tendencies found lasting expression – in the European Union, in the Council of Europe and in NATO, all of which have contributed, in different ways and to different degrees, to internationalism on a regional scale. Inevitably they also led to a weakening of the autonomy of the individual European states, and to closer contact and cooperation of citizens at a micro-level, with all that implies for language contact and language shift.

Many scholars in the field of globalisation would see the success of capitalism as one of the major causes of globalisation. Capitalism had its origins in sixteenth century Europe, growing in importance to play a central role in the formation of nation states and in the phenomenon of colonialism. Certainly the more tangible outcomes of global capitalism, the economic and business aspects, are intimately linked with the spread of English as international lingua franca. It is perhaps the globalisation of culture, however, which is having the largest impact on language use in Europe, particularly where English is concerned.

Although precise figures representing language-based ‘cultural flows’ (Wright 2004) are nearly impossible to come by, it is a reasonable assessment to claim that the products of globalisation are heavily biased in favour of English. Even in Europe where there is more resistance to the dominance of English than in many other parts of the world, English has a remarkably strong presence in European society. According to a report published by the European Union in 2001, 40% of Europeans spoke English as a non-native language, which meant that it the most



widely-spoken language in Europe and was spoken by more European citizens as a foreign language than every other major European language combined. English was also rated the most useful language to know by 75% of Europeans, far ahead of second-place French (40%) and third place German (23%) (European Commission 2001). English was found to be taught in more European schools than any other foreign language with over 40% of non-Anglophone primary students and nearly 90% of non-Anglophone secondary students learning it (European Commission 2002). The volume of translation from English to the other major European languages is, as well, far greater than that translated into English from them (Barret-Ducrocq 1992; Phillipson 2003). Additionally, there is no doubt that English is assuming a monumental role in European institutions and society which grows stronger as integration proceeds. For example, according to the EU Translation Service's presentational brochure: "The service received 1,224,755 pages for translation in 2000, of which 55% were drafted in English, 33% in French, 4% in German and 8% in the other 8 Community languages" (Phillipson 2003:130). Considering the fact that only 16% of Europeans speak English as a native language (EU official statistic), the impact of the global importance of English in Europe cannot be denied.

Phillipson (2003) argues that there are many supply and demand factors that are influencing the advance of English in Europe, leading to what he calls the 'disease of monolingualism'<sup>9</sup>. These include the fact that English has been so heavily promoted by American and British interests since the mid-1950s; the fact that English is now an integral dimension of ongoing globalisation processes in

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<sup>9</sup> This term was earlier coined by his wife, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, in a thematic issue of *Sociolinguistica*, the International Yearbook of European Linguistics (11, 1997) entitled 'Monolingualism is curable'.

commerce, finance, politics, military affairs, science, education and the media and is highly prestigious in these areas; the fact that higher education in the USA, UK and Australia attracts increasing numbers of students from all over the world, because of the quality of their teaching and because the language of instruction is English; the fact that, since English is used extensively by native and non-native speakers from different parts of the world, there is no simple correlation between English and the interests of a particular state; and the fact that the mobility of labour, more extensive international links, and cross-cultural marriages reinforce a pattern of language shift towards dominant languages, particularly English. There are, as he says, structural and ideological elements to these which help to reinforce them, however only when the motivations behind each of these factors is uncovered and dealt with can European society start embracing multilingualism.

There is, however, debate as to whether the fact of integration is furthering the process of globalisation in Europe, or whether it is effectively putting limits on it. Wallace and Wallace (2000) and Christiansen (2001) belong to the group of scholars who believe the EU in effect does both. On one hand, in his economy-driven analysis, Christiansen (2001) summarises how the EU offers opportunities for globalisation to flourish through its economic practices, particularly its single market and its support of a liberal trade environment. Although the EU may attempt to create social policies and extend citizens' rights, under this perspective such measures are secondary to the greater aim of market liberalisation. On the other hand, European integration can also be seen as providing protection from some of the effects of globalisation, as it offers the opportunity to assuage the worst impacts of a globalising world and in particular gives European states the forum they require in

order to respond to global competition, environmental and social pressures, and the capitalist power of the USA. And as Sweeney (2005) adds, the EU offers a forum for its members to express their views from inside a large and powerful economic block, and gives small and medium sized states a chance to be heard in international forums in a way they would not be able to have alone.

Linguistically, however, it is not clear if European integration is providing as much protection from the forces of globalisation as it is doing in political and economic spheres. From the extent to which English is used, it would seem that Europe is feeling the effects of globalisation as much, if not more, than elsewhere; certainly the numbers indicate that there is a significant imbalance in the status and use of other languages in Europe. Furthermore, if the dominance of English is exerting such pressure on large, prestigious languages, it is very likely exacting a toll on minority languages as well (see section 3.3.1 below for further discussion). In the next sections we look at exactly how Europe approaches language questions in general and minority languages in particular.

## **3.2. THE EU AND LANGUAGE**

### **3.2.1. Does the EU have a Language Policy?**

As outlined earlier, human rights and the protection of diversity has been a major point of rhetoric for the European institutions since their foundation, so it may come as a surprise to learn that there are still significant gaps in what the EU has chosen to protect. Language is perhaps the best example of this. On the one hand, there exists very clear policy covering the use and status of languages within European institutions, in which official languages are given ostensibly equal working-language

status. On the other hand, however, language use within member states has been almost completely ignored, despite the fact that, as we saw in the last chapter, language issues often walk hand in hand with issues of human rights. In addition, the dynamics of member state languages are often directly influenced by the activities of the European decision-makers. What makes the issue of language policy so difficult to debate at the European level are the deeply-entrenched ideas about language, nation and sovereignty that nearly all European states hold.

Europe is a continent in which language plays a major symbolic role, in which linguistic nationalism still holds tremendous resonance and the ideal of the monolingual nation state still holds sway. Haarmann (1991:105) puts it succinctly by saying, “[e]ven today Europeans are still being educated in the traditional way, with the doctrine of the national language being promoted as the crystallising focus of national identity.” A throwback to beliefs popular during the Age of Enlightenment (see chapter 4.3.2 below), he claims this view continues to define the European linguistic mindset. Posner (1991:127), likewise, identifies a major obstacle to a more equitable multilingualism in Europe as the deeply entrenched assumption that “each individual is assigned one and only one ‘mother tongue’ that turns him or her into a life-long member of a language community. In areas where several languages are spoken, each language community jealously sees to it that everyone remains loyal to one and only one language community. ... Joining another language community or simultaneous loyalty to two different language communities is considered treason.”

With such importance placed on language, then, it is perhaps surprising that language has been regulated so little. As Phillipson (2003) points out, one of the paradoxes of language policy in the EU institutions is that languages are often

regarded as purely practical, technical matters, while at the same time they are fundamental to personal, group, and national identity, and national interests. For example, many books on 'Europe' have been written by political scientists and sociologists that make no reference to the language dimension of European integration, thus implying that it is a peripheral topic to the process, and perhaps of little consequence to Europe's citizenry as well. On the other hand, "language is so politically sensitive that warning bells start ringing as soon as issues of language rights are raised, especially if there is a proposal to restrict the rights traditionally attached to a given language or set of languages" (Phillipson 2003:21).

What exactly does the EU regulate when it comes to language? The 1957 Treaty of Rome specified that the national language of each member state would be given equal and working status within EU institutions, with all documents and legislation being translated and carrying equal legal weight in each of these. This has, for the most part, been upheld, and as successive waves of new states have joined, the number has grown to 22, entailing an annual cost of 1 billion euros as of 2006. Outside the sphere of EU institutions, however, very little regulation takes place. As De Witte (1991) explains it, the fundamental legal starting point is that the European Community was created by an international treaty containing specific rules binding the contracting States and attributing specific powers to the Community institutions. All the remainder was left within the jurisdiction of the Member States. And as the EC Treaty does not contain any rules relating to language use (except for the functioning of the European institutions themselves), nor provides the Community institutions with competences to adopt such rules, the logical conclusion

would seem to be that EC rules cannot affect the linguistic policies of the Member States (De Witte 1991).

Somewhat confusingly, the EU is well-known for its rhetoric of linguistic pluralism; Phillipson (2003:129), for example, calls attention to what he terms “multilingualism as EU mantra”. According to Nic Shuibhne (2002:28), though, while “the apparent theme of EC language policy is a commitment to linguistic equality”, this only applies within the institution itself and only concerns designated official languages – and she reminds us, that even here there are bound to be inequalities. The principle of linguistic equality is championed so much because it has always had, and retains, intense political symbolism, fuelling a broader sense of equality and participation among the Member States – nevertheless, in many ways it rings hollow when the EU’s actions to actually uphold it are examined. Wright (2002) agrees that “if the language question does feature, there is usually an unquestioning acceptance of the official commitment to plurilingualism. There seems to be a conspiracy of silence on the matter, although it is clearly highly significant in such a plurilingual setting where problems of communication impact on every stage of the progress”.

Nic Shuibhne (2002) believes the failure to agree on language issues has to do most with the conflict between retaining state sovereignty and the pan-national aspirations of the European Union. The degree of sensitivity surrounding EU language policy is illustrative of this friction; debate on even minor amendments to the principle of linguistic equality is usually hindered by “sovereignty-related linguistic nostalgia” (2002:39). She argues that although it may be justifiable that respect for diversity should transcend the requirements of economic efficiency (e.g.

the enormous costs associated with maintaining the working-language structure of EU institutions), where promotion of national difference “masquerades as chauvinism” (2002:40), the shortcomings in language policy cannot be excused. Put another way, the EU should not continue to employ two yardsticks, one to measure respect for diversity in terms of its majority languages, and another to measure it in terms of its minority languages.

It is clear that under the traditional definition of language policy, Europe has none outside of that for the EU institutions, and that despite this fact language remains a topic off the agenda in integration matters. The problem is that the reality of a lack of language policy is having a significant impact on languages, particularly on minority languages, as we will see in section 4. Ó Riagáin (1991) argued fifteen years ago that many of the EU’s policies which relate to economic, social and political integration, and whose intent is not at all language oriented, hold the potential to greatly affect patterns of language maintenance and shift. Policies in these sectors are rarely assessed for their impact on language patterns, yet in total, their consequences for language maintenance objectives are of just as much importance as language policies per se. Indeed, this is what we are now seeing.

### **3.3. THE EU AND MINORITY LANGUAGES**

#### **3.3.1. The Rhetoric and Reality of Support**

“One of the truly significant developments in relation to minority languages in the post-war decades has been the formation and development of the European Union. While it is likely that the individual states that make up the EU will continue to exert a significant influence on minority language groups, the impact of the EU should not be underestimated.”

Camille O’Reilly (2001:11)

The integration of Europe presents something of a double-edged sword to the speakers of Europe's minority languages. On one hand the evolution of the European Union into a kind of supra-state government provides a unique umbrella of protection to its members, offering advantages to smaller regions that previously were the domain of only the nation-state, for example access to large economic markets, economic redistribution and subsidies for poorer regions, a single currency, and possibly in the near future a common defence network. Regional communities in turn have the opportunity to use these favourable political and economic conditions to support the promotion and normalisation of smaller languages, and to push for greater linguistic autonomy within the current state framework. In addition, the various institutions of the EU have supported this trend by pressing their member states to establish a general climate of linguistic pluralism and respect for diversity within their borders.

On the other hand, the realities of a multilingual Europe have led to an increasing linguistic imbalance in which an exclusive subset of languages have become *de facto lingua francas* within EU institutions<sup>10</sup> and beyond. English, above all, continues to hold a place of uncontested supremacy (see section 2.1.4). Judge (2000:44) contends that although few like to admit it, in realm of market value, "it is probably the case that most 'national' languages in Europe... are in a subservient position to English."

This notion of the inherent usefulness of certain languages is in and of itself nothing new in European society, where as a result of increasing state centralisation

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<sup>10</sup> A study carried out by Gerhard-Mercator Universität of Duisburg, reported in the *New Language Planning Newsletter*, Vol. 9 No. 4 (June 1995), reported that 99% of business within EU institutions (both spoken and written) is conducted through the medium of either English or French. The European Commission gave this *de facto* situation further legitimacy in 1998 when it declared English, French, and to a lesser extent German would be its sole internal working languages.



national languages have been gaining demographic ground for the past two or three centuries. Nevertheless, the scale of the current disparity between the status of the various languages of Europe and the speed at which the divide is growing is probably without precedent. This linguistic imbalance is posing a threat to many smaller national languages whose domains of use are diminishing in comparison with the language giants, but its effect on minority languages, which suffer from low prestige and often do not even have an established set of domains for use within their own territory, is potentially catastrophic. Unfortunately there is still little empirical evidence to demonstrate a causal link between knowledge of English or other widely-spoken European languages and social or economic advantage. A notable exception is Grin (2001) who found there to be significant wage premia associated with English-language competence in Switzerland. Nevertheless the perception of economic and social benefits attached to English and other major languages is generally treated as self-evident, as is the threat they pose to lesser-used languages (see for example Phillipson 1992, Pennycook 1994, Crystal 1997b, May 2001).

As noted earlier, the extent to which the European Union has, could, or even should involve itself in language matters, and particularly minority language matters, is a matter of ongoing debate. As regards minority languages, the EU has in fact chosen to involve itself more than strictly necessary, considering the lack of authority to do so accorded to by its founding treaties. The motivation behind EU involvement in minority language matters was spelled out by the European Commission in the opening paragraph of its *Euromosaic* study (Nelde et al. 1996:I):

Since the early eighties, the institutions of the European Union have taken an increasing interest in the circumstances of those autochthonous communities whose languages are not the official languages of their respective states, many of which display a high degree of social and cultural creativity. As a result of this interest...the Commission began to devote resources to the support of these

linguistic communities. This support was and is coherent with the general aims of an integrated Europe, in which every citizen can fulfil his or her own aims in a suitable social environment, and in which the European institutions provide support through their programmes so that such aims can be achieved.

The activities of the EU with regards to minority languages have been primarily the responsibility of two institutions. At the political level there have been a series of Resolutions drafted by the European Parliament which have unequivocally established this institution as the prime instigator of action in the area of minority language matters. Resolutions were passed in 1981, 1983, 1987, 1994 and 2001 which recommended increased support and promotion of regional and minority languages in areas such as culture, education, media, and public policy. They called on member states as well as the Commission to take a broad number of steps to safeguard Europe's linguistic diversity. It is crucial to note, though, that none of these Resolutions have had the force of law within the European Union – they have simply been an invitation to the Commission and to states to promote regional culture and languages. As a result of the Parliament's recommendations, two important initiatives were set into action: a report on the linguistic geography of Europe which paid particular attention to the situation of language minorities was drafted by the *Instituto della Enciclopedia Italiana* (European Commission 1986); and the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages (EBLUL), a non-governmental organization which coordinates and manages exchanges and contacts within the minority language communities, was founded in 1982. The Commission has also been involved in minority language issues, albeit in a somewhat more cautious role. The Commission requested and financed the *Euromosaic* report (Nelde et al. 1996), which for the first time addressed the issue of the economic dimension of European minority languages, and has been active in funding organisations like EBLUL and

the Mercator Minority Languages Information Network, which acts as a research and data collection centre and encourages cooperation and sharing of information among European minority language groups.

Although this is certainly not a track record of ignorance and neglect of minority language issues, it is a legitimate question to ask why the European Union has failed to do more. The missing element that has been most often identified is some force of law behind EU support. Niamh Nic Shuibhne (2002), in her comprehensive overview of the role of the EU in minority language affairs, provides an excellent analysis of the reasons this legal backing has not been forthcoming. In 1993, the Treaty on European Union officially included culture and education within the remit of the EU, and even went so far as to imply the inclusion of language as a defining element of culture. The same article, however, stipulated that in the realm of cultural policy, it is not within the Union's power to harmonise laws across member states, in effect precluding any Europe-wide language policy formulation and reinforcing the power of the member states over minority language issues. In 1998 the consequences of this lack of legal commitment were made all too obvious when the Commission was forced by the Court of Justice to discontinue its multiannual budget line for minority language promotion because they could refer to no specific legal basis for this expenditure<sup>11</sup>. Europe witnessed the introduction in 2000 of the EU's human rights document, the *European Charter of Fundamental Rights*, which for the first time mentioned the Union's interest in its linguistic diversity, with Article 22 affirming, "The Union shall respect cultural, religious, and

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<sup>11</sup> The funding for institutions like EBLUL and the Mercator Network is still decided on a precarious year-by-year basis within the Commission.

linguistic diversity.” Nevertheless, since the Charter was not made legally binding its impact was little more than symbolic.

The more recent introduction of a draft European Constitutional Treaty has inspired a more mixed reaction among those hoping for a solid legal basis for minority language protection. At first glance the Constitution seems to have made important gains in this area by offering an explicit provision on linguistic diversity. Article 1-3.3 says that the Union “shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity”, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is “safeguarded and enhanced”. In addition, the *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* has been incorporated into part II of the Constitution as a legally binding document. Upon closer inspection there has been considerable scepticism of the actual impact of these inclusions, mainly due to the fact that a mention of language was excluded from other important sections of the Treaty. For example, a prohibition on language-based discrimination was conspicuously left out of Article III-5.1, in this way differing from the basic human rights documents of, for example, the Council of Europe<sup>12</sup>. Also, respect and protection of minorities, which had been adopted as a criteria for accession into the Union as part of the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria was dropped as a condition for future accession, perhaps because of the inconsistencies of requiring minority protection from candidate countries when it is not required of current members. So although the Constitution's inclusion of linguistic diversity no doubt represents a step forward, it is phrased in too general a way to imply any concrete legal obligations on Member States or to crystallise any specific language-related rights. As Nic Shuibhne (2002:246) criticises, this very basic statement “ contains

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<sup>12</sup> In the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950: Article 14).

little more, in cultural and linguistic terms, than an additional expression of [previous EU documents]... and [i]t is doubtful...that any binding, justiciable duty could be read into [it].” Furthermore, the failure to include it in the non-discrimination clause further limits the EU’s powers to intervene in language affairs at the state level. If there is any hope to be had from the new Constitution, it is that at least the necessary treaty basis may be found to resume minority language project funding, but it is far from a comprehensive set of rights and obligations which would ensure a higher standard of protection throughout the Union.

In many ways this reluctance to hand over control of language issues to the European level can only be expected. States are not eager to give up the regulation of regional and minority language matters to a supranational government because this would entail a fundamental threat to state cohesion in a way that regulating trade and industry will not do. As Coulmas (1991) points out, the fact that the EU has espoused a commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity at all actually has very little to do with the desire of EU representatives to promote intrastate linguistic diversity. Instead it has come from an intense nationalistic fear of the homogenizing effects of integration on *national* language and culture:

...the Community’s relatively friendly attitude towards linguistic and cultural plurality is a corollary of the member states’ general hostility towards multilingualism, that is, the nation states’ tendency to favour cultural and linguistic homogeneity. It is precisely the great importance the European states attach to their national languages which motivates their backing of linguistic pluralism in the Community context (if only as a means of protecting the national languages)... A strong commitment to monolingualism, if multiplied, necessarily results in support for multilingualism.” (14-5)

But this commitment to multilingualism has proved itself to be little more than rhetoric, as the Member States have made it clear that an outward display of support for multilingualism does not guarantee an internal commitment to diversity.

Indeed, most States have taken every legal precaution necessary to ensure that the multilingual policy of the EU institutions cannot be translated into multilingual obligations at the state level<sup>13</sup>. There is no question that many of the EU's member states have continued to enact oppressive or assimilatory practices towards their regional minorities in many ways, linguistic and otherwise (see Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Barbour and Carmichael 2001; O'Reilly 2001; Extra and Gorter 2001). And despite moving a step forward with the mention of linguistic diversity in the pending Constitutional Treaty, it is clear that a common European standard for minority rights protection is still lacking, and that binding commitments shared by all EU Member States in the form of a Europe-wide language policy are not likely to be forthcoming any time in the near future.

### **3.3.2. The Council of Europe and the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

It is worth briefly mentioning the actions towards minority language issues of another institution promoting integration in Europe, the Council of Europe, despite the fact that its sphere of influence is admittedly less than that of the EU. The Council of Europe has been the most active institution in Europe in framing instruments for minority protection, both linguistic and general. Its *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, which was drafted in 1994 and entered into force on 1 February 1998, is a legally binding multilateral instrument for the protection of national minorities in Europe. The Convention is not geared toward

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<sup>13</sup> Such as the previously-mentioned principle of subsidiarity, enshrined in Article 3b of the EC Treaty, which states that the EU should only undertake those responsibilities of governance that it can solve more effectively than if individual countries tackled the issue at the same level. This has proved another enormous stumbling block to language legislation at the EU level.

individuals, however, and the Council of Europe is not capable of dealing with individual complaints; the focus of the Convention is instead monitoring state practice (Wright 2004). It does, however, address the issue of group language rights, particularly in Article 10(2), where “[i]n areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need”, signatory states are instructed to “endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities”. It is worth noting that Germany and Spain, but not France, have ratified this Convention.

In 1998 another instrument came into force which was much more specific to minority language rights. The *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (ECRML), drafted in 1992, is by far the most comprehensive legal document existing in Europe for the protection of minority languages. Not only does it promote the use of regional or minority languages in education, media, administrative and cultural spheres, but signatories have to agree to introduce the minority language in a minimum number of functions across these categories. The Charter marks a significant departure from previous minority language instruments in that it not only contains a non-discrimination clause, but it also sets out to obligate states to provide support for language maintenance (Wright 2004).

The flip side of this is, of course, that since signing the Charter necessitates positive action, far fewer states have done so compared to the number prepared to agree to the largely negative language rights guaranteed by the Framework Convention. At present, the only (pre-enlargement) EU countries to have ratified the

Charter are Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Many states apparently feel that signing a promise to support minority languages is going a step too far, despite the negative image not doing so projects to the international community, and despite the fact that the Charter itself was worded in such a way as to leave no doubt that a state's official language will suffer no loss of prestige or function if it is signed.

Despite the fact that this is by far the most progressive minority-language protection instrument introduced in Europe, it has suffered its share of intense criticism. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:535-9) draws attention to the Charter's "vague formulations, modifications and alternatives". As she argues, "a state can choose which paragraphs or subparagraphs it wishes to apply (a minimum of 35 is required). Again, the formulations ... include a range of modifications, including 'as far as possible', 'relevant', 'appropriate', 'where necessary', 'sufficient', etc." Phillipson (2003:154) agrees: "The opt-outs and alternatives in the Charter permit a reluctant state to meet the requirements in a minimalist way, which it can legitimate by claiming that a provision was not 'possible' or 'appropriate', or that numbers were not 'sufficient' or did not 'justify' a provision, or that it 'allowed' the minority to organise teaching of their language as a subject, at their own cost."

These arguments are countered, however, by those who claim that although the provisions are minimal, they do provide a much-needed boost for visibility for minority issues in Europe, as well as the international stigma attached to being a non-signing party (Neville 2004). On a more general level, as a result of the Charter language policies are becoming a significant field of government intervention, and in



countries that have ratified it there now exists a much-needed framework for dialogue between minority language groups and policy makers (Grin 2003).

The ECRML, then, is a mixed blessing for minority language protection in Europe. It appears to be an important first step in enshrining minority language protection in the international arena, and has certainly brought more visibility to the issue in the states that have ratified it. The fact of it being a voluntary charter spearheaded by a non-legislating institution means its impact is significantly reduced, however, and there is a fear that its existence will lull European policy makers into the belief that enough has already been done on this front. It is also worth remembering that the states that have signed and ratified the Charter are generally those that had some provision for minority language protection prior to its drafting, and the states that did not – among them France – are conspicuously absent from the list of signatories. Until the EU sees fit to adopt a similar list of rights and obligations and make it legally binding (which, as we have seen, is not even clearly within its competence), minority language survival will continue to find its fate in the fickle hands of national policy makers.

### **3.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented an overview of history and policy in Europe that is relevant to an analysis of minority language situations. We have seen how the processes of integration have happened rapidly, causing member states to relinquish control over a great number of areas of domestic policy, but how there are still areas such as language which remain somewhat ambiguous. Although the EU has put forward a number of idealistic parliamentary resolutions in support of minority

languages, they have avoided bringing language into the scope of legal obligation by only regulating language use within their own institutions; apart from that, they have left local and regional language issues to be decided by the relevant member states. As we have seen, however, the dual forces of integration and globalisation (and the corresponding rise in power of English) are having a pronounced effect on language behaviour at all levels across Europe, and I argue that refusing to acknowledge this fact, as well as the institution's concomitant responsibility to mitigate the consequences of this, are possibly having a greater impact on minority languages than is currently appreciated. In the next chapter we will narrow the focus even further to examine three minority language communities and their host states, looking at the kinds of pressure these communities have been subjected to as a result of nation-building and the results both local and national policy and planning have had on their current circumstances.

#### 4. CASE STUDIES

“The comparison of case studies is probably the most fruitful approach to the study of language and ethnicity, of language maintenance and shift at any theoretical level.”  
(Bratt Paulston 1994:56)

This chapter introduces the three European minority language communities that form the basis of my case studies and examines their history and current situation. In selecting languages to profile, I was mindful of two things; first, that the languages not be among the most widely studied in the language shift literature (yet not so obscure as to have had no prior research done), and second, that they each belong to countries that represent different points along the policy and planning spectrum, i.e. from more tolerant/supportive to less so. In the end I chose Galician, Corsican and Sorbian, as they fit my criteria for the languages, and their respective host countries, Spain, France and Germany, represent countries with quite different approaches to minority language accommodation.

I begin each section by introducing the general language climate in the host countries, and examining how language issues have been traditionally perceived and dealt with, including the development of language-based identity in the country as a whole. I then move on to the minority communities, and I profile the history of the language, current socio-political situation and extent of use and support in various domains. My intention is to provide a framework and reliability measure upon which to evaluate my own survey results in the next chapter.

## **4.1. SPAIN AND LANGUAGE**

### **4.1.1. Introduction**

According to Charlotte Hoffman (1996:93-4),

Among all the states of Europe, Spain, these days provides a particularly fascinating example of language planning in action. Fascinating is the speed with which language policies have been formulated and set in motion, the extent to which they have begun to affect many spheres of public life in many parts of the Iberian Peninsula, and fascinating, too, are the results which are beginning to become apparent. It is also a process which is, for many Spaniards, controversial. For linguists, the public debate in Spain on linguistic issues which has been, and still is, going on, is both dramatic and illuminating.

Spain, despite the image it has attempted to project throughout much of its history, is a highly multilingual country. Approximately 25% of the population have a non-Castilian first language, and about 40% of Spain's inhabitants now live in an official multilingual area (Turell 2001). Although the multilingualism itself is nothing new, official recognition of it is; until 1975 minority languages were given very little support or recognition, and under the four decades of authoritarian rule at the hands of Francisco Franco these languages (and their speakers) were the victims of an outright language battle. Effective as Franco's measures were in decimating the number of native speakers of these languages, however, they also had another, very powerful effect: they fuelled many people's determination to fight for their survival. Since Franco's death, speakers of Spain's three major minority languages have pushed for wide-reaching and progressive language rights, and as a result, Spain has emerged in terms of language planning as seeming to be one of the most progressive and accommodationist states in the world.

There are signs, however, that a tolerant and supportive state may not be having as positive an effect on language survival as many would have hoped. In the days of fascism the minority communities were united in a fight to keep alive their

language and culture; today, however, the subtle pressures of globalisation, Europeanisation and encroaching Castilianisation are having an effect potentially as detrimental as outright oppression. As Wardhaugh (1987:120) argued nearly two decades ago, “[t]he freedom that the present rather fragile democracy has brought could turn out to be even more harmful to the minority languages of Spain than oppressive dictatorship.” As we shall see, this is certainly true of Galician, as it is probably true of all Spain’s minorities.

Before proceeding to our discussion of language history in Spain, it is worth noting that the terms ‘minority language’ and ‘linguistic minority’ are not commonly used in the Spanish literature on the subject. Hoffman (1996) supposes that this is because the situation in Spain is somewhat different from elsewhere in that within their respective political territories, speakers of these languages actually represent a numerical majority. Instead, the term *minorised* is widely used to emphasise the subordinate *status* of the language in relation to Castilian (Strubell i Trueta 1993). In relation to language recovery, the implication of the term suggests that there is something to be overcome; namely, that only by rejecting its minorised status will the language in question ultimately be able to survive and compete on equal ground for speakers.

#### **4.1.2. History of Language in Spain**

The year 1492 marks not only the beginning of modern Spain, but the beginning of the systematic attempt to homogenise the language of the peninsula, as Jews and Arabs, along with their language and culture, were expelled from the Iberian peninsula. Because the reoccupation of Spain was orchestrated by the Kingdom of

Castile, it was this region that came to dominate the peninsula politically and militarily with “a hegemony born out of solidarity in the face of the common Moorish enemy, throughout the newly formed state, and the repression of what were now perceived as minorities along the peripheries” (Mar-Molinero 1996:73).

Although laws restricting the use of Arabic were enacted shortly after the *reconquista*, it was really not until the seventeenth century, as Spain began to abandon her imperial designs and looked inwards, that moves to consolidate Spanish national identity involving language policies took shape. Particularly prominent in the moves to formulate a sense of Spanish (as opposed to Castilian) identity for the monarchy and the state was the Conde Duque de Olivares, whose famous ‘secret’ memorandum to Philip IV in 1624 exemplifies this awareness that strength can only be found for the king’s policies by bringing political and administrative centralization to Spain. He wrote (cited in Linz 1973:43):

The most important thing in Your Majesty’s Monarchy is for you to become king of Spain, by this I mean, Sir, that Your Majesty should not be content with being king of Portugal, of Aragon, of Valencia, and Count of Barcelona, but should secretly plan and work to reduce these kingdoms of which Spain is composed to the style and laws of Castile, with no difference whatsoever.

He highlighted what was quickly becoming perceived as a major obstacle to centralizing power for the monarchy, namely, the existence of different vernaculars (linked with their diverse regional identities), and thrust the issue for the need for a ‘national’ language onto the agenda.

During the eighteenth century the position of Castilian throughout Spain began to be strengthened by language-specific policies. At the beginning of the century a power struggle for the Spanish throne brought the French Bourbon family to power, who undertook to centralise power in the Spanish state as was being done in France. This involved the increasing use of Castilian by the now very centralised

Catholic Church, and the use of Castilian in the education system. To this can also be added the effect of universal male conscription into a Castilian-speaking army, and the establishment in 1713 of the *Real Academia de la Lengua Española*. The latter was particularly significant; with its motto ‘*limpia, fija, y da esplendor*’ (cleanse, fix and give splendour’) it functioned as a regulator and promoter of the Castilian language, and helped give it a legitimacy and prestige that no regional language could hope to match (Hoffman 1996).

The 1808 invasion by Napoleon had the effect of uniting, in a sense of solidarity against the common enemy, even those who had previously been in conflict with the central government. A sense of Spanish (rather than Castilian) patriotism was experienced, even in the peripheral regions. Nonetheless, the latter half of the nineteenth century saw the resurgence of sharp ideological divisions, particularly where language and identity were concerned, along with a resurgence of cultural activities in places like Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country. These cultural movements signalled new or increased literary outputs in the minority languages, and required focusing on the written language for the first time in many centuries. This period, therefore, also saw significant work in the area of codification and elaboration of the non-Castilian languages.

These cultural and linguistic ‘renaissances’, as they are generally called, which flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century, were stimulated by the European-wide nationalism movements, in particular those inspired by the French and German Romantics (see sections 4.3.2 and 4.5.2). The Romantic movement emerging from the ideas of Herder and his followers, with their emphasis on cultural and linguistic discreteness and uniqueness, helped revive an interest in hitherto

marginalised groups and their cultures (Hobsbawm 1991). Such thinking inevitably influenced the cultural revivals beginning to take shape in Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country. However, Romanticism and its ideas about cultural nationalism were also embraced by Castilian intellectuals, such as the group of writers producing work around the turn of the century. The sense of national decadence and inadequacy produced by the final loss of Spain's empire was challenged by these writers (some of whom while deliberately choosing to write in Castilian were from the periphery – e.g. the Basque authors Unamuno and Baroja) (Hoffmann 1996). While these writers sharply criticised the Spain they saw around them, they supported the view that a united Spain could be great and should be regenerated and modernised, and in particular emphasised the greatness of Castile. They were, in particular, scornful of the splintering effect of the various nationalist movements that were gaining strength around Spain's peripheries. At the turn of the century, then, these two opposing forces – one pushing power toward the centre and the other seeking to pull it toward the peripheries – were strongly polarizing the country along both regional and ideological lines.

The beginning of the twentieth century found Spain in a very isolated position, with industrialization and modernisation lagging far behind other European countries. Politically there was growing tension between the bureaucratic centre in Madrid and regions on the periphery like Catalonia and the Basque Country, which due to their own efforts at industrialization had a significant economic advantage over the rest of the country. The tensions reflected this economic and social instability, heightened by the newly rediscovered cultural awareness of their different identities. Although there was some economic progress made during the First World



War, it was immediately followed by a period of major recession under the 8-year dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-31), who translated his zeal for centralism into repression of Spain's minority communities and their languages. This was followed, however, by a brief respite in the form of the Second Republic, a period of radical policies and reforms which gave Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia autonomous status and control over language matters. The ink barely had time to dry on this progressive new legislation, however, when everything was cut short by the outbreak of Civil War in 1936. It was, as Mar-Molinero (2001:97) aptly describes it, "a bloody manifestation of Spain's multiple identity crises."

With the forces of centralism winning the Civil War, the years that followed saw a period of unparalleled repression toward the minorities on Spain's periphery. Franco's government made the language question a highly politicised one, fervently promoting Castilian as the basis of one national identity, *una sola Hispanidad*, and allowing displays of regional cultural expression only in anachronistic 'folkloric' contexts. The regime, which considered any display of ethnic or linguistic 'otherness' to represent a political threat, cracked down hard on minority languages, prohibiting their use in schools, administration, and often even in public spaces. Another strategy the regime employed was to refer to these languages as 'dialects'. It was claimed that the non-Castilian languages were inferior, and they were characterised, along with such so-called 'non-standard' varieties of Castilian as Andalusian, as the speech only of the uneducated and peasantry. All the patriotic rhetoric of the dictatorship centred around the concept of '*lo castellano*' (things Castilian); anything challenging this was considered dangerously subversive (Mar-Molinero 1996).

Although in the early years of the dictatorship infringements against the laws prohibiting the use of minority languages were heavily punished, by the mid-sixties Franco's government had relaxed its attitudes a little with the passing of the so-called Freedom of Expression Law, which liberalised both teaching and printing laws in languages other than Castilian. Mar-Molinero (1996) believes that this reflects the confidence of the Franco regime, as it felt that by this point the minority languages had such a weak speaker base that very few people would take advantage of these new laws anyway. In addition, Franco deliberately encouraged a certain type of media coverage in minority languages which helped to trivialise them even further – i.e. reports on dance competitions or local fiestas – leaving 'serious' news to be reported only in Castilian.

In 1975 Franco died, bringing his repressive regime to its end and opening the door to demands for recognition from Spain's minority groups. Politically, the country evolved from a highly centralised state to a quasi-federal one, and along with this came the opportunity for Spain's most visible minorities to determine their own language fate. The 1978 Constitution, considered by many to be a marvel of compromise and consensus, particularly so soon after Franco's death, divided the country up into seventeen autonomous units and granted political recognition to several of Spain's minority languages. This represented, for the first time, the attempt to reconcile the seemingly contradictory images of a single Spanish state with the reality of its diverse parts.

In practice, though, the new Constitution was full of ambiguities. The assertion that: 'All Spaniards have the duty to know [Castilian] and the right to use it' caused a tremendous uproar in minority communities, as they did not feel it was

fair to be placed under ‘duty’ to know Castilian, and also because the regional languages were prohibited from including similar duty-bound clauses in their local Autonomy Statutes. The clause that gave minority groups language rights was also highly criticised: ‘The other Spanish languages will also be official in the respective Autonomous Communities in accordance with their statutes.’ This granting of status to Spain’s minority languages is qualified by the highly prescriptive constraint of limiting their official status to their own territorial space, effectively limiting the role of the minority languages. For example, it guarantees no rights to speakers of these languages if they happen to live outside the political boundaries of the autonomous community where it is official. The third clause appears to confirm a belief in linguistic plurality when it states: ‘The richness of Spain’s different linguistic varieties is a cultural heritage which shall be the object of special respect and protection’, however the exact meaning of words such as ‘respect’ or ‘protection’ are left unclear. In practice it has been left up to the relevant states to determine what degree of ‘special respect and protection’ they want to afford the language in question (Mar-Molinero 1996).

The other major step enacted by the Constitution was the adoption of a new political model that Spaniards called *el estado de las autonomias* (i.e. the quasi-federal model based on regional self-government). The justification for this model was that some of the autonomous regions undoubtedly had a historical claim to their own separate identity, the so-called *comunidades historicas*, and that these deserved special status in determining their own affairs. These were Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. The most distinctive mark on which these claims were founded was the existence of their own language in the respective territories. It was felt that

the other regions also could have a claim to autonomy, but a less convincing one than the *comunidades históricas*. This feeling was written into the Spanish Constitution by allowing for two different degrees of autonomy, namely full autonomy and partial autonomy. Catalonia's Statute was passed first, then the Basque Statute, both in 1979, followed almost immediately by Galicia's in 1980 (Hoffmann 1996).

A major component of each region's campaign to promote its languages were the so-called laws of *linguistic normalisation*. According to Cobarrubias (1987:60, quoted in Mar-Molinero 2000:80), "[n]ormalization consists of... three tasks... a) to empower minority languages in order to make it possible for [them] to satisfy the communicative needs of a modern society; b) to increase the number of speakers/users and increase the communicative competence of current users, and c) to expand the geographic scope of the language within a given area." The term was first coined by Catalan sociolinguists and later officially adopted by the Catalan Regional Government for its programme of linguistic policies; however both the Basques and Galicians modelled their policies, including the legal framework within which they were set, closely on the same scheme. By following a form of integrated status and acquisition planning, the intent was to bring not only the domains of use of the minority language up to par with that of the majority language, but to place it on an equal status footing as well, thus making it more 'normal'. This continues to be the policy employed by all three minority regions in Spain, to greater and lesser success.

The evolution of Spanish language policy has thus arrived via a very rocky road to where it is today. Although there continues to be a somewhat uneasy relationship between Spain's autonomous regions and its centre, in terms of

accommodating and supporting the needs of minorities Spain has come probably farther than any other nation in Europe. This does not mean that Spain could not do more, however, but it does mean that Spain's largest minorities have at least more control over the survival of their language than many other minorities. In the following section we will take a closer look at Galician, one of Spain's *comunidades historicas*, and a region that has had full control over its language planning for 25 years. We will look at how language ideologies have developed there in relation to the rest of Spain, how the changing tides of government and public perception have affected language vitality, and what the current prospects for language survival seem to be.

## **4.2. GALICIAN**

### **4.2.1. Overview**

Galicia is the region of Spain situated in the far north-west corner of the Iberian peninsula and consists of four provinces: La Coruña, Lugo, Orense and Pontevedra. Galicia has a population of 2.7 million people (2001 census), but Galician speakers also inhabit bordering regions of the Spanish provinces of Castilla-Leon, Asturias, and Zamora. Another Galician-speaking area, the *Franxa Exterior*, is divided between the peripheral regions of Asturias and Castile-León, and has a population of about 70,000. In addition, many people of Galician origin, around 550,000 of whom are Galician speakers, live in other parts of Spain, in other European countries and in Latin America. The rate of familiarity with Galician is extremely high; more than 99% of the population reported having at least minimal competence in Galician in the 2001 national census.

The Galician language comes from the same branch of the family of Romance languages as Portuguese, and in fact until the 14th century, the differences between the two languages were scarcely perceptible. From that point on, however, Galician became the means of communication of a rural society while Portuguese was standardised on the basis of the Lisbon dialect and became the language of the royal court, and the divergences between the two were to grow ever more marked. Fernandez Rei (1991), author of the *Mapa Sociolinguístico de Galicia*, argues that in his opinion, modern Galician does not have dialects but rather linguistic blocs: the eastern bloc, which includes the Franxa Exterior, and the central and western blocs, distinguished by several characteristics but primarily by their formation of plural nouns. Within these blocs Fernandez Rei distinguishes other linguistic sub-units, but nevertheless asserts that modern Galician is particularly unified.

Galician has several commonalities with the other two major minority groups in Spain, but differs primarily in its social status. In contrast to Catalan, Galician was not the language of a confident and prosperous bourgeoisie nor the medium for artistic movements that gained international recognition. It had limited or no history as the language of local administration, education, military conscription, local media or local arts. It has, in fact, existed for a long time in a highly diglossic relationship with Castilian, with Galician being the popular, widespread vehicle for oral communication of a primarily rural farming and fishing population. Galician had little association with the arts and the intelligentsia, and though there were one or two brief periods when there was some literary output in Galician, on the whole this language did not have a strong and influential literary tradition to look back on. This historically low status for the language has caused the nationalist movement in

Galicia to be somewhat less fervent than in the other regions (for example, Wardhaugh (1987:127) calls the Galicians “one of the more dormant linguistic minorities in Europe”), and has made the task of ‘normalisation’ that much more difficult, as there was never really a tradition of normality to return to.

#### **4.2.2. History**

Galicia and Portugal have been considered as independent territories from the year 1096 when King Alfonso VI of Castile gave the Portuguese County to one of his daughters and Galicia to the other, thereby effectively splitting up a territory which had until that time always been under the same ruler. Portugal then won its independence from the Castilian crown in 1140, and although relations remained close after that date, the independence of Portugal drew a dividing line which, as the years went by, ended up driving ever further apart the two territories, their cultures and languages. Within Galicia, until the mid-14th century Galician was the language of the whole of society and of the administrative and judicial systems. Beginning in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, however, a deliberate Castilianisation on the part of the monarchy was to gradually work to exclude Galician from writing and public affairs.

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Galician was almost completely absent from linguistic areas typically reserved for cultural matters, i.e. it was barred from administrative, religious and literary affairs, despite the fact that 99% of the population still continued to speak it (Hermida 2001). The period from the Enlightenment to the Renaissance (1700-1840) involved the continued encroachment of Castilianisation and the process of discrediting and undermining the Galician language which had

begun in the Medieval period. By this point, politically marginalised within Spain, Galicia was impoverished by the archaic social and economic structures (the last feudal privileges were not abolished until 1973); industrial development came late and was of limited scope, all of which contributed to the low prestige of the language. Nevertheless, a lack of in-migration also helped preserve the language base, unlike in Catalonia and the Basque Country where large amounts of Spanish-speaking economic migrants shifted the language balance in urban areas.

A new awareness in the 19th century resulted in a cultural renaissance in Galicia termed the *rexurdimento*. This had its genesis in 1840 when a group of intellectuals started to lay down the foundations of a political ideology that had as its basis the defence of Galicia at all levels. The awareness of the fact that Galicia had become marginalised and discriminated against had become widespread, and this fact led to a reaction on the part the intelligentsia in favour of everything that was ‘typically Galician’ in an attempt to rid it of the negative image it had. In an attempt to change the image of Galicia, the main proponents of the *rexurdimento* set about rejecting the adjectives and attitudes which discredited the Galician language, demanding that it be given more of a presence in Galician life, both orally and in print. The main effect of this movement was to usher in the beginnings of the scientific study of the language with the publication of the first grammars and dictionaries, and the setting up of the *Real Academia da Lingua Galega* in 1904, which had the promotion of Galician as its main aim. However, as Roseman (1995:5-6) points out, there was a measure of irony inherent in the aims of the *Rexurdimento*, because, “despite the fact that the majority of Galicians thought and spoke in Galician, the intellectual elite who were involved in reviving the language



as a literary vehicle did not ordinarily speak it; in contrast, most Galician speakers did not read or write their own language.”

The *Academia* did not manage to complete its work on the standardization of the language, but that did not hinder the emergence of a small, yet significant body of literature. The period from 1916-36 is particularly looked upon as the Golden Age of Galician literature, where numerous writers worked to bring this and all the other scientific and cultural branches up to the highest level they had ever known. Although this period represents a continual slump in the number of Galician speakers, the Second Republic saw the birth of the highly influential *Irmandade da fala* (Brotherhood of Speech), which strived to promote the use of the language alongside Castilian, and which eventually developed into a great language movement which set the stage for the *Partido Galeguista* (Pro-Galician Party). The latter organisation won seats in the Spanish Parliament in Madrid, and put pressure on political parties in Galicia to draw up the very first Statute of Autonomy, which later went on to be approved in the years just before the Civil War. This official recognition of Galician was to aid its push for recognition and autonomy in the post-Franco era as well (Hermida 2001).

Like the other non-Castilian languages, Galician was subjected to rigorous repression under the Franco regime, and during this time the recent gains in domains of use and prestige that the language had recently achieved were effectively wiped out. The process of industrialization which finally began in the 1950s, as well as the expansion of the education system and of the Castilian-language media, facilitated a multidirectional penetration of Castilian into Galician life. Galician ceased to be used for public affairs and once again became a language synonymous with a backward,

rural population, a label that was hard to shake when Galicia was given full control over language matters following Franco's death.

Today, Galician enjoys legislative and institutional privileges that many other minority languages may never achieve: it is an official language of the regional government, it is a mandatory part of public schooling, and nearly the entire population of Galicia has at least some proficiency in it. Nevertheless, many of these gains have come at the expense of creating frustration and disunity among Galicia's population, and in many cases policies seem to have artificially inflated the appearance of language vitality. The following sections detail the specific achievements of various language planning efforts that have been implemented since 1975.

#### **4.2.3. Standardisation**

Despite the fact that the *rexurdimento* did much to raise the prestige and visibility of the Galician language, the body of literature produced in the language was extremely limited. A few literary figures, from Alfonso the Wise in the thirteenth century to Lorca in the twentieth, produced some poems in Galician, however Rosalia de Castro, the best-known Galician author, wrote mostly in Castilian (Hoffmann 1996). As a consequence, because Galician was primarily a spoken language without a strong literary tradition, there was no settled written form which could immediately be employed as a language of government and administration in the Autonomy and as a medium of education (Wright 2004).

When the programme of linguistic normalisation in Galicia was set into motion in the early 1980s, the first hurdle was to find an acceptable standard variety.

There was no obvious candidate to choose from among the various Galician dialects. Codification and development of the language were complicated by the existence of two main language ‘camps’, one, the ‘reintegrationists’, favouring a closer alignment with Portuguese, and the other, the ‘independists’, arguing for an independent development of Galician, that is, independent from both Castilian and from Portuguese. The reintegrationists, for example, argued that a closer alignment with Portuguese would bolster not only the prestige of Galician, but allow the language to tap into the cultural, print and media resources of the entire Portuguese-speaking world. The independists, on the other hand, felt that the more vulnerable Galician language would too easily be subsumed within the Portuguese behemoth, and would inevitably lose its unique characteristics. To make matters more difficult, there were many people who spoke a kind of Galician-Spanish hybrid, called *galego castilianizado*, which represented a third possible orthography, although very few people (including speakers of this dialect) recognised this as a legitimate variety (Roseman 1995). Although the debate is still active, the ‘independists’ have more followers and most organisations that promote the language subscribe to this viewpoint, for instance in the *Real Academia Galega* and the *Instituto da Lingua Galega*, where the official decisions on matters of language are made (for more on this debate see Herrero-Valeiro 2003; also see, for examples of this type of debate elsewhere, Schieffelin and Doucet 1998 and Romaine 2005).

The standardisation of Galician also had the hurdle of class distinctions to overcome. As Galician had existed in a situation of typical diglossia, being used in all the usual functions of an L language with Castilian fulfilling all the H functions, it was seen by those devising a standard as crucial to address the issue of language

prestige. For this to happen Galician had to lose its former characterisation as the language of rural poverty, and this meant that the solution for standardisation had to take account of what would be acceptable to these urban groups. The standard officially proposed was thus based largely on the language of intellectual activists, who had sometimes acquired it as a second language. However, as they were educated urban speakers, theirs was held to be a variety that could become a prestige language (Hoffmann 1996).

Unfortunately, this left the traditional Galician speakers who did not speak such a variety as minority speakers once again. Indeed they were now arguably a double minority, neither at home in the prestige variety of Galician nor mother tongue speakers of Castilian. Green (1994) terms this a situation of ‘double jeopardy’. As Hoffmann (1996:82) claims:

Culturally it is probably hard for them (rural Galician speakers) to recognise *gallego normalizado* as part of their heritage. Yet not accepting it bears some risk too. Social mobility and migration (both into urban areas and through urban sprawl into the countryside) brings with them increased contact with Castilian Spanish as well as with the new Standard Galician. One thing seems sure: constant conflict with these two varieties will remind rural speakers that they use neither of them well.

The *Instituto da Lingua Galega* published their linguistic norms covering orthography and morphology shortly before the Law of Linguistic Normalisation was passed in 1983. No one was happy with their decisions. Particularly, many criticised the new *gallego normalizado* for conceding too much to Castilian and for making Galician into a kind of scholars’ language, rather than one that could be easily taught in schools. The Instituto’s norms were officially accepted, but as a result of the disputes, there are two other orthographies which are widely used, and which apparently are not always kept separate. Although initially it may have been a form of protest to use one of the ‘unofficial’ standards, their differences have become

blurred for many people with the result that many do not know which ‘version’ of Galician they are in fact using, a fact that does not add to the perceived legitimacy of the language (Willis 1992; Herrero-Valeiro 2003).

#### **4.2.4. Legal and Institutional Support**

The Galician language enjoys a considerable amount of institutional support within the political confines of the Autonomous Community. The Galician Autonomy Statute of 1981 declared Galician to be "Galicia's own language" and conferred on it the status of an official language alongside Castilian Spanish. The Statute granted all citizens the right to know and use Galician, and stipulated that the Galician Government (called the *Xunta*) must guarantee its use in all areas of activity and promote knowledge of it. The *Lei de Normalización Lingüística* (Galician Linguistic Standardization Act) of 1983 declared Galician to be the official language of the regional administration and its associated bodies and granted citizens the right of recourse to the law to safeguard their linguistic rights. It contained provisions relating to the promotion of Galician culture, to the media, to the use of Galician in dealings between the regional administration and the public, to its use in the judicial system and within local authorities and with regard to place names.

One thing worth mentioning in the context of institutional support for Galician, is that for virtually all of Galicia’s autonomous history (1981-2005 except for 1987-89), Galicia has been presided over by the centre-conservative *Partido Popular de Galicia*, the local branch of one of the largest political parties in Spain. The Spanish *Partido Popular* was originally a reincarnation of the *Alianza Popular*, a party led and founded by a number of ex-ministers from Franco’s government, and several small Christian Democratic parties. This party was never particularly

interested in promoting Galician nationalist issues beyond a certain amount of political rhetoric, and although support for the language never seems to have been explicitly compromised, as evidenced in responses to my survey (which was conducted while the PPG was still in power, see chapter 5), many residents of Galicia feel that the government is only doing the minimum necessary. With the handover of power in 2005 to a socialist-dominated coalition, it remains to be seen how language issues will be tackled.

#### **4.2.5. Education**

Under the Autonomy Statute, the promotion and teaching of Galician falls within the exclusive competence of the *Xunta*. The Linguistic Standardization Act establishes the official status of Galician at all levels of education, recognises the right of children to receive their initial education in their own mother tongue and requires the *Xunta* to promote the use of Galician in that domain. In theory Galician is a compulsory part of all non-university education, and by the time they finish school pupils must have achieved equal competence in Galician and Castilian. In practice, however, this is not always the case. Although various secondary provisions regulate the number of hours for which Galician is to be taught and the use of Galician as the language of instruction in certain subjects, there is little enforcement of these provisions, and often teaching staff are simply not competent enough in Galician to uphold them (Costas 2001).

In preschool education, although the use of Galician as the language of communication is compulsory for all native speakers, only about 60% of children in nursery schools receive instruction in Galician (Costas 2001). In primary school and

during the first stage of secondary education (from the age of 6 to 14), some teaching in Galician is compulsory, although research shows that only 8.5% of primary schools meet the legal requirements for Galician instruction (Costas 2001). At the final stage of secondary education and in vocational training, a minority of pupils are taught mostly in Galician, while a larger minority are sometimes taught in Galician; almost all of them learn Galician for three to four hours a week. But here again, independent research indicates that only 22.9% of schools achieve the legal minimum (Costas 2001).

In higher education Galician is an official language, alongside Castilian, in the region's three universities, and candidates for the entrance examination have the option of being tested in Galician. Two of those universities also offer degree courses in Galician, and these courses are conducted entirely in Galician. Nevertheless, the rate of teaching in Castilian is higher at the university level than at any other educational level, partly due to the fact that knowledge of Galician is not required of university teachers, and partly due to the high levels of foreign and Castilian students attending Galician universities (Council of Europe 2002).

As far as teacher training is concerned, Galician courses are compulsory for all students of colleges of education, who are also able to take a special diploma in Galician. Special in-service training exists to help teachers already in the field improve their competence. Overall, mastery of Galician is considerably greater among young teachers than among older ones (Nelde et al. 1996).

#### **4.2.6. Public Services**

The Autonomy Statute and the Linguistic Standardization Act both contain measures designed to promote the use of Galician within the judicial system, including the

appointment of officials with knowledge of Galician, the validity of documents and procedures, and the right of citizens to use Galician in their dealings with the judicial authorities. The creation of the Supreme Court of Galicia was also regarded as an important measure of decentralisation. Nevertheless, recent evaluations have found that the right to use Galician is not always formally upheld, or else made so inconvenient (through wait times for interpreters, etc) that use of Castilian is almost universal (Council of Europe 2002).

Regional delegations to the national Government, like their subordinate bodies, seem to make very limited use of Galician in their dealings with the public. Despite the legislative provisions on the matter, few measures are apparently taken to ensure that civil servants posted to Galicia are familiar with the Galician language. As far as the *Xunta* is concerned, debates in the Galician Parliament are mainly conducted in Galician, and members of the Government use Galician at numerous public events. Knowledge of Galician is claimed to be a criterion for employment in the regional administration, and measures have apparently been taken to ensure that civil servants receive language training. As for the local authorities, most of the municipalities seem to make quite frequent use of Galician, both in Council meetings and in contacts with the public. It should be emphasised, however, that this varies according to the party in power (see above). The use of Castilian for written notices, on its own or along with Galician, seems to predominate in most of the public services, except in the case of hospital signs, which are mainly in Galician; police stations, on the other hand, are signposted exclusively in Castilian (Costas 2001).



#### 4.2.7. Media

The daily press in Galicia is basically in Castilian, the Galician columns in the main dailies amounting, with few exceptions, to around 5% of the total copy. Moreover, a likely legacy of the Franco era is the fact that the use of Galician is often restricted to reporting local and/or 'soft' news, particularly things with a cultural theme. Under an agreement signed in 1991, the Galician Government offers grants to newspapers and Galician press agencies with a view to raising the profile of Galician, but the results have not been spectacular. Since January 1994 there has been a daily paper published entirely in Galician, *O Correo Galego*, with a circulation of 5,000 to 10,000 copies. There are, however, several weekly, monthly and quarterly magazines and journals published entirely in Galician and devoted to various topics, including culture, economics, religious life and the environment. Only one of these, the weekly news magazine *A Nosa Terra*, founded in 1977, has a circulation of more than 1,000 copies. Other magazines appearing at various intervals are partly written in Galician (Nelde et al. 1996; Council of Europe 2002).

As for radio, one station, *Radio Galega*, which is operated by the Galician broadcasting authority, broadcasts 24 hours a day in Galician and attracts around 152,000 regular listeners. Two stations operated by the central broadcasting authority (*Radio Nacional de España*), as well as three commercial stations, broadcast programmes in Galician for a few hours per week. Around ten local radio stations broadcast entirely in Galician; others have some Galician programmes in their schedules (Nelde et al. 1996; Council of Europe 2002).

*Televisión Galega* (TVG) transmits programmes almost entirely in Galician for about 100 hours per week and is said to have captured around 24% of the market.

The programmes transmitted by one of the two channels of *Televisión Española* include several hours per week in Galician. The other Spanish channel only transmits in Galician in exceptional circumstances. The Galician language is totally absent from two of the three commercial channels, while the other only transmits occasional special reports in Galician. Some local television stations also offer occasional programmes in Galician (Nelde et al. 1996; Council of Europe 2002).

#### **4.2.8. Summary and Prospects**

Most of the research done on Galician since 1975 shows it to be in a strong position, with rates of fluency continually on the increase. Attitudes are generally reported to be positive as well, and although literary skills generally score lower, this trend seems to have been reversing itself in recent years as compulsory Galician education becomes more widespread. Particularly among the urban middle class, the group with the historically lowest competence in Galician, these numbers seem to indicate at least some success with language normalisation.

Nevertheless, there are many cracks in the optimism, particularly when the numbers are closely scrutinised. As Hermida (2001) notes in her analysis of Fernandez Rei's (1990) *Mapa Sociolinguístico de Galicia*, the high numbers for language proficiency do not match up with the figures for actual language use, and that particularly when factors such as age, class, and education are taken into account, the numbers seem to lead to the opposite conclusions. For example, although a very high percentage of 16-25-year-olds claim to be fluent in the language, a much lower percentage report that it is either their first language or that they use it regularly. Predictably, the situation is the reverse for the 65+ group. A

class breakdown indicates that the upper-middle class is the class with the lowest level of first language speakers, as well as having the lowest figures for usual language. The lower classes are those which learn to speak Galician more than any other class, as well as being the class to use it most frequently. As regards the figures for place of residence, the figures for Galician as a first language and as usual language are much lower for urban than for rural areas. As far as the levels of formal education of the population are concerned, the trend seems to be that the sector that uses Galician the most habitually is the sector with no formal studies, and in fact, the higher the level of educational attainment, the less frequently Galician is used (also see Del Valle 2000; Costas 2001 for similar findings).

There would seem, then, to be two contradictory tendencies at work. On one hand a large segment of the population is becoming highly proficient in Galician and attitudes are becoming more favourable. On the other, this proficiency does not seem to be reflected in an actual increase in language use. It may simply be too early in the normalisation process to expect anything more, and time will show more improvements. More worrying, however, is the possibility that there is a flip-flop taking place, where instead of working from a base of rural language transmission and making it a 'normalised' language for everyone, the normalisation process has replaced the rural use with a middle class, urban proficiency which is just as restricted in terms of use. Green (1994), for instance, notes that although self-proclaimed bilingualism among younger people seems to be high, this bilingualism actually tends to be asymmetrical, with Galician fulfilling far fewer functions than Castilian. It could be that there is still a certain amount of social ambiguity attached to using it, or that from a more practical point of view, the Castilianisation of

Galician society has just progressed too far for Galician to realistically make a comeback with the post-Franco generations. It would seem that Galician is in the first stages of progression toward a scenario similar to Ireland today, where outside of a few isolated areas (e.g. the *Gaeltacht*) the language has disappeared from the main low-level domains in which natural transmission occurs, and exists for most of the country's inhabitants as a language of symbolic importance but limited practical value (see e.g. Hindley 1990, Ó Murchú 1993).

Most of the authors cited here believe that overall the position of Galician is quite precarious. Although there seem to be many positive gains made over the last three decades, including the establishment of a linguistic norm, the adoption of Galician by the educational system and local and regional authorities, the main area where gains must be made for the language to survive – namely within the family and civil society – seems to be suffering severe setbacks. Ironically the process of normalisation may have something to do with this, as the well-entrenched rural varieties that were the expression of a certain identity may have been undermined by the top-down imposition of a prestige standard. Nevertheless, it is far more likely that general processes of globalisation and Europeanisation are to blame just as much for this phenomenon. This is doubly frustrating for those working for Galician language survival, namely because they are one of the 'lucky' minorities in Europe in terms of the concessions they receive from the Spanish state. While it is clear that Galician is in a much better position than many other minority languages, it is unclear just how advantaged that position really is.

### 4.3. FRANCE AND LANGUAGE

#### 4.3.1. Introduction

“There is no demand in France for the rights of so-called minorities...since we have no minorities we avoid the very idea of so-called discrimination between so-called minorities.”

(Yves Marek, counsellor to the French Minister of Culture, on the drafting of the Loi Toubon, 1994)

France, perhaps more than any other country in history, has seen its national identity revolve around the concept of “one culture, one language, one nation.” Harold Schiffman (1996) claims that this ideology of language in France is so powerful that it cannot fail to strike even the most casual of observers. Gordon (1978) observes that to the French, their language does not just fulfil a communicative function; it is seen as the bearer of not just their own civilization, but the best of human civilization.

France is today the only nation in the world with legislation requiring the exclusive use of the national language in all public and private acts, from the drafting of laws to the language of commercial transactions and even a private citizen’s last will and testament (Schiffman 1996). French language policy, by adhering to such an unwavering monolingual and monocultural norm, has both devalued every other language on its soil and offered powerful economic and cultural rewards for shifting to French (Jaffe 2001). It is the most extreme case of a nation totally identified with one language, and this has had, unfortunately, devastating consequences for France’s minority languages, as they have, for the better part of three centuries, been the objects of ridicule, repression and forced assimilation.

### 4.3.2. History

The origins of French language policy can be traced back to the Serment of Strasbourg of 842, in which Louis-le-Germanique and Charles-le-Chauvre proclaimed the alliance of their respective kingdoms not in Latin, as was usual at that time, but in each other's vernacular tongues. According to Jaffe (1999), this small event would cement a connection between language and nation that was to guide France's language policy from that point forward. The first piece of legislation aimed at establishing monolingualism in France was the *Ordonnance of Villers-Cotterets* (1539), in which the vernacular of the Ile-de-France was declared the language of the French kingdom. It was in fact mainly a symbolic act, meant more than anything to replace the power of Latin in official quarters, and this declaration had little direct impact on the variety of languages spoken by the common people. The establishment in 1635 of the *Académie Française de la Langue* was to further reinforce the hegemony of French, however. The principal aim of the *Académie*, which was established amid fears that French was becoming usurped by Italian or Spanish (Schiffman 1996), was to systematically codify, standardise and purify the language. Most importantly, though, the influence of the *Académie* served to fuel the growing belief that French represented "innate clarity, precision, logic and elegance and...superiority over any other language, and certainly over any...regional language" (Ager 1999:23).

The Revolution of 1789 certainly marked a turning point in French language policy, in that it actively sought to unify the population of France and make everyone equal on social, cultural and linguistic terms. In fact, the revolutionaries seized on language as a symbol of a new kind of national unity. The unity of speech, it was

argued, was a central element of democracy, since non-French speakers would not be able to fully participate as citizens of the Republic, and this in combination with the connection made between the French language and moral order, meant that the cultural and linguistic assimilation of the six million nonspeakers of French was conceived of as a 'civilising mission' (*la mission civilisatrice*) (May 2001). As Schiffman (1996) observes, although the modern-day tendency is to think of revolutionaries as being the champions of small disenfranchised groups, at the time of the Revolution the speakers of non-standard French dialects and other languages were seen as counter to the ideals of the Revolution. There was undoubtedly a current of goodwill and the belief that this adherence to linguistic purity would lead to greater popular empowerment, but the result of this mindset was a sustained policy to suppress or stamp out smaller languages throughout the Republic.

As De Varennes (1996:14) explains it, the perceived need to create a unitary, centralised state in Revolutionary France and to eliminate the remains of the old system inspired some political leaders to present the concept of equality of citizens in a somewhat distorted way: equality meant that everyone should be treated by legislation as if they were identical, and so the French nation must use only one language to the exclusion of all others. Moreover, languages other than French were perceived as being in some way inferior since only through the French language could the revolutionary doctrines be properly appreciated. In fact, far from being inspired from any real commitment to equality, the language policy initially put into place by revolutionary France, and subsequently copied by others in search of the perfect nation-state, had more to do with the Jacobins' perception that the non-French cultures of France were inherently hostile to the Revolution. As it went, in the

areas where the Revolution was accepted enthusiastically, French came to be spoken within a short space of time. The parts of France that rejected the revolutionary philosophy tended to be those where regional languages were more carefully guarded, thus furthering the perception that conservatism was for *all* the old ways. In other words, if people rejected the revolutionary message, they effectively rejected the French language as well (Wright 2000).

The institution set in place by the Revolution that has had the most profound effect on France's minority languages was a universal and compulsory public school system. In 1794, a report was prepared by the Abbé Grégoire, who had conducted a nationwide survey on language practices, called for the government to “*annéantir les patois et universaliser l’usage de la langue française*” [annihilate the patois and universalise the use of the French language] and called speakers of languages other than French “counter-revolutionaries” (Jaffe 1999:79). A direct result of this was that by July of 1794, all public education was required to be in French. Jaffe explains how the schoolteachers who went out into the provinces at the turn of the nineteenth century “were thus the front line troops in the government’s campaign to create French people through language. The frenchification of the provinces was rapid [and] the aims of the schools were embraced by parents and children because of the incontestable value of learning French” (1999:80).

Nevertheless, although the Constitution of 1791 decreed compulsory primary instruction for all, the government struggled to put these principles into effect in the years following the revolution. As a result, throughout most of the nineteenth century regional languages in France continued to be spoken in areas where state education had not yet penetrated, or where parents were too poor to have their children



educated. France's monolingual policy aspirations were eventually realised, however, with the establishment of free, compulsory universal public schooling in the early 1880s, which required all children in the Republic to be educated in French between six and thirteen years of age.

This state-led 'ideology of contempt' (Grillo 1989) towards non-French languages has proven extremely resilient and has led to the inexorable decline of these varieties to a point where less than two percent of the population of France now speak these as first languages (May 2001). Laws concerning education have proven particularly enduring, and French continued to be the sole permissible language of instruction until 1951, when the *Loi Deixonne* permitted certain regional languages to be taught in French schools (although Corsican was initially omitted from the scope of this law – see below). The Act was limited though in that it did not involve the *active* promotion of these languages, instead merely permitting them to be taught in a limited way within schools. Moreover, the law itself was not actually implemented until 1969.

The last forty years have seen an increased consternation over the growing dominance of English on the world stage and a reaction to this new threat to the French language, which has effectively served to further strengthen French language policy (Judge 2000). Since the 1960s a number of governmental institutions have been created with the intention of defending the integrity of French. The *Bas-Lauriol* law of 1975 sought to make the use of French compulsory in various domains to protect the French language from misinformation arising from the use of a foreign language. This was more recently replaced with a new law, the *Loi Toubon* (1994), which covers the sale of goods and services, contracts involving the state,

publicity materials, contracts of employment and the media. This law has essentially made it illegal to publicly display non-French words that are not officially sanctioned by the *Académie*. Another aim of this law was to ‘cleanse’ foreign borrowings from the language through the pronouncements of the *Académie*, which has aimed to replace creeping anglicisms with more ‘home-grown’ terminology (Judge 2000). Additionally, in 1992 the French Constitution was amended to state that the language of the Republic was French. This decision to give *de jure* status to what had always been the case *de facto* should perhaps be seen as a symbolic act, taken in a precautionary mood in the light of greater European integration, but the message it sends is quite clear: France is still not prepared to concede legal ground to any language on its territory but French.

The *Loi Toubon* has widespread support from the elites. Particularly among the intelligentsia, defence of the language is seen as vital to the protection of French interests and cultural independence. There are currently more than 200 lobby and pressure groups set up to promote and defend the interests of French speakers, most of which publish a variety of documents to alert the French-speaking world to the spread of English and to lobby both the government and the public to take action (Wright 2004). Three associations, *Défense de la langue française* (DLF), *Avenir de la langue française* (ALF) and *Association francophone d’amitié et de liaison* (AFAL), have the right to bring civil actions against those flouting the language laws.

There are nevertheless a few indications that the linguistic culture of France is undergoing a shift, perhaps due in some part to increasing claims for minority emancipation throughout the European Union. The socialist government elected in 1997 commissioned a report on France’s regional languages (the first time such a

thing had been done), which recommended that France acknowledge the existence of its minority languages and cultures as they posed “no threat to national identity” (cited in Louarn 1998:5). However, as May (2001:160) points out, the predominant ideology surrounding nation and language has at the same time “entrenched deep into the national psyche a view that promotion, and even simply the maintenance of minority languages (and cultures) are fundamentally at odds with the principles and objectives of the French state”. Many French still refuse to acknowledge the existence of other languages on their territory; the term ‘patois’ is still frequently and unashamedly used with all its pejorative connotations. Similar vestiges of this mindset are evident in the reluctance of France to make itself a party to international treaties dealing with minority language rights. France put off signing the Council of Europe’s European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages for many years, and although it finally did in 1999, one month later the French Constitutional Court declared that ratifying the Charter would go against France’s constitution.

Thus although we can conclude that the linguistic climate in France is not as unambiguous as it once was, the stubborn vestiges of France’s monoglot ideology still hold tremendous currency, and as of yet the state shows no signs of giving any significant concessions to France’s regional minorities. It remains true that in essence, the French use “two different yardsticks” in its language policies, one for the French language, including fighting for the rights of French minorities abroad, and one for regional and minority languages (Coulmas 1991:21). What we will look at now is how this powerful ideology has impacted the vitality of the Corsican language.

## 4.4. CORSICAN

### 4.4.1. Overview

Corsican is a Romance language of the Italo-Roman group, and, despite its closeness to several central Italian dialects, is the result of an independent linguistic evolution from Latin (Jaffe 1999). It is spoken by about 100,000-160,000 people<sup>14</sup> out of a total population of 290,000 (1999 census) on the French island of Corsica, which lies in the northern Tyrrhenian Sea, 10km north of the island of Sardinia and about 130km from the Italian coast. The island is extremely mountainous and until comparatively recently had been home to a population that was not only very isolated from outside linguistic and cultural influences, but also from one another. The fact of Corsica's isolation and its particular geography have shaped its language evolution in many ways, and has led to a kind of internal fragmentation and a plethora of dialects that has complicated the debates surrounding language revival efforts.

Corsican is also by all counts a language in steep decline. Unlike Galician, which has had a few periods of language activism, literary output and cultural flowering, Corsican has been an almost exclusively oral language suffering continued neglect at the hands of the French government for the better part of two centuries. Although there has been a language movement gaining momentum over the last three decades, it has done very little to actually promote the transmission and

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<sup>14</sup> It is problematic to give accurate figures on the number of speakers of Corsican because the French census does not account for languages other than French. According to the survey conducted in 1995 by the Interregional Policy Observatory (O.I.P.-*L'Observatoire Interregional du Politique*), 81% of the island's 260,000 inhabitants say they understand the language and 64% say they speak it. Euromosaic (Nelde et al. 1996) reported around the same time that Corsican is the first language of almost 10% of the total population of Corsica (i.e. about 25,000 people) and that almost half the island's population (around 125,000) has some command of Corsican. Nevertheless, these numbers have likely fallen in the interim.

use of the language, and has had limited success raising its prestige. The main problem is that there is a very limited speaker base in Corsica after so many years of language shift, and this in combination with the highly politicised nature of language issues in France has meant that language revival is seeming to be an ever more difficult uphill battle.

#### **4.4.2. History**

Latin came to be spoken in Corsica as a result of the Roman conquest in 259 B.C. Corsica fell under Italian, or more precisely Tuscan, rule for several hundred years until becoming a province of France in 1769, shortly before the French Revolution. Corsican had, during Italian rule, been in a diglossic relationship with Tuscan, and this diglossia was gradually replaced by a similar diglossia between Corsican and French, with Corsican always occupying the disadvantaged position (Blackwood 2004a). After compulsory schooling was extended to Corsica in the nineteenth century, the knowledge and use of French permeated the Corsican social fabric more widely, particularly in the rural areas which had hitherto been virtually isolated from external influences. Nevertheless, the myriad of Corsican dialects continued to characterise everyday social intercourse among the majority of people throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Jaffe 1999).

Language decline continued during the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mostly due to the wide-scale emigration of workers to the mainland, a pattern that has continued almost uninterrupted to this day. Although there were stirrings of an autonomy movement in the 1920s and 30s, including the founding of a few Corsican-language newspapers, Corsican language nationalism did not really materialise until

the late sixties and early seventies, spurred on by similar movements taking place in places like the Basque Country, Wales and Ireland (Jaffe 1999). One reason for this was undoubtedly the island's poor infrastructure, which left many villages isolated and unable to communicate until the early 1960s (Blackwood 2004a). During this period, Corsican activists set about the work of standardization and normalization with enormous vigour, producing a variety of Corsican grammars and pedagogical materials. The association *Lingua Corsa* was founded by young Corsican intellectuals, which sponsored language classes in cities around France with large Corsican populations, such as Paris, Marseilles, Nice and Lyon. In 1972 the association *Scola Corsa* was founded. Modeled explicitly on the private *Ikastolas* of the Basques, *Scola Corsa* organised language courses on the island and launched the public campaign for official recognition of Corsican as a regional language with rights to be taught in schools. Over five thousand signatures were gathered on a petition, and at the end of 1973, a motion proposing official inclusion of Corsican into the provisions of the Deixonne Act, which provided for one hour per week of voluntary instruction in 'regional languages,' was made by a Corsican member of the French National Assembly. This motion was successful, and in 1975, schools began to offer Corsican on the limited basis permitted by the law.

Another influential association formed in the 1970s was the *Association pour la défense de l'étude de la langue corse de l'est et du centre* (ADECEC). ADECEC members published Corsican lexicons that both collected vocabulary from traditional cultural domains and actively produced neologisms for new topics. Since the mid-seventies, the ADECEC has also sponsored yearly round tables on language, and runs a local radio station called Viva Voce that broadcasts in Corsican. Beginning in

1974, many cultural and political organizations campaigned for a university on the island, which was finally opened in Corti in 1982.

Unfortunately, the normalisation of Corsican has not been as straightforward in Corsica as it has been in other minority language areas where it has been applied, mainly because of the heavy stigmatization it carried until so recently. This stigmatization may be, as Blackwood (2004a) argues, due partly to the fact that Corsican has never occupied high-register ('H') positions in Corsican society, having experienced its diglossic position with Tuscan give way to an equally diglossic relationship with French. It was also, no doubt, a reflection of how French had always been promoted at the expense of Corsican language and identity:

Learning French, becoming French, was always at the expense of regional language and identity, which was made an object of shame and ridicule. Children who spoke Corsican were made to feel like "peasants"; worse, "donkeys", in a world that increasingly valued the professions ... made possible by French literacy (Jaffe 1991, cited in Blackwood 2004a:145).

As a result the first language activists did not focus on introducing the language into higher-prestige domains such as education and government, but instead worked to improve public perception of the language, and particularly tried to convince people to use the language in the home. Although intimate social contexts had become the only situations in which the language was used, it was rarely being transmitted intergenerationally. Language activists thus focused their first efforts on convincing people to accept Corsican as a language with equal linguistic value to French, and from there, launched campaigns to begin including Corsican in higher-prestige functions (Jaffe 1999). This strategy has met with limited success, however, as we will see in the following sections.

#### **4.4.3. Standardisation**

A particular thorn in the side of language activists has been the lack of an uncontested written standard for Corsican, which considerably weakens its position in relation to French. There are many reasons why opposition has been so great to a single set of norms. The most obvious reason is the difficulties presented by the distinct dialects of the language and the differences of opinion over which version should form the standard. In addition, the absence of any Academy or official body weakens the perceived legitimacy of a standard, as for most French people, this is the way they are used to being handed language norms. The absence of a literary tradition in Corsican also does not help, in that language activists cannot focus a standard orthography on a 'classic' text. The most compelling reason, and the one that is probably most unique to Corsica, is the phenomenon that Jaffe (1999) calls a 'resistance of separation'. She explains that one of the strategies Corsican-speakers have used to deal with the intense marginalisation of their language has been to glorify its role as the language of home and hearth. The boundaries that previously existed to keep Corsican out of prestigious functions are now seen to be essential tools for preserving an authentic, autonomous identity, and as a result, they tend to oppose language planning measures which would give it the same status and functions as French. Corsican-speakers, she claims, are often afraid of being alienated from a language that has become synonymous with intimacy; they don't want to see it polluted or de-authenticated by imposing standardizing measures. This resistance is, in a sense, legitimising the diglossic situation that has existed for so many years already, the only difference being that it is being kept in place by those who value Corsican. Although paradoxically this resistance may have benefited the



Corsican language in the past, providing an alternative interpretation of the rigid diglossia imposed upon it, at the moment it seems to be undermining language revitalisation efforts, as people are reluctant to see the benefits of a standardised Corsican language.

#### **4.4.4. Legislation**

Although the earliest texts calling for regional education in the history of Corsica or in the Corsican language date back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was no serious debate around this issue until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1951 the Deixonne Law was passed, giving certain limited educational rights to minority groups around France, but Corsican was conspicuously left out of the scope of the law. The reason for this omission was that the French considered Corsican to be a dialect of Italian and not a language in its own right (cf. discussion of language and dialect in section 2.3.3); in addition it had been unified and codified to a much lesser extent than many of France's other regional languages. It took 23 years of promotion and struggle to drag Corsican under the shelter of the law (Nelde et al. 1996).

In 1982 the French administration allowed Corsicans to form an independent political body to represent the whole of the island. The election of the first Regional Assembly provided a new political venue for the pursuit of official recognition that had begun with the campaign for inclusion under the Deixonne Act (Jaffe 1999). Although the Assembly did not supplant the existing departmental structure (Corsica having been divided for administrative purposes into two French *départments*), it did have a role to play in championing Corsican language rights to the French government. In the 1990s it was successful in negotiating a series of planning

contracts with the state to develop programs for teacher training and an increased presence for Corsican in school curricula and local media, and was successful in obtaining a limited amount of state funding to implement these plans.

The ‘resistance of separation’ that Jaffe (1999) mentions, however, has also affected the success of several of the Assembly’s initiatives. In the 1980s and 90s a series of propositions designed to increase Corsican’s status and visibility were rejected by the Assembly because of the strength of popular opposition. The first motion was to introduce a higher degree of ‘co-officiality’ between Corsican and French in the Assembly’s diplomatic dealings. This was rejected because of the fears that artificially pushing the language into public spheres would de-authenticate it for a majority of its users. The second was a motion to introduce ‘obligatory bilingualism’ in Corsican schools (i.e. mandatory Corsican teaching), which was rejected on the grounds that making the language compulsory would turn public opinion against it. Children would resent being forced to learn it instead of “taking pride and pleasure in the language of their ancestors”, it was argued, and the only way for Corsican to regain its vitality would be to let it “regain its position through natural means”, not coercion (Regional Assembly text quoted in Jaffe 1999:184). Although Corsican teaching was eventually included as a standard part of the secondary-school curriculum, the strength of public resistance effectively prevented it from being made obligatory (see below).

#### **4.4.5. Education**

The Corsican language is not strongly represented at any level of education, particularly in comparison with Galician and Sorbian, both of which are offered as a

medium of instruction. Nevertheless, developments in the past few years have increased its presence significantly in Corsican classrooms. In nursery education, only a handful of nursery schools have included optional Corsican lessons in their programme. The same situation generally prevails in primary schools, although the schools have access to teaching manuals in Corsican for language, history and geography lessons. At this level, although around 80% of pupils have some exposure to Corsican, only around 20% receive three hours of real teaching per week, and only 5% receive more than three hours per week (Fusina 2000).

The situation is somewhat more positive in secondary education. After many years of a declining presence for the language in secondary education, the situation began to improve in 1999 with a piece of legislation known as the Corsica Act, which decreed that all students in sixth form (approximately age 11) should be given three hours a week of Corsican instruction, unless they specifically chose to opt-out. As Blackwood (2007) notes, this change in policy was not without tremendous controversy, but appeals made by the Act's opponents to the French Constitutional Council failed as the latter declared that the optional nature of this teaching did not contravene the principle of equality for all pupils. The quasi-optional teaching is offered for two years to all pupils, after which they may continue for a further two years if they choose. This has led to a remarkable increase in the number of students being exposed to Corsican in the classroom: for the academic year 1996-97, 6165 children of secondary school age received some Corsican language teaching; by the turn of the millennium this had risen to 8330 and to 8717 (or 44% of all children in secondary education) for the school year 2004-05 (Blackwood 2007).

At the University level Corsican is present in the context of an optional course that students in every faculty have the option of attending for one hour per week. There is also a Center for Corsican Studies (*Centre d'Etudes Corses*) at the University of Corti which provides some opportunities for the use of Corsican, such as provision to take examinations and write doctoral theses in the language. Overall, though, apart from those specifically studying Corsican topics, there is very little use of the language at the tertiary level (Fusina 2000).

#### **4.4.6. Public Services**

Since the French Government has never pursued a policy of promoting Corsican in society, and also due to resistance to the idea of 'co-officialising' the two languages in local government, there is little presence of Corsican in the public sphere. For example, the regional authorities make no provision for the inclusion of Corsican in their official documents, for its use in the sessions and debates of the Regional Assembly, or in their own relations with the public. As for the services provided by the various administrative departments, Corsican is not used at all in any of their fields of competence. Documents issued by various public services, for example, are drawn up in French only. With regard to the promotion of Corsican in the regional public services, the regional authorities do take account of candidates' command of Corsican when staff are recruited and when training courses are organised for new employees, but in reality public servants rarely are called upon to demonstrate a competence in Corsican on the job (Nelde et al. 1996).

#### **4.4.7. Media**

Corsican is present in a variety of media on the island, although up-to-date information is somewhat scarce. The all-Corsican newspaper *Scontru* has a circulation of about 5000 copies, while *U Ribombu* (circulation 20,000) is written partly in Corsican. The largest regional newspaper, *Corse Matin*, makes use of Corsican occasionally. There are, in addition, weekly or monthly magazines written entirely in Corsican, including the weekly magazines *Arritti* (20,000 copies) *Paese* and *A fiara*. The monthly news magazine *Corsica* also has one or two articles in Corsican. One cultural and literary magazine in Corsican, *A Pian' d'Avredu*, is published at irregular intervals. *Radio Corsica Frequenza Mora*, which is a regional station of Radio France, broadcasts for about 30 hours per week in Corsican, although the use of Corsican is limited to discussion and record programmes. The use of the language on television is limited to the programmes of France 3 Corse, which transmits around 3 hours per week in Corsican (Nelde et al. 1996; Alexandra Jaffe, personal communication).

#### **4.4.8. Summary and Prospects**

Although no official statistics exist on minority language speakers in France, comparatively recent studies indicate that currently about ten percent of the population of Corsica considers Corsican to be their first language, and about half the population claim to have some knowledge of it (Nelde et al. 1996). Like Galician, however, the numbers alone can be deceiving. Both systematic surveys (e.g. Nelde et al. 1996) and observations of language behaviour (e.g. Jaffe 1991, 1999; Blackwood 2004b) indicate that in reality, Corsican is only used as a habitual means of communication by a small percentage of the elderly population and that

intergenerational transmission is almost nonexistent. As Blackwood (2004b:330) observes, “based on [...] evidence gathered during the total of my time spent on the island, Corsican is not being passed to children within their home environment, with the exception of formulaic greetings, swear words and popular slogans.” Although attitudes among young people are often favourable to the idea of Corsican, the reality is that there is no economic or social advantage attached to speaking it, and very few actually consider it worth the effort.

Overall, the success of language planning efforts on Corsica has been mixed. On the one hand, normalisation strategies have created dramatic shifts in sociolinguistic judgments about Corsican’s status as a language. Few Corsicans, for example, will still say that Corsican is a ‘patois’. Some of the normalization strategies have also had a noticeable effect, particularly literary corpus building and language teaching in schools, and this has worked to convince many Corsicans of the ‘linguistic legitimacy’ of the language. On the other hand, the effect of these changing attitudes on language practice has been neither immediate nor dramatic. Compared to Galicia, language planning to date in Corsica has by and large failed to mobilise Corsicans on a large scale to take aggressive action to protect the minority language. Most Corsicans continue to speak French to each other and to their children; even those who champion the survival of the language often do not use it frequently themselves. With regard to teaching, while people have been generally accommodating of its introduction into the school system, few have played an aggressive role in demanding quality or quantity education; most seem happy that it plays a reduced symbolic role. And in terms of legal mandates, there has been fairly

active resistance to the idea that Corsican should benefit from an increased public profile.

Assuming the will exists to change language use patterns, Corsican language planners by all counts have a difficult job ahead. Not only are minority language issues still highly politicised in France, but the vestiges of Corsican's long history of subordination have made institutional gains difficult to sell to Corsica's own population. It may be too early to judge the accuracy of Euromosaic's claim that Corsican is "poised to disappear as a customary means of communication in urban society", but it will take a considerable change in strategy to begin to reverse the rapidly accelerating downward trend.

## **4.5. GERMANY AND LANGAUGE**

### **4.5.1. Introduction**

Like France, Germany has experienced the cultivation of a strong link between language and identity over the course of its history, but unlike France, that link was premised in a fundamentally different way that did not require the linguistic assimilation of every group on its territory. Significantly, this belief extended itself to provide a climate quite hospitable to minority language groups across German soil for much of the past two hundred years. Additionally, although the period of Nazi rule was not itself beneficial to linguistic minorities, it may have inadvertently helped the situation of minority language communities in the long term, as policies and attitudes that followed this have tended to fall on the opposite end of the tolerance spectrum.

On the continuum of minority language accommodation today, Germany would probably fall somewhere in the middle between Spain and France. While not providing territorial concessions and/or political autonomy to their minorities, Germany's policies are considerably more benign those of their neighbour to the west, and Germany appears keen to demonstrate to the international community their willingness to support diversity in all its forms. As a result, although language decline has happened, overall it seems to have not been as pronounced or as rapid as, for example, on Corsica.

#### **4.5.2. History**

The origins of linguistic nationalism are usually traced back to German philosophers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in particular the 'Romantic Triumvirate' of Herder, Humboldt and Fichte. All three subscribed to the philosophy of a fundamental link between nation, language and blood, with the nation existing as an objective, pre-given and fixed social entity. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) argued that a group's identity was intimately connected to the language it spoke, and that a nation's very existence hinges on having a unique language through which to express itself (Edwards 1985). He advocated an 'organic' or 'linguistic' nationalism where culture, and particularly language, were central to the essence of a nation and formed its most distinguishing characteristic (May 2001), and in which language is "the criterion by means of which a group's identity as a homogenous unit can be established" (cited in Barnard 1969:58).

Herder's ideas later influenced both Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). Humboldt, like Herder, believed in a strong



interconnection between language and nation, and felt that nothing was more important for national culture and continuity than possession of the ancestral tongue. Fichte went one step further, translating Herder's ideas into a broader sociopolitical position. He argued that of all the 'Teutonic' peoples (roughly all Europeans), only the Germans remained in their original location and retained and developed the original language. He argued that languages like French, because of the influence of outside sources (e.g. Latin), were inferior to the 'pure' and 'original' German language, and what followed from that was that the German nation, being so intimately linked with language, was also superior to all others (Edwards 1985).

May (2001) explains that while Germany did cultivate the glorification of a strong link between identity and language, and like the French put the German language on a high ideological pedestal, the cultural and linguistic emphases of the Romantics were in fundamental opposition to those of the French. Whereas the French revolutionary ideology advocated the goals of equality, unity and integration, and knowledge of French as the only vehicle for achieving this, in Germany the recognition of a primordial link between 'language, blood and soil' did not predicate the germanising of non-German peoples – particularly since they were destined to belong to inferior nations anyway.

Due to events such as the Reformation and the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), the German speaking areas were extremely fragmented linguistically, although a standard written language had emerged by the end of the seventeenth century. The rise of Prussia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, saw a rise in the importance of the German language and a concomitant restriction of the rights of Germany's minorities. Hoping to expand their sphere of influence into Eastern

Europe, Prussia's ruling classes embraced racist pseudo-theories about the 'civilization' of German speakers versus the 'barbarity' of others, particularly dialects spoken on German soil. Open discrimination toward non-Germans did increase with the *Reichsgründung*, the unification of Germany under Bismarck in 1871. Firmly committed to the idea of a strong and ethnically homogenous nation state, the Prussian government issued policies that sought to weaken and germanise their various ethnic minorities. At this time place names were forcibly germanised, cultural and political activities that were seen as hostile to German aims were curtailed, and an attempt was made, mainly through control of the Church and compulsory military service, to linguistically homogenise the population.

Things changed considerably after World War I, however. The constitution of the Weimar Republic stated that linguistic minorities were not to be impeded in their cultural development, especially with regard to the use of their languages in education, internal administration and legal procedures. Although such a declaration did not amount to any enforceable rights, let alone active support, it was the first sign of an administration sympathetic to the claims of non-German groups in their midst.

The Nazi period represented as dark a period for German linguistic minorities as it did for many other socially and politically marginalised groups. The Nazis perverted the ideals of blood and nation of the nineteenth century Romantics to the extreme, and capitalised on a growing undercurrent of linguistic nationalism of the interwar period at the expense of national minorities. After an initial period of tolerance, they began to deal with minority ethnic and linguistic communities exactly as they did with other undesirable groups, confiscating property, closing down institutions, banning publications and imprisoning or executing outspoken critics of

their practices. They had as part of their larger plan for the purification of German territory the intention to resettle minority groups outside of Germany, but the course of history intervened favourably for these groups and the plan was never actually implemented before the end of the war (Stone 1972).

The war and the stigma attached to the policies of the Nazi regime may have ended up benefiting minority groups in German territory in the long run, however. As Barbour (2001) explains, as a result of the Holocaust fundamentally new attitudes to national identity emerged in both post-war German states. In the Federal Republic a strong internationalism and an identification with West Germany as a political and economic power began to emerge as the dominant force, as people recoiled from the Nazi-esque view of identity being linked to blood and language (Erling 2004). In the GDR the notion of language was also downplayed as the regime attempted to create loyalty based upon an exclusively socialist identification with the state – the *sozialistisches Vaterland*. The GDR, in particular, adopted a number of policies to safeguard the rights of the one sizeable minority in its midst, the Sorbs, who were given an infrastructure to establish Sorbian-language education and a presence in the political system (see next section).

Wright (2000) believes that another characteristic of the modern-day German state that has helped to foster a tolerant climate toward minorities is the fact of Germany's own linguistic fragmentation. Both East and West Germany are home to a plethora of dialectal variants, yet unlike either Spain or France, neither region has ever felt pressure to launch a dedicated campaign to homogenise the various dialects in the pursuit of a single prestige variety. As it is, there are of course varieties which have achieved national prestige through the media (e.g. the variety from around

Hanover in North-Central Germany is widely considered to represent ‘accent-free’ speech), and varieties suffer lower prestige outside their regions (e.g. Saxonian dialects are often used to represent ‘typical East German’ speech in the West, along with an implication of backwardness), but regional varieties continue to be widely and unashamedly spoken on their home territory. This lack of pressure to move toward linguistic unity has most likely contributed to rather more relaxed attitudes towards speakers of non-German varieties as well.

Since reunification in 1991, policies have not significantly changed for any of Germany’s minorities, and the German government continues to pursue a policy of benign neglect towards its various minority groups. It leaves all relevant legislation for minority language matters in the hands of the respective federal states, the *Bundesländer*. The central government has, however, indicated a commitment to safeguarding the rights of its minorities by signing and ratifying the Council of Europe’s *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) and the *Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities* (1995).

## **4.6. SORBIAN**

### **4.6.1. Overview**

The Sorbian language, a member of the Western Slavonic group, is reportedly spoken by some degree of fluency by less than 60,000 people<sup>15</sup> in areas of the present day German states of Saxony and Brandenburg. This area, a part of the former German Democratic Republic, was traditionally called Lusatia (*Lausitz* in German), and can be further divided along linguistic lines into Upper Lusatia and

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<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately this is a rather outdated estimate based on information collected in 1981, the last time a census was conducted in Eastern Germany.

Lower Lusatia. The Sorbs, or Wends as they are also known (particularly in Lower Lusatia<sup>16</sup>), have occupied this region since the fifth or sixth century, when they migrated westward to settle between the Elbe and Oder rivers (Barker 2000). Both linguistically and otherwise the Sorbs are closely related to their closest neighbours, the Czechs and Poles, but there is little debate that the Sorbs form a separate cultural and linguistic entity, due to differences in history, folklore, cultural traditions, language and sense of nationality (Stone 1972).

The language is divided into two standard varieties, Upper Sorbian and Lower Sorbian, with an overlapping dialect boundary in which features from both varieties are found. The two forms of the language are for the most part mutually intelligible, but there is still considerable debate as to whether they are the result of independent evolutions from Proto-Slavonic which have evolved similarly side by side, or whether their genetic relationship can be traced to a more recent ancestor (Stone 1972).

Demographically, Upper and Lower Sorbian find themselves in very different situations. Although neither variety could be classified as particularly vital, there is a much larger speaker base (accounting for approximately four-fifths of the total number of Sorbian speakers) and accordingly stronger infrastructure of language support in Upper Lusatia. Lower Sorbian, by contrast, has a much more diffused speaker base and correspondingly weaker presence in the school system and administration. Many debates that centre on Sorbian language issues, thus, tend to be more relevant to Upper Sorbian, as this is where the majority of language planning is taking place.

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<sup>16</sup> The choice of nomenclature is actually more complex than implied here; while many Upper Sorbs regard the term 'Wend' to be merely an antiquated synonym for 'Sorb', there are still groups in Lower Lusatia who disassociate themselves from the term 'Sorb' and use 'Wend' exclusively.

#### **4.6.2. History**

After resisting the eastward expansion and continued subjugation attempts of German-speaking invaders for several centuries, the Sorbian people were conquered and brought under Germanic control around AD 1000. They were forcibly Christianised and incorporated into the German Church almost immediately. They subsequently suffered for several centuries as a pawn in the territorial power struggles between Germanic and Slavic interests, until the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) ended the dispute by allocating both Upper and Lower Lusatia to Saxony. The King of Bohemia was allowed to retain supreme rights over the Catholic Church in the Lusatias, however, which was to prove significant due to the fact that the majority of Catholics in Lusatia at that time were Sorbs (although the majority of all Sorbs were Protestant). The Congress of Vienna in 1815 obliged Saxony to cede all of Lower and the greater part of Upper Lusatia to Prussia, an event which effectively split the Sorbian population and was to have a decisive impact on the evolution of the Sorbian nation, particularly as Prussian policy toward Sorbian language and culture was far more repressive than that of Saxony (Barker 2000). A small part of Upper Lusatia remained Saxon, and thus, still under the suzerainty of the Czech crown, which struggled to foster links between the Catholic Sorbian population and Prague. The division of the Sorbian population between Saxony and Prussia, according to Gerald Stone (1972), was one of the main causes of the Sorbs' failure to develop the same degree of national consciousness as other Slavonic peoples, and it was among the Saxon Sorbs that the idea of nationality flourished strongest.

During this period the demographic strength of the two Sorbian dialects was weakened considerably, through forced assimilation of the part of the regimes, discrimination, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the influx of large numbers of non-Sorbian speaking migrants who took jobs in the rapidly-expanding brown coal and iron industries in the region. Although in this century there was a growth of a middle class and a small Sorbian intelligentsia promoted the ideas of a Sorbian nationalism, the vast majority of Sorbs remained rural and poor. Barker (2000) notes that serfdom continued longer in Lusatia than in most other parts of Germany, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, after which many landless Sorbs began emigrating to places like America and Australia, further weakening the demographic base of the language.

Following the unification of Germany in 1871, the Prussian and Saxon authorities began working together to harmonise their policies relating to minority groups, with both sides favouring a more oppressive, assimilatory approach. By the beginning of the twentieth century the gap between Prussian and Saxon policies had narrowed considerably, although the Saxon administration was still occasionally censured for their more lenient attitude. After the First World War things improved somewhat with the Constitution of the Weimar Republic securing certain rights to minority groups, but in reality, for the Sorbs at least, the gains were almost nonexistent (Barker 2000). Official policy, such as the necessity of using German in official and educational contexts, as well as social and economic pressures, were forcing all Sorbs to have a working knowledge of German and adapt to German cultural pressures. National consciousness was growing during this period, however, and one essential achievement of this period was the founding of the Sorbian

national umbrella organization *Domowina* (Homeland) in 1912, which worked against germanising influences and sought to support Sorbian language and culture in many arenas.

During the Nazi period many Sorbian institutions such as *Domowina* were closed down and all public use of the language was banned. The Nazis also began weakening the demographic concentration of the Sorbs by bringing in prisoners of war from their conquered territories to settle in Lusatia. The goal of the Nazis was in fact to replace the Sorbian identity of the region with a German one – not to eliminate all members of the ethnic group – so the damage to the Sorbian population during this period was not as great as it might have been (Stone 1972). In addition, a fear that actions taken against the Sorbs would provoke counter-measures against the ethnic Germans in Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia) also resulted in restraint on the part of the Nazis (Barker 2000). Nevertheless, a prohibition on any practice or display of Sorbian language or culture during this period had a markedly negative effect on demographic trends.

After the Second World War (during the existence of the German Democratic Republic) many rights were, at least in theory, secured for the Sorbs. A wide network of national institutions (including *Domowina*), schools and media were either founded or re-established. In particular, a large cultural and literary output was a result of a growing nationalism in the second half of the twentieth century – the publishing house *Domowina Verlag*, for example published over 3400 separate titles of books and periodicals between 1958 and 1998, the Circle of Sorbian Film Makers was set up in 1971, and in 1963 the German-Sorbian People's Theatre became the first and only bilingual professional theatre in the nation (Schiemann



2000). A problem, however, was that Sorbian organizations were incorporated into the communist party system in the GDR, which forced them to conform to certain ideological and structural constraints; the maintenance of minority language and culture was thus always seen to take a backseat to the promotion of communist ideology. For instance, “whenever functionaries from the Domowina seemed to be putting Sorbian national interests above the political requirements... they were accused of chauvinistic, reactionary behaviour” (Barker 2000:61), and surveillance was often conducted on Sorbian leaders and institutions to make sure ‘anti-state’ activities were not taking place. In addition, a policy meant to encourage the industrialization of the region and a reliance on brown coal mining brought many new German-speaking immigrants into the region, with the result that assimilation trends continued and the number of the users of the language went on decreasing rapidly under the GDR at the rate of about 1000 a year (Satava 2003). The severity of this decline has intensified due to the extremely low birth rate in the eastern part of Germany after 1990.

#### **4.6.3. Standardisation**

Standardisation seems to have presented less of a problem in Sorbian communities both in Upper and Lower Lusatia than it has in the Galician and Corsican communities. This may be because of the relative age of the two standards, or the fact that the standards have strong ties to the Church. The first translations into Upper and Lower Sorbian were religious texts and occurred in the sixteenth century; although there was some secular poetry written in Sorbian in the seventeenth century, it was not until the eighteenth century that a wider range of secular texts

started to emerge (Barker 2000). Later, Upper Sorbian was standardised based on the form used for the Sorbian Bible, published for the first time in 1728, which itself was based on the regional dialect of Bautzen, in Saxony. Although for a time in the eighteenth century there existed two orthographic norms for Upper Sorbian - the Protestant version being based on German spelling and the Catholic based on an adaptation of the Czech system – these were eventually consolidated into one, which represented a compromise favouring the more Slavicised Catholic system. Lower Sorbian, while being spoken by a predominantly Protestant community, nonetheless took the lead from Upper Sorbian and also developed a Slavic-influenced orthography (Stone 1972).

#### **4.6.4. Legislation**

Under the GDR many basic rights were attained for the Sorbs soon after this government came to power. In March 1948 the Parliament of Saxony passed the Law for the Protection of the Sorbian Population's Rights, which was followed in 1950 by a similar law passed in Brandenburg. These laws guaranteed the Sorbs the use of their language in education, provided for the use of the language at the local administrative level, and found visible expression in things like bilingual place names and road signs.

When East and West Germany were reunited, the rights of the Sorbs were re-enshrined in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Unification Treaty of 1990 and the constitutions of the German states of Saxony and Brandenburg. Since each German state has autonomy in matters of education and culture, the policies for the Sorbian minority in each state is slightly different. Both

states have enshrined in their constitutions, however, the right of the Sorbs to protection, preservation and promotion of their linguistic and national identity. In Brandenburg, the 'Law for Securing the Rights of the Sorbs' was passed in 1994, and promises the Sorbs their right to national identity and the employment of representatives for Sorbian affairs in their communities. In Saxony a similar law was passed in 1999 which also includes the right to use Sorbian in courts of law and in government offices. Both state constitutions and the Basic Laws guarantee bilingualism in the Sorbian-speaking area. This means as well that Sorbian enjoys full legal status as an administrative language and is recognised as a subject in schools.

#### **4.6.5. Education**

Sorbian is an optional medium of instruction or a subject in a network of schools across Brandenburg and Saxony, conforming to the system set up by the government of the German Democratic Republic. In Brandenburg, Sorbian is taught as a foreign language, with up to a maximum of three hours per week of instruction available in select primary and secondary schools (Hemminga 2001). At present about 1000 primary students receive some instruction in Lower Sorbian at 23 schools; at secondary schools the number is around 500, and usually takes the place of the second foreign language (Council of Europe 2004).

In Saxony, Sorbian is taught as the native language, as a secondary language and as a foreign language. The secondary schools follow two models: in Sorbian schools (formerly called A schools under the GDR), the following subjects are usually taught through the medium of Sorbian: mathematics, local history, English,

history, biology, geography, music and sport. At these schools the study of the Sorbian language is compulsory. There are (as of 2003) 6 Sorbian schools in Saxony, of which only two have all A-type classes and four have A and B model classes (Satava 2003). In B schools, all instruction is given in German except for the subject of the Sorbian language. The goal in these schools is to give students a basic familiarity with Sorbian grammar and a vocabulary of about 2000 words (Hemminga 2001). Overall, 33 schools in Saxony offer some kind of Sorbian instruction to around 2500 pupils, of whom about 850 speak Sorbian as their mother tongue (Council of Europe 2004)

At the tertiary level, the language can be studied as part of a degree course in Sorbian Studies at the Universities of Leipzig and Potsdam, and as well in Slavic language departments at the Universities of Saarbrücken, Hamburg and Regensburg (Hemminga 2001). At the preschool level, the most significant development has been (since 1998) the WITAJ (Welcome) project drawing mainly on the experience of the *Diwan* schools in Brittany. A network of immersion nursery schools and, since 2000, first classes in some primary schools have been created in places where Sorbian is now spoken by the older generation only. Unfortunately, the immersion education still involves only limited numbers – there were only 6 WITAJ nursery schools and 14 WITAJ play groups with the total of 436 children as of 2003 (Satava 2003).

#### **4.6.6. Public Services**

The use of Sorbian in the courts of justice in the bilingual area is sanctioned by the Federal Unification Treaty and by the constitutions of Saxony and Brandenburg.

Despite the Sorbian language being firmly encapsulated in the law at national and state level, in practice the language is hardly ever used in court, since all Sorbs are bilingual and generally use German in official places and in dealings with the authorities. In Brandenburg there has never been a case where a member of the Sorbian community has invoked the right to use Sorbian; in Saxony there have been only a few (Council of Europe 2004). Sorbian is used at the *Land*-administrative level in dealings with individuals and institutions that are responsible for Sorbian affairs. While at the federal level there is virtually no use of Sorbian, competence in Sorbian is taken into account by authorities at the state level when recruiting public servants, although it is a requirement only when the post will require direct contact with Sorbian individuals or institutions (Council of Europe 2004).

#### **4.6.7. Media**

There is one daily newspaper published entirely in Upper Sorbian, the *Serbske Nowiny*, while the weekly *Nowy Casnik* is published half in German and half in Lower Sorbian. The two newspapers have a combined readership of around 3200. Several quarterly and monthly journals in Sorbian are published with the help of government subsidies, among them the journals *Rozhlad* (monthly periodical on culture, language and art, with articles in both Upper and Lower Sorbian; 610 copies), *Serbska Sula* (bimonthly education journal in Upper and Lower Sorbian; 210 copies), *Plomjo* (children's magazine in Upper Sorbian; 1800 copies), *Plomje* (children's magazine in Lower Sorbian; 850 copies), *Pomhaj Bóh* (monthly published by the Protestant Sorbs of Upper Lusatia; 800 copies) and *Katolski Posol* (weekly

magazine published by the Catholic Sorbs of Upper Lusatia; 2360 copies) (Council of Europe 2004) .

Radio broadcasting in Sorbian has been in existence for over 50 years. Since 1992 the MDR Radio station has broadcast in Upper Sorbian for 21.5 hours per week, and includes in their program regional news, cultural reports, children's programmes and sports summaries. Radio Brandenburg (ORB) broadcasts in Lower Sorbian for 6.5 hours per week. Every Sunday evening there is a short television program for children in Upper Sorbian, and once a month a thirty-minute evening version of the programme *Sachsen Spiegel* is broadcast. In Brandenburg a thirty-minute magazine program is also broadcast once per month in Lower Sorbian with German subtitling, and covers topics including language, culture, tradition, and everyday life in the Sorbian community (Schiemann 2000; Council of Europe 2004).

#### **4.6.8. Summary and Prospects**

The best estimates for the number of people competent in the Sorbian language today is 40-60,000, of whom only 15-20,000 are active users of the language (Satava 2003). Both language competence and Sorbian identity are strongest in the Catholic areas of Upper Lusatia, with the majority of speakers and institutions centred there. The use of Sorbian in Lower Lusatia is much more fragmented and there exists no region in which a significant number of people still use the language daily.

Nelde et al. (1996) called the legal position of the Sorbian language in 1996 "thoroughly satisfactory". Notwithstanding the intensive legal support, however, the future of both varieties of Sorbian are highly uncertain. Satava (2003) calls attention to the decreasing number of students enrolling in Sorbian schools and the

severe lack of teachers, and says that although there is a tremendous amount of hope attached to the WITAJ project, it has so far not managed to attract as many children as it had hoped. In addition, two bilingual primary schools, one in Brandenburg and one in Saxony, have been forced to close recently due to lack of enrolment. The one real measure of hope for Sorbian, and what makes it stand apart from Corsican, for example, is that there does still exist a nucleus of active speakers of the language in the rural Catholic area of Upper Lusatia. Nevertheless, the extent to which Eastern Germany's chronic unemployment and low birth rate are affecting this last stronghold of the Sorbian language has yet to be investigated fully; most indications are that there is little cause for optimism.

#### **4.7. THE DEAD-END CASE STUDY: VLACH**

My original aim was in fact to compare four minority language communities, and apart from Galician, Corsican and Sorbian I had selected the Vlach community in Greece to profile. Vlach (also called Aroumanian) is a Romance language closely related to Romanian which is reportedly spoken with some competence by around 50,000 people in northern Greece (although this is an extremely rough estimate as the last official count was the census of 1951) (Clogg 1993).

I was particularly eager to include Vlach in the study because it represented a language at another point on the state-accommodation continuum, namely at the hands of an even more repressive administration than France. This fact came to my attention because of a story to hit the minority-language media shortly after I began my research. I learned that a Vlach language activist named Sotiris Bletsas had been arrested in 1995 for distributing informational leaflets on minority languages

published by EBLUL which mentioned, on their language map of Europe, the existence of the Vlach community. The charge behind his arrest was ‘distributing false information’, a charge that gained its legitimacy through the fact that Greece did not, at that time, officially recognise any ethnic or linguistic minority within their borders. Although this had officially been the case for nearly five decades, the administration was especially sensitive to questions of regional ethnic identity at this time, as they had recently witnessed the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s and the bloody form that nationalism took in these regions just north of the Greek border. While certainly not justifying it, this may explain the severe reaction to a seemingly innocuous activity.

Mr. Bletsas appeared before a local court which found him guilty, and he was sentenced to serve fifteen months in prison. With the help of EBLUL, however, he appealed the conviction, and in December 2001 a high court in Athens overturned the decision, exonerating him and simultaneously acknowledging, for the first time, the existence of minorities on Greek territory. Nevertheless, since up to this point Greece’s attitude toward its minorities had been characterised not just by neglect and ignorance but by an outright denial of existence, I was extremely curious to see how the strength of language vitality would compare to my other three communities.

Unfortunately the hurdles to researching Vlach were too great. Not only was there an extreme paucity of existing research upon which to base my own, but the logistics of administering the survey to the Vlach community were formidable. Although the translation of the survey was not difficult, as I had ample access to native speakers of Greek, developing a web-based version of the survey in the Greek alphabet that worked reliably across different browsers proved beyond my



capabilities, even after soliciting help from a couple of Greek linguists. Also, I had great difficulty locating people via the internet to whom I could target my advertisement of the survey; in all I was able to collect less than two dozen email addresses of people who appeared to be connected to the Vlach language in some way, and most of these were researchers abroad. My own lack of Greek language abilities also hampered this search, as I could only make sense of literature and information in English or other European languages.

I thus decided in late 2003, after successfully completing my other surveys but making no headway on the problems associated with Vlach, to abandon the effort and focus on the other three case studies. I still believe research is desperately needed on the Vlach language, but I will have to leave it to someone with a command of Greek, contacts in the community, and perhaps better HTML skills to carry it out.

#### **4.8. CONCLUSION AND PREDICTIONS**

In this chapter we have traced the paths to national identity of the Galicians, Corsicans and Sorbs, and seen how the language climate in their host countries has affected the status and circumstances of their languages. As we can appreciate, the Corsicans, Galicians and Sorbs present a very interesting basis for comparison of both language vitality and policy. These three groups share many similarities; for example, they are all autochthonous groups of long-standing in their respective countries, they occupy geographically and economically peripheral locations in the EU (or, in the case of Sorbian, did at the time of research), and they have experienced a similar growth of language awareness and revitalisation programmes

over the last few decades. They have also all to a certain extent fallen under the research radar, that is, they are not among the most widely studied of Europe's minority languages, and thus represent valuable additions to a complete picture of European language vitality.

The differences between them are equally significant, however, and it was in fact the divergences in political and historical climates that ultimately led me to select these three languages for this study. As mentioned previously, the countries these three language communities inhabit fall in three distinct places along the spectrum of state support for minority languages: Spain falls at the power-sharing, accommodationist end; France falls at the centralist, repressive end, while Germany falls somewhere in the middle, providing some financial and legal support but not offering any political autonomy or administrative authority to its minorities. I felt that these three different climates offered an ideal platform for comparing both language attitudes and behaviour, and for assessing the impact of European policy on each community.

Of course there are other differences as well which cannot be ignored when attempting to compare language vitality across these three groups. They do vary tremendously in size, with Galician being spoken by fifteen times as many people as Corsican, which in turn is spoken by twice as many people as Sorbian. They have all spent different amounts of time as members of the European Community/Union; the Corsicans having joined in 1957, the Galicians in 1986, and the Sorbs only after the fall of the Eastern bloc and incorporation of East and West Germany in 1991. There are less obvious differences as well, such as the strength of nationalist sentiment, and the link it has with language competence and behaviour in the popular

consciousness, all of which contribute to the necessity for a more nuanced analysis of their current situations.

Given what we know about these communities, their states and the European Union, and given my review of the kinds of factors that have been identified as crucial to an analysis of vitality, specifically the variables related to status, prestige and institutional support (cf. section 2.2.1 and the vitality model proposed by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor 1977), there were certain predictions that I could make concerning what was likely to be elicited by my own research. As I believed that the political/ideological climate in which the minority language communities have existed has had a greater impact on speech patterns than other factors such as size or insularity, I predicted that in all three areas the rankings as provided by the survey respondents would correspond to the points along the spectrum of accommodation that their host states occupy. In other words, I predicted that Galician would show the strongest profile in all three of these areas of vitality, followed by Sorbian, with Corsican noticeably lower than the other two. I also believed the respondents' perceptions of their host state's attitudes would correspond to their placements on the spectrum, and thus would predict a more positive assessment by Galicians and a less positive one for Corsicans. As for the more tangible effects of integration and globalisation, as we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, English is posing an ever-increasing threat to minority languages, and I expected to see strong evidence of that in the respondents' evaluations of the role of English in education and employment, and the indication that it is assuming a role of great importance in all three communities – perhaps even greater than the minority languages. Finally, in light of the considerable rhetoric of European support but little concrete action, I predicted

that opinions as to both the EU's attitude and the effectiveness of their support would be judged as positive, but with room for improvement, by all three communities.

There is, of course, also an instrumental side to this research, and in surveying these three language communities I hoped to gain an understanding of what the most crucial measures are to combat language loss. Particularly, as so little data is available on the success of different language revitalisation efforts, I was interested in the perspectives of the speakers themselves, all of whom have experienced firsthand a wide variety of revitalisation measures implemented over the last few decades. Considering the different sociolinguistic climates in each community and the different levels of support they currently get, I predicted that their responses to this question would vary considerably, with each community identifying a different set of measures as being the most valuable to their situation. I did think it was likely that communities would rate measures that have not yet been implemented in their communities particularly high, so for example I expected Corsicans to rate all kinds of institutional support quite highly as they have experienced very little. Whatever the ratings, however, I hoped these responses would give us a useful community-internal perspective as to where the appropriate points of intervention are for these and other language communities in the same situations.

The next two chapters detail the methodology and results of the language survey. We will see both qualitative and quantitative responses to a number of questions designed to gauge language behaviour, attitudes and perceptions. We will see that none of the language communities fits the predictions exactly, that the measurement of certain 'classic' variables, chief among them language proficiency,

does not provide a completely accurate indicator of language vitality, and that on certain questions there are very different stories told by the qualitative and quantitative responses. We will, however, see that for all three communities many of the fundamental challenges are the same, including the ever-increasing power of English, and that the language communities are remarkably unified when it comes to identifying the most crucial domains in which they believe revitalisation efforts need to be focused.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### 5.1. OVERVIEW

My reasons for choosing to conduct my research through the use of a survey rather than through any other sociolinguistic methods were twofold. I wanted to compile an overview of as many language-related variables as possible in each community, and I was more interested in the opinions and perceptions of the speakers themselves instead of that of outside researchers. A survey would also allow the questions to be standardised, so that I could collect data in the same format for all three groups for cross-comparison.

In drawing up the survey I had three guiding motivations:

- to compare subjective perceptions of language vitality (i.e. numbers of speakers, domains of use, amount of official support) with ‘official’ estimates;
- to gauge people’s opinions about the success of language support from various sources;
- to find out what speakers themselves think are the most important measures on which to focus revitalisation efforts.

I hoped from this to be able to formulate a comprehensive picture of language vitality in these three communities, and from there make generalizations about the effect of both national and European policy/support on language use.

## 5.2. STRUCTURE OF SURVEY

The survey consisted of 36 questions (see Appendix A), which attempted to solicit information and opinions on a wide variety of language variables, including the respondents' own language behaviour and that of others in the community, the prestige and domains of use attached to the language, the types of support that exists on various levels and the impact of this support (or lack thereof). I designed these questions to fall into four broad categories: demographic information, competence and usage, attitudes and perceptions, and policies and support. The questions were all multiple-choice, with either a range of contextual responses that attempted to cover all possible opinions, or a range of numbers which represented gradations of opinion along a scale, from 0 to 5. Every question, except the initial demographic ones, had an opt-out ('Don't Know') option. The graduated scale was chosen to contain six numbers so that respondents were forced to commit to one side or the other – there was no neutral choice unless they chose to opt-out entirely. The survey was also designed to be anonymous, with the only information solicited pertaining to age, gender and geographical location. Each question was followed by a space for commentary.

After the initial survey questions had been formulated, it was pilot tested on a native Galician speaker in late 2002. She helped fine-tune many of the questions which were slightly confusing or did not provide responses to cover every likely possibility, since I wished to minimise the number of opt-outs based on someone's particular situation or opinion not being covered in the provided responses. The survey was then sent out for translation. I decided to make the survey available only in each of the dominant languages, despite the fact that this might elicit negative

reactions from the respondents I was targeting, for two reasons: first, because of the difficulty of locating speakers of the minority languages to do the survey translations at this early stage, and second, because I did not want to exclude anyone who might otherwise be eligible to respond to the survey because of inadequate minority-language competence (e.g. a resident of Galicia who had been raised during the Franco era and had never learned to read and write Galician). In fact I did receive some protests from respondents – particularly Galicians – arguing that a survey about a minority language should be administered through the minority language; luckily none of the protesters refused to answer the survey but some did leave their comments in Galician, which I was able to translate with the help of a speaker of Portuguese. In addition, as all of these languages have conflicts surrounding standardisation, it would have been a problematic and potentially divisive decision to select one form for the survey.

I asked colleagues of mine, native speakers of French and German, to do the initial translation into these languages, and I did the Spanish translation myself. I then met with three secondary translators – all native speakers – to review the translations and correct them. Although I could have asked them to back-translate the survey to English to check for accuracy, instead I chose a comparative approach; we worked closely with the original English version to make sure the original meaning was preserved, and I relied on the translators' knowledge of the political and educational particulars in their respective countries to accurately frame many of the questions.



### 5.3. DISTRIBUTION OF THE SURVEY

The biggest hurdle was deciding how to distribute the survey. My research situation did not allow for lengthy field visits, which would have been the ideal method, and I felt mailing surveys was both too slow and too unreliable, although I did make this an option. I eventually decided on the medium of the internet, and decided to host a simple, interactive web-based survey which would work in any browser, and on any age of machine. A basic radio-button and drop-down menu interface was used. An advantage of a using web-based survey was that it was easy to prevent questions from being overlooked; if a question was not answered an error message was returned telling the respondent a question had been left blank. When the completed survey was submitted, the answers were summarised in an email and sent to my account, from where I hand-entered them into the survey database. A small number of surveys were sent out and returned by mail after having been requested from me by email, though this accounted for less than 1% of total surveys.

The surveys were posted online in 2003 (January for Galician, April for Corsican, and August for Sorbian), and each remained active for several months (though for each language the majority of the responses came in within eight weeks). To advertise the survey I gathered a list of email addresses from websites belonging to universities and various political and cultural organizations in the three regions, and sent out an email explaining my research and soliciting participation in the survey, which could be completed in approximately twenty minutes. The aim was to generate expanding networks of participants as people persuaded their colleagues, family and friends to visit the website; this is commonly called the ‘friend of a friend’ method in sociolinguistics (cf. Milroy 1987). In the email and on the survey

itself I stipulated that anyone who considered himself or herself to be a member of the minority groups (regardless of language competence), or who currently or previously had lived in either Galicia, Corsica, or Upper/Lower Lusatia, was eligible to respond. I did, however, ask that if the respondent was no longer resident in the relevant area that they refrain from answering questions about the current situation there unless they were familiar with it. In total I received more than 1000 responses from the Galician community, 122 responses from the Sorbian community and 79 from the Corsican. Due to time constraints, a random sample of only 500 responses from the Galician respondent pool was entered into the database.

#### **5.4. LIMITATIONS OF INTERNET RESEARCH**

There are, of course, significant limitations in using the internet as a medium for this type of research. Most significantly, it is impossible to collect data from a population sample that can be regarded as wholly representative. This is for two reasons: first, the nature of soliciting voluntary participation means that it is likely that only those who are particularly interested in or concerned by the topic will spend the time to respond; and second, the internet necessarily discriminates against those who do not own the equipment to access it, in other words, favouring responses from people at the higher end of the socio-economic spectrum. In addition, the anonymity of internet data collection means that there is the potential for misuse and/or fraudulent responses, such as one person submitting multiple surveys and biasing the final results.

With regards to the first problem, I believe that although the views expressed in the survey results cannot be taken to be representative of the populations of these

regions as a whole, they do reflect the opinions of people concerned with language revitalization, and this provides us with a useful starting point for analysing language ideologies and reported patterns of language use. We can assume that the responses are at least representative of those who are involved in language reproduction and transmission, and therefore their opinions and observations are extremely significant in discussing both vitality trends and policy improvements. Additionally, to some extent this same problem would have existed had I done the survey in person, as without a significant motivating factor (e.g. payment), it is likely that only people with an interest in the topic would have agreed to give me their time. In any case, I believe that the responses from these subgroups are as valuable to this type of research as any statistically representative population sample.

As for the second problem of prejudicing groups without computers or access to the internet, the populations of Spain, France and Germany are not in any significant way hindered in internet connectivity, and even in the 'peripheral' regions in which the study was conducted, access to the internet is common and not limited to a privileged sector of society. Concurrent data on internet connectivity (Nielsen/Netratings 2002) support this claim, indicating that at the time of the survey 54% of the population in Spain aged 16 and over has access to the internet, 54% in France and 63% in Germany (to put this in context, the highest connectivity at that time was found in the UK and topped the scale at 68%). It may, however, have been slightly prejudicial to older age groups who tend to be less technology-savvy, and indeed there is a lower proportion of older respondents overall. This does represent an unfortunate gap in the results, but there was little I could do to specifically target older people. I did attempt to correct for this by making paper surveys available to

anyone who requested one, and there were about ten returned to me in this way, although unfortunately these were all from respondents in the 30-60 age bracket.

As regards the third problem of fraudulent responses, there is naturally a certain amount of faith that one must put in the people who respond to a survey of this kind. That said, I did check every survey that came in for signs of validity (e.g. highly unlikely configuration of responses and/or comments that indicated someone was not taking the survey seriously), and I periodically ran a check of IP addresses to see if multiple surveys were being returned from a single computer. I did find a few IP addresses that fit this profile, but the quality of the surveys from each indicated that they were probably public or shared computers in a place where many people had been informed of the survey (e.g. classrooms, language institute, etc). In the end, I omitted only one survey from the analysis for these reasons.

## **5.5. ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES**

The survey results were entered by hand into a FileMaker Pro relational database, after which each question was analysed for frequencies, percentages, and in some cases, averages. I adopted a basic descriptive statistics approach to analysing the data, preferring this over inferential statistics, because I felt there was very important information contained in the many comments to each question that I wished to work into each variable's analysis, and I felt that looking for correlations between the numbers alone would mask much of the valuable qualitative data. The comments respondents provided were not systematically analysed, but instead were used to help explain patterns in the statistics and 'round out the picture' a little better. For most of the questions, I did not filter the answers and drew percentages from the entire pool.

On questions relating to competence and home usage, however, I filtered the questions to only include respondents who were born in the communities in question, as I had many respondents who were not, and whose language behaviour is thus not as crucial to understanding trends of production and reproduction in the community.

Finally, it is worth briefly discussing the relative sample sizes of the three language communities. As I noted earlier, I received over 1000 responses from the Galician community (though I ended up only analysing 500 of those), while I only received 79 from the Corsican and 122 from the Sorbian<sup>17</sup>. The majority of the discrepancy can no doubt be explained by the relative sizes of the communities in question; Galician, with over two million speakers, has about fifteen times as many speakers as Corsican (which has around 120,000), and about thirty times as many speakers as Sorbian (60,000). In fact, the percentage of each language community that responded to the survey is lowest for Galician: 0.04% of all Galician speakers are represented by the 1000 survey respondents, compared to 0.06% of total Corsican speakers and 0.2% of Sorbian speakers. My email solicitation methods, I should point out, were identical for Galician and Sorbian, with an initial mass email sent out to around seventy-five addresses. Corsican, however, presented more of a problem, in that my initial mailing resulted in very few responses, and I was forced to pursue every available avenue to recruit Corsicans, including posting on online forums and discussion boards, and contacting Corsican researchers, activists and cultural groups abroad (and I as a result have a lower proportion of respondents who were born on Corsica). I sensed that the problem was not so much how I was reaching Corsicans, as it was with their reluctance to participate. For example, two separate people wrote

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<sup>17</sup> Although I did not distinguish between Upper and Lower Sorbian responses for most of the survey questions, from the question on birthplace it is clear that Lower Sorbians are very underrepresented in this group, with only 9 out of 122 respondents having been born there.

to me after being forwarded my email, wanting to know exactly what my statistics were being collected for, who would have access to the responses, and how I could guarantee their anonymity. In the end one ended up participating and the other didn't, despite my reassurances that I would be discarding any traceable information (such as IP addresses). I take this as a manifestation of the highly politicised nature of language debates on Corsica and the perceived hostility of the central government to Corsican language issues. Perhaps people were apprehensive of revealing viewpoints that were too 'nationalist'; then again perhaps they were simply reluctant to reveal their behaviours and opinions to an unknown outsider on such an 'intimate' topic (cf. section 4.4.3; also Jaffe 1999). In any case, although this scarcity of responses was regrettable and frustrating, I believe the difficulty of doing this kind of research in itself is a significant and potentially revealing fact about the language situation on Corsica.

## 6. THE SURVEY

This chapter explores the results of the survey conducted among members of the Galician, Corsican and Sorbian language communities. The questions have been separated into four broad categories: *demographic* (including gender, age, birthplace, present location, etc), *language behaviour and competence* (both self-reported and observed, questions concerning identity, and observed trends of language growth/decline), *attitudes and perceptions* (questions concerning status and prestige, community pride, etc), and *support and policies* (including the extent of the language in education and effectiveness of support measures). Within each category, each question is presented with the results for each community displayed side by side, to facilitate comparison on individual variables. Following each question is a brief explanation of the figures, using examples from the respondents' comments to illustrate patterns in the data. I then include a separate section discussing the results and their implications for an overall assessment of language vitality and policy measures. Also, note that in the tables below, following Fishman (1991) the letter 'X' has frequently been used to denote the minority language and the letter 'Y' has been used to denote the majority language.

### 6.1. SURVEY RESULTS

#### 6.1.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The survey respondents from all three groups constitute a fairly heterogeneous slice of the population in terms of both gender and age. Gender is quite unbalanced among the Corsicans with males constituting almost three-quarters (73.4%) of the

respondents (perhaps due to the fact that academics/researchers made up such a large proportion of my respondents), but for Sorbian and Galician the proportions are about equal. For all three groups a good selection of age groups is represented, with the highest numbers falling in the 21-30 age group, followed by the 31-40. It seems, unfortunately, that the survey reached very few members of the oldest group (>60) which is not surprising considering their lower rate of access to (and/or competence with) computers and the internet.

As we can see there are some notable differences in birthplace. A very high percentage (above 85%) of Galician and Sorbian respondents were born in Galicia and Upper/Lower Lusatia, while only slightly over half (54.4%) of the Corsican respondents were. For all three languages a majority of the respondents are living in the communities now, with Galicians having the highest proportion (86.8%) and Corsicans the lowest (64.6%). As noted in section 5.3 the low percentage of Corsicans was no doubt influenced by the fact that I had to actively recruit respondents from sources based outside Corsica (including cultural organizations and academic departments in mainland France, the UK and the USA).



**Table 6.1.** *Survey Questions 1-3: Demographic profile of respondents.*

	<b>Galician</b>	<b>Corsican</b>	<b>Sorbian</b>
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	52.6% (263)	73.4% (58)	51.6% (63)
Female	47.4% (237)	26.6% (21)	48.4% (59)
<i>Age</i>			
<20	5.2% (26)	15.5% (13)	12.3% (15)
21-30	47.6% (238)	45.6% (36)	35.3% (43)
31-40	30.0% (150)	20.3% (16)	22.9% (28)
41-50	12.2% (61)	10.1% (8)	21.4% (26)
51-60	4.8% (24)	6.3% (5)	8.2% (10)
>60	0.2% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
<i>Born in Galicia/ Corsica/Lusatia</i>			
Yes	85.4% (427)	54.4% (43)	81.1% (99)(Upper) 7.4% (9)(Lower)
No	14.6% (73)	45.6% (36)	11.5% (14)
<i>Live there now</i>			
Yes	86.8% (434)	64.6% (51)	63.1% (77)(Upper) 9.8% (12)(Lower)
No	13.2% (66)	35.4% (28)	27.0% (33)

Question 4 asked about the demographic size of the participants' current place of residence, and has revealed some interesting differences between the language groups.

**Table 6.2.** *Survey Question 4: How many inhabitants does your city/town have?*

	<i>Less than 1000</i>	<i>1,000- 5,000</i>	<i>5,000- 10,000</i>	<i>10,000- 50,000</i>	<i>50,000- 100,000</i>	<i>100,000- 500,000</i>	<i>More than 500,000</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	6	9	11	16	10	0	0	52
	11.5%	17.3%	21.2%	<b>30.8%</b>	19.2%	.0%	.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	17	30	29	41	93	167	9	386
	4.4%	7.8%	7.5%	10.6%	24.1%	<b>43.3%</b>	2.3%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	54	14	2	20	2	3	0	95
	<b>56.8%</b>	14.7%	2.1%	21.1%	2.1%	3.2%	.0%	

Galician respondents tended to live in medium-to-large sized cities, with 69.7% living in cities with populations greater than 50,000 inhabitants and 45.6% in cities of more than 100,000. Sorbs, on the other hand, were heavily represented in small towns and villages with 71.5% of respondents having a local population of 5,000 or fewer inhabitants, and more than half (56.8%) reported living in tiny villages of less than 1000 inhabitants. Corsican fell somewhere in the middle, with the largest percentage (30.8%) in the 10-50,000-population range, but very few living in anything larger. The Sorbian case in particular fits in with data available about the upkeep of the language, and indicates that the survey reached people living in the Catholic strongholds of rural Saxony (cf. section 4.6).

### **6.1.2. Language Behaviour and Competence**

The following set of questions was designed to gauge actual language use and abilities in the three communities. These responses are the only ones that have been filtered to include only respondents who were born in the regions in question, as I identified these as most crucial to an analysis of language practice. This accounted for 427 Galician respondents, 108 Sorbian respondents and 43 Corsican. I could have filtered based on those identifying the minority language as their native one, but since this is often a very subjective term and one that can have different meanings to different people (see below), I have instead chosen the criteria of birthplace, which I believe is less open to creative interpretation. This excludes a certain number of native speakers who were born outside the area, and potentially includes non-

speakers who were born inside it, but overall I believe it gives the most accurate picture of language behaviour in the three communities<sup>18</sup>.

Question 5 was a multi-part question that asked participants to reflect on their own abilities in the minority language. It began by asking if they consider the minority language to be their native language or ‘mother tongue’ (translated in the survey as ‘*lengua materna*’ in Spanish, ‘*langue maternelle*’ in French, and ‘*Muttersprache*’ in German, cf. Appendix A). This unfortunately is not a completely straightforward question. As Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) argues, the definition of mother tongue is a variable and contested thing, and depending on the interpretation can be based upon origin (language first learned), identification (either internally or externally), competence (language used best) or function (language used most). It is thus worth keeping in mind that the terminology may have had differing connotations for different communities, though inasmuch as the definition is culturally constructed, it is likely that within each group the interpretations did not vary too greatly.

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<sup>18</sup> A total of 31 Corsicans, 287 Galicians and 81 Sorbs overall identified the minority language as their native one, and filtering based on this criteria instead of birthplace would have resulted in some minor differences. For instance, the results for reported language competence would have looked slightly higher across all three languages, with all Corsican skills on average 5-7 percentage points higher, Galician 2-3 points higher on production skills (speaking and writing), and Sorbian 10-15 points higher on all skills. In addition, home use both currently and in childhood would have been 10-15 percentage points higher for all groups, and the percentage of all respondents saying they have taught or will teach their children the minority language would have been 5-8 points higher. On the questions of identity, the percentages choosing ‘exclusively X’ would have been a few (<5) points higher for all three groups, as would the percentage declaring language to be ‘very important’ to their identity. For none of these questions, however, would the ranking of languages have changed with respect to each other.

**Table 6.3.** *Survey Question 5: Please describe your proficiency in X.*

*a. Is Corsican/Galician/Sorbian Your Native Language?*

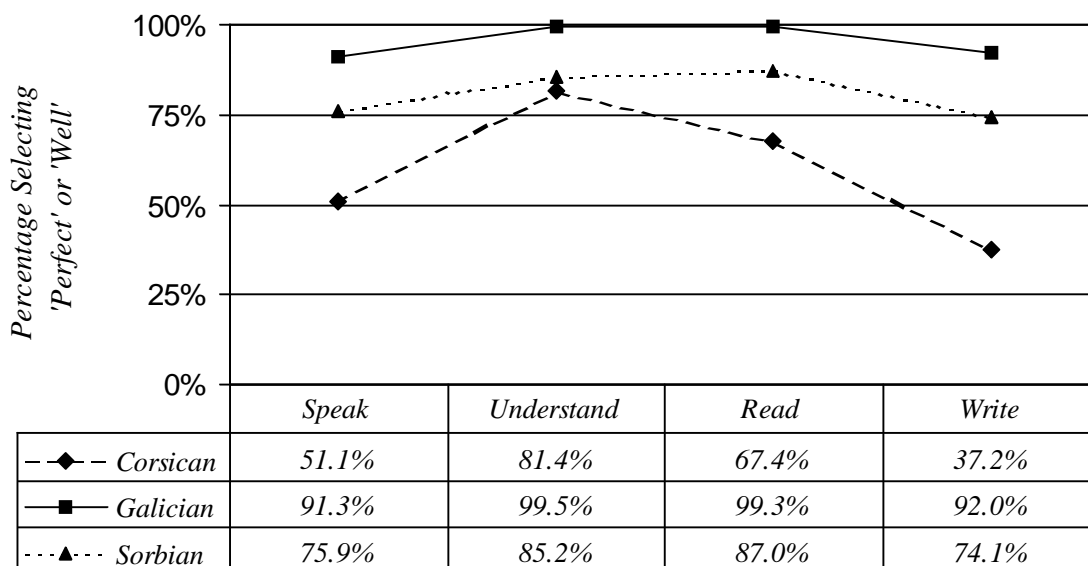
	<i>YES</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	24	43
	55.8%	
<b>Galician</b>	267	427
	62.5%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	79	108
	73.1%	

As we can see here, all three groups have a majority claiming native abilities in the minority language. Of all three groups Sorbs have the highest number, with nearly three-quarters (73.1%) of respondents claiming it to be their native language. The percentage of Galicians is slightly less at 62.5%, and the percentage of Corsicans is not far behind that with 55.8%. The structure of these numbers would seem to indicate that in the Sorbian community in particular, non-Sorbs did not respond to the survey in large numbers, and of the Sorbs who did, most of them speak Sorbian as a result of having learned it as a first language. A possible corollary to this might be that there are very few people who consider themselves Sorbian yet did not grow up speaking the language, in other words, indicating that there is a much less tenuous relationship between identity and language than there is in, for example, Galicia, where people feel a part of the Galician community without having been raised speaking the language (see question 21 below).

The next four sub-questions ask about competence in the four traditional areas of language ability, namely speaking, understanding, reading and writing. The abilities reported on these variables show a predictable pattern, with higher scores for

comprehension-type skills (understanding and reading), and lower for production-type (speaking and writing), and a consistent stratification of abilities in the three languages across these four activities.

**Figure 6.1.** *b-d. How well do you speak/understand/read/write Corsican/Galician/Sorbian?*



The above chart shows the percentage of people for each language that answered ‘perfect’ or ‘well’ to the question ‘how well do you speak/understand/read/write X?’ A visual representation is useful here in that it makes clear the consistent differences in competence between speakers of the three languages, although note that the line is quite flat for both Galician and Sorbian, indicating that their abilities in the four areas do not vary greatly. In terms of spoken language ability, Galician comes out on top with 91.3% of respondents saying they speak the language perfectly or well. Sorbian comes in a close second with 75.9% who claim this, and Corsican trails with only 51.1%. In terms of comprehension, Galician again leads the pack with an incredibly high 99.5% of respondents claiming high ability. Both Corsican and Sorbian also

show very high numbers (85.2% and 81.4% respectively), which indicates that passive language competence is typically very high for native-born inhabitants of these regions, but not all are able to turn passive into active competence. Considering the numbers for reported speaking ability, the numbers for comprehension are quite a bit higher than I would expect for Corsican, and stand in marked contrast to Sorbian, whose numbers do not vary much between speaking and understanding. A possible explanation for this discrepancy can be found, however, by looking at the linguistic distance between these two languages and their majority counterparts. Corsican, being a Romance language, is probably at least partly intelligible to speakers of French after a short period of exposure, whereas Sorbian, being a Slavic language, would not be to a speaker of German who had not systematically studied it. Corsican, thus, is understood by many who have no other formal abilities in the language, which explains the spike in percentages for this skill.

There is a slight decline in numbers for the category of reading ability. Galician drops almost imperceptibly, with nearly all respondents (99.3%) saying they read it perfectly. As another passive language skill that is taught in all Galician schools, it is not surprising that such a high number claim high competence. Interestingly, the numbers for Sorbian are also higher for this question (87.0%) than for the question of understanding. This may be also a result of people studying it as a school subject and having less familiarity with it as a medium of daily communication. Corsican shows the weakest numbers here, with significantly less competence in reading (67.4%) than understanding, but still more than speaking. The variable of writing is where the languages really diverge. Galician remains firmly at the top with 92.0% of respondents saying they have good or perfect

competence, whereas only three-quarters (74.1%) of Sorbian respondents say the same and just over one-third (37.2%) of Corsican respondents. This is, once again, most likely a reflection of the different presence of these languages in the local school systems.

Interestingly, there tended to be a lot of comments submitted for these questions on competence by the Corsicans and Sorbs hedging about their use of ‘perfect’ or ‘well’. Many from both groups protested the use of ‘perfect’, saying that “perfection only exists as an ideal”<sup>19</sup>, or challenging what exactly I was implying with the term. The Galicians, in contrast, didn’t seem to have the same problem. I suspect that smaller speaker bases for Corsican and Sorbian have something to do with the lack of certainty, as there are fewer “genuine” native speakers in the community to set an unambiguous fluency standard. I tried to minimise the effect of these uncertainties by combining the top two categories of proficiency in my analysis; presumably there is a lot of overlap between the two categories as speakers have different conceptions of just where speaking ‘well’ ends and ‘perfection’ begins.

Questions 6 and 7 asked respondents about language use in the home, both currently and when the respondent was a child.

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<sup>19</sup> All comments translated by the author.

**Table 6.4.** *Survey Question 6: What language do you speak at home?*

	X	X&Y	Total using X to some extent
<b>Corsican</b>	3	21	24
	7.0%	48.8%	55.8%
<b>Galician</b>	168	114	282
	39.3%	26.7%	66.0%
<b>Sorbian</b>	59	15	74
	<b>54.6%</b>	13.9%	<b>68.5%</b>

**Table 6.5.** *Survey Question 7: What language did you speak at home when you were a child?*

	X	X&Y	Total using X to some extent
<b>Corsican</b>	3	17	20
	7.0%	39.5%	46.5%
<b>Galician</b>	98	89	187
	23.0%	20.8%	43.8%
<b>Sorbian</b>	62	16	78
	<b>57.4%</b>	14.8%	<b>72.2%</b>

Interestingly, Sorbian outdistances the other two languages on both counts. A very high percentage of Sorbs (54.6% and 57.4%, respectively) use(d) it exclusively in the home, and Sorbian also has the highest number of people who claim use it to any extent in the home (68.5% and 72.2%). Corsican has the fewest people who speak the language exclusively in the home (7%), but nearly half say they use it along with French (48.8%). Galician, surprisingly, is not used as much in the home as peoples' high competence would suggest, either currently or in childhood, though the numbers suggest it is increasing. As regards current use, the percentage of Galicians using it to some extent (66.0%) does not fall far behind Sorbian, but the number of



people using it exclusively (39.3%) does by a full fifteen percent. This is an unexpectedly poor home profile for a language so well institutionalised and so competently spoken. In the comments many Galicians explain how despite the fact that their parents spoke Galician to each other, they were raised speaking Castilian:

*“My parents and all my family were Galician speakers. In spite of that, they made an effort to speak to me and my brother only in Castilian.”*

*“In the 80s, people still generally believed that Galician was the language of the villages and that Castilian was the language of the city, culture and progress. As a result there was a generation of children who were, like me, raised and educated in Castilian despite the fact that our parents spoke Galician, because of a desire to give us chances in life they didn’t have.”*

Nevertheless, the comparatively low home use today suggests that language normalisation has not been as successful as many believe in reintroducing the language to the most crucial domain of all.

Question 23 asked respondents about whether they have or intend to pass on the minority language to their children.

**Table 6.6.** *Survey Question 23: Have you taught or will you teach Corsican/Galician/ Sorbian to your children?*

	<i>NO or UNDECIDED</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	5	38	43
	<i>11.6%</i>	<b><i>88.4%</i></b>	
<b>Galician</b>	87	340	427
	<i>20.4%</i>	<i>79.6%</i>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	21	87	108
	<i>19.4%</i>	<i>80.6%</i>	

Despite this poor record of home usage, nearly all participants say they feel strongly about passing it on. Around 80% of Galicians and Sorbs said without reservation that they have or plan to teach their children their minority language; for Corsicans the

number is even higher, at 88.4%. This is surprising as Corsicans' reported use in the home is the lowest. What I suspect is that this is less a true indicator of practice and more a result of strong nationalist sentiment (see discussion, section 6.2.1). I can also tell from the comments of all three groups that the responses from those who have already tried to teach it to their children are marked with considerably less enthusiasm than the as-yet-to-have-children group; for all three languages there are numerous comments along the lines of 'yes, I did but without much success', or 'yes, but they don't use it'. There were, however, interesting sentiments expressed by a couple of Galician respondents who are wary of the low status they still see ascribed to the language, and who argued that while they naturally want their children to learn Galician, they don't want it to assume too great a role:

*"I will teach [Galician] to them, but I don't want it to be their mother tongue. I will try to make them feel an attachment to it, but if it's not going to be useful, I prefer that they speak Castilian better. The most important thing is that they can express themselves correctly in one language, and that they don't feel marginalised. Even today speakers of Galician are often marginalised."*

*"They'll learn it in school. I personally don't like to speak it – I want them to learn it but I don't want them to use it as their primary language."*

To explain the Corsican results I should point out that it is, of course, also up to interpretation exactly what is meant by 'teach'; perhaps members of the Corsican group felt they had 'taught' their children the language if they imparted a passing familiarity with it, while Galicians did not unless they had spoken Galician exclusively with their children. In any case, the numbers are all high enough to suggest that among these groups there is a strong motivation to take on responsibility for transmitting the language to the next generation.

Question 20 asked about identity, providing points on a scale ranging from 'exclusively Galician/Corsican/Sorbian' to 'exclusively Spanish/French/German'.

**Table 6.7.** *Survey Question 20: How do you identify yourself?*

	<i>Exclusively X</i>	<i>More X</i>	<i>Equally X&amp;Y</i>	<i>More Y</i>	<i>Exclusively Y</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	18	12	11	1	0	43
	<b>41.9%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	117	189	95	7	0	427
	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	45	27	21	5	9	108
	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	

Not surprisingly, we can see a strong sense of identification among people born in these areas with the minority ethnic label. Very few of the respondents identify themselves with the majority label either exclusively or primarily; in contrast a fair number, hovering around 20-25% of each group sees themselves as much a part of the majority community as the majority one. All three groups lean most heavily towards identification with the minority label, though surprisingly, again the Galicians don't seem as convinced of this as the other two, with a higher percentage saying they are 'more Galician' (44.3%) than 'exclusively Galician' (27.4%). In comparison, 41.9% of Corsicans and 41.7% of Sorbs consider themselves 'exclusively' identified with the minority label.

There were a number of comments submitted for each language group that indicate that a strong minority identity goes hand-in-hand with a European identity. For example, several people who chose a 'more' or 'exclusively' X label spelled out the precise order of their allegiances, and two common possibilities were 'first X, then European' (in effect bypassing the 'state' allegiance; some followed European with 'the world'), and others offered 'European, then X, then Y', indicating that the supra-national label for them takes precedence over the minority one. Other people

stressed a conceptual differentiation between identification based on nationality and that based on citizenship, in other words ethnic vs. political identities, arguing that both are retained for different purposes. There were others, naturally, who said that it was impossible to not have an identity bound to the state of residence, and who pragmatically argued that it is impossible to have an X identity that does not encompass some degree of Y. A comment from a Sorbian respondent indicates a belief that the identities are two sides of the same coin:

*“It would be false to say ‘exclusively Sorbian’, as we live in Germany and enjoy German citizenship. We live with a double identity.”*

Question 21 followed the previous one about identity, asking people to reflect on how important their knowledge of the minority language was to their answer.

**Table 6.8.** *Survey Question 21: How important is knowledge of Corsican/Galician/Sorbian to that identity?*

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>A Little Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	6	14	10	13	43
	<i>13.9%</i>	<i>32.6%</i>	<i>23.3%</i>	<i>30.2%</i>	
<b>Galician</b>	65	67	34	47	213
	<i>30.5%</i>	<i>31.5%</i>	<i>16.0%</i>	<i>22.0%</i>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	70	25	7	5	107
	<i>64.8%</i>	<i>23.1%</i>	<i>6.5%</i>	<i>4.6%</i>	

Sorbs more than the others seem to consider their language as essential to identity, with two-thirds (64.8%) rating it as ‘very important’. Corsicans, on the other hand, seem reluctant to say it is very important, and split their answers between the other three possibilities. Galicians are also quite split, though the two largest percentages fall on ‘very important’ (30.5%) and ‘somewhat important’ (31.5%).

Comments submitted to this question are very enlightening on many levels. While many Galicians responded with hedges that although language is important to Galician identity, it is by far not the only aspect, the Sorbs revealed a much more deterministic viewpoint:

*“The language creates our identity, if someone loses the language, he does not call himself a Sorb anymore.”*

*“The language is the key to our identity.”*

In contrast, the Corsicans seem happy to call language only a peripheral part of their identity, instead emphasizing the link to the physical terrain as the crucial element:

*“Corsica creates and has always created Corsicans, regardless of whether they spoke Latin 2000 years ago or will speak English 2000 years from now. Language is nothing more than a small part of identity.”*

*“Being Corsican is about a very intense feeling; it’s a visceral attachment to the land and a culture – language is just one element of that culture.”*

These comments perfectly illustrate the fundamental differences in the language-identity link as they manifest themselves in the three communities, which themselves nicely fall along a spectrum from still a ‘core cultural value’ for the Sorbs, to an important but not crucial element for Galicians, to a seemingly peripheral element for the Corsicans.

The following questions include responses from all respondents, regardless of birthplace. Question 22 re-phrased the question about the language-identity link, and shifted the focus away from the respondent to see if their feelings about their own identity influence how they perceive other’s claims to the same identity.

**Table 6.9.** *Survey Question 22: In your opinion, can someone who does not speak Corsican/Galician/ Sorbian be considered Corsican/Galician/Sorbian?*

	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	9	63	72
	12.5%	87.5%	
<b>Galician</b>	114	351	465
	24.5%	75.5%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	44	66	110
	40.0%	60.0%	

Responses to this question varied considerably, though in general they support the patterns uncovered in the previous question. At the most extreme end, 87.5% of Corsicans believe that a capacity for the language is not a prerequisite for membership in the community. This is understandable, considering that language competence is generally low but regional nationalism is high. Galicians come in second with three-quarters (75.5%) of respondents saying yes, despite the fact that language competence is much higher. It could be that due to the fact that language skills declined so sharply under Franco that a more multifaceted conception of what it takes to be ‘authentic Galician’ was born. Finally with Sorbs, a majority (60%) still believes that language is not essential to identity, but it is a much smaller majority than the other two groups. Due to the fact that the Sorbs have neither their own territory nor their own government, the role of language as more of a boundary marker does make sense.

The comments are, as ever, helpful in understanding the reasoning behind the different responses. Among all three groups, there were persuasive arguments both ways. Some commenters voiced the opinion that while there are indeed many people who identify themselves with the minority label without speaking the language, they

do not personally approve of it. On the other hand, as one Galician commenter argued:

*“We are many those who call ourselves Galicians but neither speak the language nor want to, yet cannot admit it for political reasons. I believe more than half the population is in this situation.”*

Another admitted that it is often people who do not speak the language who are the most influential activists for Galician nationalism. A number of Corsican respondents commented that identifying oneself as Corsican has everything to do with the land where you were born, and much less to do with the language you speak:

*“A Corsican is simply an inhabitant of Corsica, just as a Scot is an inhabitant of Scotland – language has nothing to do with it.”*

A couple of these Corsican commenters also referred to Ireland as an example of another place where identity is more connected to land than language. Many of the Sorbs who commented seemed to subscribe to a ‘live and let live’ philosophy, arguing that it is a completely personal matter and citing Lower Sorbs as perfect examples of those who identify themselves as Sorbs but do not speak Sorbian. There were, however, a couple of commenters who expressed the belief that in practice when someone wishes to identify himself as Sorbian, he automatically will try to make an effort to speak it at least a little, presumably since language is the single biggest ethnic marker in this community. Again, I believe this is related to a lack of other criteria (such as a separate territory) that make membership in the minority community a ‘given’.

Question 27 asked respondents to draw on their perceptions of the community in which they live to paint a picture of language competence.

**Table 6.10.** *Survey Question 27: Approximately what proportion of the community in which you live do you think can speak Corsican/Galician/Sorbian?*

	<i>Close to 0%</i>	<i>Less than 25%</i>	<i>Between 25% and 50%</i>	<i>Around 50%</i>	<i>Between 50% and 75%</i>	<i>More than 75%</i>	<i>Close to 100%</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	3	16	12	13	13	14	2	73
	4.1%	<b>21.9%</b>	16.4%	17.8%	17.8%	19.2%	2.7%	
<b>Galician</b>	4	12	19	27	94	205	99	460
	.9%	2.6%	4.1%	5.9%	20.4%	<b>44.6%</b>	21.5%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	12	36	9	3	18	26	7	111
	10.8%	<b>32.4%</b>	8.1%	2.7%	16.2%	23.4%	6.3%	

I felt this was an important question to ask to get an impression of language behaviour beyond my sample of respondents. In fact, it has revealed beliefs that vary greatly in coherence. Corsicans, especially, seem to either have widely differing perceptions or else competence in different communities varies enormously; the percentages are roughly equal on every option between less than 25 percent and more than 75 percent. Galicians seem a bit more consistent, with the percentages clustering at the higher end of the scale (above 50% of the population), whereas Sorbs display a classic bimodal distribution pattern: either more than three-quarters of the population, or less than one-quarter. Nevertheless, the largest percentages for these two groups fell on ‘more than 75%’ for Galicians (44.6%) and ‘less than 25%’ for Sorbs (32.4%). A typical comment from all three groups was that although this percentage knows how to speak, they don’t actively use it.



**Table 6.11.** Survey Question 28: *Approximately what proportion of the community in which you live do you think regularly speaks Corsican/Galician/Sorbian?*

	<i>Close to 0%</i>	<i>Less than 25%</i>	<i>Between 25% and 50%</i>	<i>Around 50%</i>	<i>Between 50% and 75%</i>	<i>More than 75%</i>	<i>Close to 100%</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	7	17	12	10	13	8	3	70
	10.0%	<b>24.3%</b>	17.1%	14.3%	18.6%	11.4%	4.3%	
<b>Galician</b>	3	74	120	86	85	33	8	409
	.7%	18.1%	<b>29.3%</b>	21.0%	20.8%	8.1%	2.0%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	18	35	9	11	20	12	4	109
	16.5%	<b>32.1%</b>	8.3%	10.1%	18.3%	11.0%	3.7%	

Question 28 changed the question slightly to ask about language *practice* rather than language ability. Opinions seem equally split, but the overall tendencies show a drop in numbers, indicating that in all three communities, competence doesn't necessarily match up with performance. Galicians report the greatest difference, with the most popular answer dropping from 'more than 75%' where competence is concerned to 'between 25% and 50%' where practice is concerned (29.3%). Sorbs and Corsicans appear to be considerably more consistent in their language practice with the largest percentage of respondents choosing the 'less than 25%' option for both competence and practice.

**Table 6.12.** *Survey Question 29: How many people can speak Corsican/Galician/Sorbian in Corsica/Galicia/Lusatia?*

	<i>Close to 0%</i>	<i>Less than 25%</i>	<i>Between 25% and 50%</i>	<i>Around 50%</i>	<i>Between 50% and 75%</i>	<i>More than 75%</i>	<i>Close to 100%</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	0	11	20	16	20	6	0	73
	.0%	15.1%	27.4%	21.9%	27.4%	8.2%	.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	0	2	16	22	120	228	98	486
	.0%	.4%	3.3%	4.5%	24.7%	46.9%	20.2%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	4	65	19	13	6	4	1	112
	3.6%	58.0%	17.0%	11.6%	5.4%	3.6%	.9%	

Question 29 was asked to see if people perceived a marked difference between competence in their communities and competence on a regional scale. The largest difference can be seen in the Sorbian responses; people seem to think competence is higher in their communities than in Lusatia in general, with 58% choosing ‘less than 25%’ for Lusatia. Galicians seem to feel their communities are representative of Galicia as a whole, with 46.9% choosing ‘more than 75%’, a nearly identical percentage to the earlier question about their own communities. Corsicans are still split, but the tendency of the numbers is higher (27.4% chose ‘between 25% and 50%’), which would suggest that many Corsicans think there must exist stronger communities of speakers on the island than the one in which they live. One Corsican respondent commented that there is a growing community of North African immigrants on Corsica that speaks Corsican better than many native islanders, which may account for some of this perception.

Question 25 was designed to gauge the perception of tendencies of language increase or decline by asking people whether they think the number of speakers today is higher or lower than ten, twenty, or thirty years in the past. While in reality

the variation in number of native speakers probably does not fluctuate too much within a span of two or three decades, a question like this really addresses perceptions rather than fact, which may be a more useful indicator for the long term.

*Survey Question 25. How many native speakers of Corsican/Galician/ Sorbian are there today compared to:*

**Table 6.13.** *10 years ago?*

	<i>Many More</i>	<i>Some More</i>	<i>A Few More</i>	<i>The Same</i>	<i>A Few Less</i>	<i>Some Less</i>	<i>Many Less</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	3	5	8	15	24	8	7	70
	4.3%	7.1%	11.4%	21.4%	<b>34.3%</b>	11.4%	10.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	25	48	98	71	133	78	19	472
	5.3%	10.2%	20.8%	15.0%	<b>28.2%</b>	16.5%	4.0%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	2	9	11	11	27	37	19	116
	1.7%	7.8%	9.5%	9.5%	23.3%	<b>31.9%</b>	16.4%	

**Table 6.14.** *20 years ago?*

	<i>Many More</i>	<i>Some More</i>	<i>A Few More</i>	<i>The Same</i>	<i>A Few Less</i>	<i>Some Less</i>	<i>Many Less</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	4	3	2	4	19	26	11	69
	5.8%	4.3%	2.9%	5.8%	27.5%	<b>37.7%</b>	15.9%	
<b>Galician</b>	40	72	55	18	77	136	65	463
	8.6%	15.6%	11.9%	3.9%	16.6%	<b>29.4%</b>	14.0%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	4	10	4	4	9	34	50	115
	3.5%	8.7%	3.5%	3.5%	7.8%	29.6%	<b>43.5%</b>	

**Table 6.15.** *30 years ago?*

	<i>Many More</i>	<i>Some More</i>	<i>A Few More</i>	<i>The Same</i>	<i>A Few Less</i>	<i>Some Less</i>	<i>Many Less</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	6	2	1	2	3	8	46	68
	8.8%	2.9%	1.5%	2.9%	4.4%	11.8%	<b>67.6%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	80	44	34	13	39	79	163	452
	17.7%	9.7%	7.5%	2.9%	8.6%	17.5%	<b>36.1%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	12	5	1	2	3	9	83	115
	10.4%	4.3%	.9%	1.7%	2.6%	7.8%	<b>72.2%</b>	

What is important to note here is that perceptions of decline are strong among all three communities. While there were a few respondents from the Galician community who indicated they feel language use is on the rise, presumably since it has been institutionalised following Franco's death (and indeed many of these indicated in comments that while they feel general abilities are on the increase, actual usage is on the decrease), a majority indicate patterns of decline, which places Galician in line with what the other two communities perceive as well. The most common response among all three groups was to indicate a falling pattern for the three decades in question of a few less, some less, and finally many less than there were 30 years ago.

Many commenters, particularly from the Galician community, stressed again the perception that there is more general (often called 'school-based') competence in Galicia today but fewer native speakers; differences in interpretation might explain the higher number of responses on the 'more' side of the scale than seen with the other two languages. Not all of the comments seemed entirely pessimistic, however. As one Galician commenter pointed out:

“There are fewer Galician speakers now, but those that exist are much more conscious of the importance of maintaining their language than they were 30 years ago.”

There wasn't much optimism amongst the Sorbian comments, however, as many people lamented the economic situation in Eastern Germany that forces young people out of the community, resulting in “fewer speakers, every year”.

### 6.1.3. Attitudes and Perceptions

Question 8 attempted to gauge respondents' perceptions of the prestige attached to the minority language, the majority language, and English in their community. It was in fact somewhat problematic to get a consistent translation for the concept of language prestige; I ended up using ‘*tener prestigio*’ (to have prestige) in Spanish, ‘*être perçue*’ (to be seen) in French and ‘*angesehen sein*’ (to be regarded) in German. For these questions, respondents were given a six-point scale ranging from 0 to 5, with 0 representing no prestige and 5 representing maximum prestige. By having an even number of points respondents were prevented from the middle (usually seen as the neutral) option.

*Survey Question 8: How prestigious is \_\_\_\_\_ in your community?*

**Table 6.16.** Corsican/Galician/Sorbian

	Low ← → High						Total	Average Score
	0	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>Corsican</b>	2	0	3	6	23	43	77	4.30
	2.6%	.0%	3.9%	7.8%	29.9%	55.8%		
<b>Galician</b>	7	29	106	226	93	24	485	2.91
	1.4%	6.0%	21.9%	46.6%	19.2%	4.9%		
<b>Sorbian</b>	1	16	20	50	19	13	119	2.37
	.8%	13.4%	16.8%	42.0%	16.0%	10.9%		

Surprisingly, on the question of the prestige of the minority language, Corsican scores considerably higher than the other two languages. 55.8% of Corsicans rated Corsican as having the highest level of prestige (5), while Galician and Sorbian peak in the middle of the scale, with 46.6% and 42.0% (respectively) of the respondents rating it at 3. The averages reinforce this observation; Corsican’s average of 4.3 is miles ahead of Galician’s 2.91 and Sorbian’s 2.37.

**Table 6.17.** *French/Spanish/German*

	<i>Low ← → High</i>						<i>Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
<b>Corsican</b>	1	1	7	16	29	20	74	3.77
	1.4%	1.4%	9.5%	21.6%	<b>39.2%</b>	27.0%		
<b>Galician</b>	0	4	1	46	218	216	485	4.32
	.0%	.8%	.2%	9.5%	<b>44.9%</b>	44.5%		
<b>Sorbian</b>	0	1	2	7	41	65	116	4.44
	.0%	.9%	1.7%	6.0%	35.3%	<b>56.0%</b>		

The prestige of the majority language is scored considerably higher by Galician and Sorbian respondents, being rated a 4 or 5 by nearly everyone (reflected in averages of 4.32 and 4.44, respectively). For the Corsicans, however, the prestige of French dives; although the responses are quite spread out among the top three choices, an average of 3.77 for French is considerably lower than Corsican’s average of 4.3.

**Table 6.18.** *English*

	<i>Low ← → High</i>						<i>Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
<b>Corsican</b>	6	5	13	20	12	5	61	2.69
	9.8%	8.2%	21.3%	<b>32.8%</b>	19.7%	8.2%		
<b>Galician</b>	9	14	27	53	100	223	426	4.09
	2.1%	3.3%	6.3%	12.4%	23.5%	<b>52.3%</b>		
<b>Sorbian</b>	1	4	14	30	35	22	106	3.51
	.9%	3.8%	13.2%	28.3%	<b>33.0%</b>	20.8%		

I also asked respondents to rate the prestige of English in their communities, to be able to compare its importance in these communities with that of the minority language. The results are similarly divergent, though knowing what the general attitude of the three countries is toward English, the average scores make sense. In French, a strong anti-English backlash of recent years is reflected in the low prestige accorded to it by Corsicans (2.69 average score). Galicians rate the prestige very high (4.09), probably because fluency in English in Spain is quite low, and therefore seen as a prestigious ability. In the Sorbian community it is also quite high (3.51), but not as quite as high as among Galicians perhaps because proficiency in English is not so rare in Germany, particularly among younger people.

Overall, then, the Corsican respondents rate the prestige of their language *above* both French and English, while Galicians and Sorbs rate the prestige of theirs *below* these other two. In general, the comments provided are quite enlightening. They indicate that many Corsican respondents had difficulty with the concept of language prestige; several people claimed they did not understand exactly what they were being asked to measure. One commenter indicated that asking about the

prestige of French was silly as it did not have positive or negative feelings associated with it one way or the other – it is simply *there*, implying that even among Corsicans French persists as a completely unmarked variety. Still others commented that the trend is to view Corsican more and more favourably in recent years; this may have prompted people to give it a higher score than French, which by comparison seems to be lessening in prestige. Galicians, by contrast, seemed to have a clear idea of what I meant with the question; many remarked on the split nature of the status the language enjoys in different sectors of society. A common observation was that although the language has gained in prestige recently, there are certain groups for whom it remains low, particularly the rural lower class (who, we may recall, were the primary users of the language until recently), and the urban upper class (who no doubt have more of an effect on its general societal prestige than any other group):

*“Although the situation has improved considerably, in the big cities people still consider Galician speakers to be provincial and uneducated, and the stronger the accent, the stronger the impression. This is in spite of the fact that 80% of the population of Galicia speaks it.”*

One person claimed that someone who chooses to speak Galician tends to be viewed either as a rural ignoramus, or if educated, a left-wing ‘nationalist’. Sorbs, likewise, seemed to not have any conceptual problems with the idea of prestige, and expressed the view that although the language’s prestige seems to be growing among older members of the population, it remains ‘uncool’ for young people to be seen speaking it. There was a lot of hedging among Sorbs, however, with several commenters arguing that it is hard to make generalizations as the opinions of the population vary so widely.

Questions 9-11 asked respondents about the importance placed on knowing the minority, majority and English languages in order to find work in the local



community. The options given were that knowledge of the language is essential, helpful, doesn't matter, or has a negative impact.

**Table 6.19.** *Survey Question 9: How important is knowledge of Corsican/Galician/Sorbian to get a job in your community?*

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Doesn't Matter</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	6	38	30	2	76
	7.9%	<b>50.0%</b>	39.5%	2.6%	
<b>Galician</b>	14	244	187	48	493
	2.8%	<b>49.5%</b>	37.9%	9.7%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	5	62	51	0	118
	4.2%	<b>52.5%</b>	43.2%	.0%	

On question 9 the scores are nearly identical between the three groups. The consensus seems to be that knowledge of the minority language can be helpful (accounting for around half of the responses for each group), but actually for all groups the difference between the 'doesn't matter' and the 'helpful' categories is quite small. Very few people of any group considered the minority language essential to know in order to get a job; likewise very few believe it has a negative impact. Note that among Galicians, however, there are more people who believe it might have a negative impact on employment (9.7%) than that it is essential (2.8%). Several comments gave some insight into this negative rating, explaining that knowledge of Galician could harm employment prospects when a job seeker insisted on speaking *only* Galician, which I believe is a slight misinterpretation of the question. One respondent, however, insisted that merely having a strong Galician accent in their spoken Spanish could harm job prospects, as they would be seen as uneducated. Overall, though, across all three groups many of those who selected

‘helpful’ qualified their answer by saying it is only in certain jobs, above all in the public sector, where a knowledge of the minority language might be seen as useful, or in rare cases, essential.

**Table 6.20.** *Survey Question 10. How important is knowledge of French/Spanish/German to get a job in your community?*

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Doesn't Matter</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	68	5	3	1	77
	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	377	96	22	0	495
	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	106	9	4	0	119
	<b>89.1%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	

On question 10, the numbers predictably indicate that knowing the majority language is more or less indispensable for finding employment, with between 76% and 89% of respondents for all three languages choosing ‘essential’. One Galician respondent summed it up nicely by saying,

*“If you don’t speak Castilian, you can only live in the mountains.”*

In other words, without a command of Castilian there is no place for you in mainstream society.

**Table 6.21.** *Survey Question 11: How important is knowledge of English to get a job in your community?*

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Doesn't Matter</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	1	47	26	0	74
	1.4%	<b>63.5%</b>	35.1%	0.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	17	394	78	0	489
	3.5%	<b>80.6%</b>	16.0%	0.0%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	9	82	23	1	115
	7.8%	<b>71.3%</b>	20.0%	0.9%	

The results for English are very interesting, though not extremely surprising. It seems that for all three groups English is generally perceived as being more helpful than the minority language. Whereas only around half of each group indicated that the minority language is helpful, English is rated as helpful by between 63.5% and 80.6% of respondents. Note that the percentages here seem to correspond to responses on the previous question about prestige for every group except the Corsicans. Considering how highly they rated the prestige of Corsican, we might expect ratings of its usefulness to be higher than English, yet they are not (57.9% rate Corsican as either essential or helpful, while 64.9% rate English as either essential or helpful). English is, however, predictably perceived as less useful on Corsica than it is in either Galicia (where 84.1% rate it essential or helpful) or Lusatia (where 79.1% rate it as essential or helpful). Galicians commented that particularly with large companies, knowledge of English is becoming more and more likely to tip the scales in an applicant's favour, even for a job that doesn't explicitly require it. Corsicans, on the other hand, stressed that generally only jobs in the tourism sector require proficiency in English.

Question 12 followed up on the previous three by asking about perceived importance of speaking the minority language for non-job reasons.

**Table 6.22.** *Survey Question 12: How important is knowledge of Corsican/Galician/Sorbian for non-job reasons in your community?*

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Little Bit Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	41	28	7	3	79
	<b>51.9%</b>	<b>35.4%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	134	151	133	67	485
	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	63	30	15	11	119
	<b>52.9%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	

This question was meant to elicit more personal reflections from the respondent, and as we can see from the comments, seemed to provoke a variety of different interpretations. As we can see above, a remarkably similar profile can be found for Corsicans and Sorbs. For both languages the majority of people (over 50%) said that it was ‘very important’, with the numbers steeply dropping off on the answers indicating less importance. Galicians, in contrast, had the largest percentage (31.3%) answering ‘somewhat important’, though their opinions were quite evenly split among very, somewhat and a little important. Note as well that the percentage of Galicians selecting ‘not important’ is higher at 13.8% than either of the other two groups.

There were, I realised in retrospect, two different ways of interpreting this question. The vast majority of comments among Galicians and Corsicans contained arguments such as:

*“Our language helps us to know who we are.”*

*“It’s the vehicle of our culture and community.”*

*“It helps us maintain our unique identity.”*

*“It’s our link to the past and our collective memory.”*

I believe the majority of these respondents interpreted this as a personal question that they felt was directed at uncovering the various emotional or ideological motivations they have to speak and maintain the language. The Sorbs, on the other hand, tended to perceive a more instrumental slant to the question, listing the non-employment related benefits that come with a proficiency in Sorbian; the most popular seemed to be a jump-start in learning other Slavic languages and a closer relationship with the Slavic-speaking world.

Questions 13 and 14 asked respondents to rate the relative amounts of control the minority and majority groups have over economic and political matters in the respective communities on the six point scale from 0 (no control) to 5 (maximum control).

**Table 6.23.** *Survey Question 13: In your opinion, how much control over economic/business matters do speakers of Corsican/Galician/Sorbian have in your community?*

	<i>Little ←</i>						<i>Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
<b>Corsican</b>	2	6	4	21	22	8	63	3.25
	3.2%	9.5%	6.3%	33.3%	<b>34.9%</b>	12.7%		
<b>Galician</b>	19	110	151	129	42	8	459	2.19
	4.1%	24.0%	<b>32.9%</b>	28.1%	9.2%	1.7%		
<b>Sorbian</b>	3	24	13	30	12	3	85	2.39
	3.5%	28.2%	15.3%	<b>35.3%</b>	14.1%	3.5%		

On the question of economic or business control, Corsican leads the other two in scores; the largest percentage (34.9%) of responses favoured point 4 on the scale, and the average of all scores is 3.25. Galicians had their largest number (32.9%) choose point 2, and had the lowest overall average of 2.19; Sorbs were slightly higher with the largest percentage (35.3%) choosing point 3, resulting in an average score of 2.39.

**Table 6.24.** *Survey Question 14: In your opinion, how much control over political matters do speakers of Corsican/Galician/Sorbian have in your community?*

	<i>Little ←</i>						<i>→ Much</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>				
<b>Corsican</b>	0	0	6	9	26	27	68	4.01		
	.0%	.0%	8.8%	13.2%	38.2%	<b>39.7%</b>				
<b>Galician</b>	8	55	138	165	84	19	469	2.68		
	1.7%	11.7%	29.4%	<b>35.2%</b>	17.9%	4.1%				
<b>Sorbian</b>	1	24	20	32	13	5	95	2.71		
	1.1%	25.3%	21.1%	<b>33.7%</b>	13.7%	5.3%				

The question concerning control over political matters indicates even more of a gap between Corsican and the other two communities. Here nearly forty percent (39.7%) have chosen the highest score, with the average rising to 4.01. Galicians and Sorbs, by contrast, rate the political control only marginally higher than the economic control; the Galician average score comes to 2.68 and the Sorbian, 2.71.

In attempting to explain the unexpected distribution of scores for these questions, I realised that there are differences in the demographics of the three communities that made answering these two questions problematic, something I did not take fully into account while drawing them up. Overall the Sorbian community is probably best poised to answer these questions without difficulty, as there is more of

a clear division between Sorbian-speakers and non-Sorbian-speakers which also coincides with Sorbian/non-Sorbian identity (see the discussion of question 21). In Galicia the situation is made much more complex by the fact that most people both have some competence in Galician and consider themselves Galician. As a result many, many comments were submitted which questioned whether by ‘Galician speakers’ I was referring to people who *habitually* speak Galician or those who *can* speak Galician. Most seem to have interpreted it as those who habitually speak Galician, and indicated that this group (which, as we’ve seen earlier, is a group often identified as having a particular nationalist agenda) does not in fact seem to possess as much control in either economic or political spheres as those who primarily speak Castilian. In particular, the question about political matters brought about a large number of comments that described how the Galician language is often used as a tool by politicians to garner more votes. As one commenter noted:

*“It’s ‘politically correct’ to speak Galician in public, even though at home [the politicians] all speak Castilian.”*

Most of these people rated the political control exercised by Galician-speakers to be quite low.

It is not immediately apparent to me, however, why Corsicans should rate these two variables so highly. One possible explanation might be down to the influence of the non-Corsican-born respondents who answered this question (they form a larger percentage of the total than either of the other groups), who perhaps have a different perspective on the language of those in control than the natives of Corsica themselves. The comments, unfortunately, do little to enlighten the analysis. As regards the economic sphere, most commenters expressed the belief that Corsican only tends to be spoken by small business owners as opposed to larger companies

which tend to be French-dominated, indicating that perhaps there was some confusion in the interpretation of this question. In terms of politics, however, there were quite a few people who said that most local politicians do tend to be bilingual. I suspect that the high numbers afforded to Corsican-speaking policymakers is a reflection on the oppositional nature of local and national politics; in other words, because the local administration stands in such marked contrast to the French administration they are seen as very authentically ‘Corsican’, despite the fact that very little administrative activity goes on in the Corsican language.

Question 24 asked respondents to reflect on how much pride other members of their language community have for their language, culture and history.

**Table 6.25.** *Survey Question 24: In your opinion, how proud are Corsicans/Galicians/Sorbs of their language, culture & history?*

	<i>Not Proud ←</i>						<i>→ Very Proud</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>				
<b>Corsican</b>	1	1	1	6	14	55	78	4.51		
	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	7.7%	17.9%	70.5%				
<b>Galician</b>	17	38	104	184	102	48	493	2.93		
	3.4%	7.7%	21.1%	37.3%	20.7%	9.7%				
<b>Sorbian</b>	0	2	12	39	32	30	115	3.66		
	.0%	1.7%	10.4%	33.9%	27.8%	26.1%				

Once again, there is a large gap between Corsicans and the other two; the former seem by far the most proud of their unique cultural heritage. More than two-thirds (70.5%) of Corsican respondents gave the highest score for this question, resulting in an average score of 4.51. The other two groups have their peak in the middle of the scale, with Sorbian coming in second with an average of 3.66 and Galician at the low end with 2.93. I believe Corsican’s score reflects a strong feeling of pride attached to



being Corsican that does not necessarily include the language. The comments seem to support this interpretation:

*“Fierce pride is a well-known character trait among Corsicans.”*

*“We used to feel inferior to France, which is a classic complex of colonised people. Since the 1970s we have realised who we are, and we have become very proud to be different.”*

*“Corsicans are very, very proud... but what do we do to save our language?”*

Another thing to keep in mind is that Corsicans have a more highly developed nationalist sense than the other two communities – they are, after all, the only one of the three to have had a nationalist movement that encompassed a militant separatist element. In contrast, many comments from Galicians indicate that there is a strong perception that the image of Galician as a backward, peasant language continues to persist for many people. These commenters tended to distance themselves from their given score by framing it as ‘what other people think’, while implying that they obviously don’t agree. I find this interesting that such perceptions of devaluation seem so widespread; of course my sample constitutes a non-random segment of the population, but even so I wonder if this is an overly pessimistic viewpoint that those concerned with the future of Galician are holding.

Question 26 asked about the rate of out-migration for economic or other reasons. The question of job migration seemed like a fitting one to ask, as all three regions are ‘peripheral’, both geographically and economically. Although the changing economic structure of Europe along with the subsidies of the EU itself have made the problem much less severe, there are still limited employment opportunities for young people in all three regions. Economic out-migration has been identified as one of the most severe problems facing minority languages, for immigrants rarely

find themselves in an environment in which it is lucrative or feasible to continue use of the minority language.

**Table 6.26.** *Survey Question 26: How many people do you believe emigrate from Corsica/Galicia/Lusatia each year (e.g. to find jobs)?*

	<i>Many</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Few</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	23	40	10	0	73
	31.5%	<b>54.8%</b>	13.7%	.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	135	210	126	6	477
	28.3%	<b>44.0%</b>	26.4%	1.3%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	71	39	5	0	115
	<b>61.7%</b>	33.9%	4.3%	.0%	

As we can see, all three communities report still significant levels of out-migration, with Sorbian reporting the highest levels – 61.7% of Sorbian respondents say that ‘many’ people are forced to emigrate. Galician seems to be the most stable of the three, which is understandable due to the size of the region in which the language is spoken. Corsica seems to fall somewhere in the middle, with numbers split between the two highest options, *many* (31.5%) and *some* (54.8%). This is no doubt partly due to increased opportunities on Corsica in recent years due to a boom in tourism, as several commenters pointed out.

#### **6.1.4. Support and Policies**

The final set of questions relates to the type and amount of support these minority languages get in their communities from local, national and European sources. Questions 15 and 16 asked about the presence and nature of instruction of both the

minority language and English in public schools, and were included to check the accuracy of official data on language teaching.

**Table 6.27.** *Survey Question 15. Is Corsican/Galician/Sorbian taught in public schools in your community?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	58	2	60
	<b>96.7%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	479	6	486
	<b>98.6%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	110	2	112
	<b>98.2%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	

**Table 6.28.** *If yes, at what age does Corsican/Galician/Sorbian teaching begin?*

	$\leq 5$	6-12	13+	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	30	26	2	21	79
	<b>38.0%</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	191	284	2	23	500
	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>56.8%</b>	<b>.4%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	37	72	0	13	122
	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>59.0%</b>	<b>.0%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	

**Table 6.29.** *If yes, is it an obligatory or optional subject?*<sup>20</sup>

	<i>Obligatory</i>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	15	41	20	76
	19.7%	<b>53.9%</b>	26.3%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	31	72	12	115
	27.0%	<b>62.6%</b>	10.4%	

The responses to question 15 reveal that the teaching of the minority language is indeed nearly universal in all three language communities; only a very small minority (1.2-3.3%) say it is not offered. In the responses to the first sub-question we can also see that most teaching of the languages begins relatively young, with a majority of children starting at some point in elementary school. There does appear to be quite a high number who start in a formalised way at a very young age, in preschool or Kindergarten programmes (more than 30% in all three communities). Note, however, that Corsicans seem the least clear on age; a full quarter (26.6%) say they have no idea at what age it starts. Also, in the second sub-question we can see that for both Corsican and Sorbian, the majority of respondents believe that this instruction happens in an optional context (53.9% and 62.6%), which is to be expected given the weak educational legislation concerning these two languages; although note again the large percentage of Corsicans (26.3%) who do not know whether it is optional or obligatory. Although Galicians were not asked this last question, many left extensive commentary which is relevant to this last point. An overwhelming number of Galicians reported that although Galician teaching in

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<sup>20</sup> This question was introduced after the Galician survey was completed.

schools is in theory obligatory in every state-funded school, in practice many teachers get away with using it little or not at all. As one commenter put it:

*“The law states that some subjects must be taught in Galician, a regulation that most of the time is not respected because of a lack of vigilance by the administration.”*

One respondent even reported that they have witnessed teachers doing their best to convince their pupils of the uselessness of mastering Galician, although this may be an isolated incident.

**Table 6.30.** *Survey Question 16: Is English taught in public schools in your community?*

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	49	3	56
	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	427	48	476
	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	111	0	111
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>.0%</b>	

**Table 6.31.** *If yes, at what age does English teaching begin?*

	$\leq 5$	6-12	13+	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	7	41	0	31	79
	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>51.9%</b>	<b>.0%</b>	<b>39.2%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	88	334	7	71	500
	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>66.8%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	9	100	2	11	122
	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>82.0%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	

**Table 6.32.** *If yes, is it an obligatory or optional subject?*<sup>21</sup>

	<i>Obligatory</i>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	25	21	31	77
	32.5%	27.3%	<b>40.3%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	75	23	11	109
	<b>68.8%</b>	21.1%	10.1%	

Question 16 asked the same question about the presence of English in the educational system. English is apparently also taught in the schools according to a majority of respondents (between 87% and 100%) in all three regions. The majority of students who study English begin in primary school, between the ages of 6 and 12, with only very few beginning earlier or later, in contrast to the minority language, where a large number begin in preschool. On the other hand, English seems to be frequently obligatory in Corsica and Lusatia, while the minority language is not. In fact 68.8% of Sorbian respondents say it is obligatory; obligation is reportedly lower among Corsican respondents (32.5%), though the largest percentage of them (40.3%) again don't know. What emerged in the comments is that many people are sure that studying a foreign language is obligatory, but they are not sure if English specifically is required.

With question 17, I attempted to solicit opinions on how strong a presence in the educational system people would like the minority language to have in relation to the majority language.

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<sup>21</sup> This question was introduced after the Galician survey was completed.

**Table 6.33.** *Survey Question 17: How much attention do you think Corsican/Galician/Sorbian should be given in schools compared to French/Spanish/German?*

	<i>More Time</i>	<i>Same Amount</i>	<i>Less Time</i>	<i>Should not be taught at all</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	14	50	14	0	78
	17.9%	<b>64.1%</b>	17.9%	.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	144	182	33	1	359 <sup>22</sup>
	40.1%	<b>50.7%</b>	9.2%	.3%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	31	71	17	0	119
	26.1%	<b>59.7%</b>	14.3%	.0%	

Not surprisingly, the answers to this question reflect a pragmatism on the part of the three minority language groups. A majority (more than 50%) of all three groups considers it important to give equal time to the majority and minority languages, whereas only a small minority thinks it deserves less or no time (in fact, only one person in the whole survey thought it deserves no time, because in her words “*Galician is useless*”). Of all the groups, Galicians believe the minority language deserves the most time, with 40.1% of respondents arguing that it should be given *more* time than Spanish. This was reinforced in the comments from many Galicians, who argued that what was as important as the amount of time devoted to Galician is the quality of that time; more subjects should be taught through the *medium* of Galician, in their view. I was surprised to see so few Corsicans advocating more time for Corsican, considering the incredibly high scores for this language on status and prestige-related questions. Considering that Corsican has such a weak presence in the educational system, however, the feeling might be that the first goal should be to

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<sup>22</sup> The comparatively low number of responses for Galician is a result of the question being introduced to the survey late.

equalise time given the two languages. Once that happens, perhaps more people would argue for greater time for Corsican, as they have for Galician.

Question 18 asks the same judgment about minority language school time to be made, but this time in relation to English and foreign languages.

**Table 6.34.** *Survey Question 18: How much attention do you think Corsican/Galician/Sorbian should be given in schools compared to foreign languages (e.g. English)?*

	<i>More Time</i>	<i>Same Amount</i>	<i>Less Time</i>	<i>Should not be taught at all</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	31	37	11	0	79
	39.2%	<b>46.8%</b>	13.9%	.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	350	114	30	1	495
	<b>70.7%</b>	23.0%	6.1%	.2%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	65	43	11	0	119
	<b>54.6%</b>	36.1%	9.2%	.0%	

Here the answers reflect a perception that the minority language is more valuable than English in the Sorbian and Galician communities, but less so in the Corsican. More than two-thirds of Galicians (70.7%) and just over half of the Sorbs (54.6%) would like to see the local language given more time and attention in schools than English compared to only 39.2% of Corsicans; the highest number of Corsicans (46.8%) think Corsican and English should be on a par. This, again, reflects an unexpected pragmatism on the part of Corsicans, and is particularly surprising as they indicated earlier that English has less prestige on Corsica than it does in the other two communities. The Galicians, by contrast, seemed downright indignant that I would suggest that English given more time than Galician, which they don't believe belongs in the same conceptual category as a second or foreign language:



“Galician is NOT the same as a foreign language!”

“It shouldn’t be treated as a ‘foreign language’, but Spanish should!”

Question 19 asked about the presence of both the minority language and English in the local media.

Survey Question 19: How much presence does \_\_\_\_\_ have in the mass media in your community?

**Table 6.35.** Corsican/Galician/Sorbian

	Little ← → Much						Total	Average Score
	0	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>Corsican</b>	0	16	17	25	13	7	78	2.72
	0%	20.5%	21.8%	<b>32.1%</b>	16.7%	9.0%		
<b>Galician</b>	2	96	156	157	67	22	500	2.51
	.4%	19.2%	31.2%	<b>31.4%</b>	13.4%	4.4%		
<b>Sorbian</b>	2	36	33	36	10	5	122	2.25
	1.6%	29.4%	27.0%	<b>29.5%</b>	8.2%	4.1%		

**Table 6.36.** English

	Little ← → Much						Total	Average Score
	0	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>Corsican</b>	45	19	11	1	0	1	77	0.64
	<b>58.4%</b>	24.7%	14.3%	1.3%	.0%	1.3%		
<b>Galician</b>	274	161	45	12	0	1	493	0.59
	<b>55.6%</b>	32.7%	9.1%	2.4%	.0%	.2%		
<b>Sorbian</b>	8	34	27	22	18	7	116	2.25
	6.9%	<b>29.3%</b>	23.3%	19.0%	15.5%	6.0%		

We have very similar observations of the presence of the minority language; for all three groups the highest percentages cluster toward the middle of the scale and

averages hover in the 2.25-2.75 range. From information available, I would have assumed Galician would score higher as it seems to have the greatest media presence of the three minority languages (see chapter 3); however we should keep in mind that each community measures with a different yardstick, and thus should not expect the scores to correspond to each other. It is obvious, however, that all three communities think there is much room for improvement.

The presence of English in the media, by contrast, appears to be extremely low, at least in Galicia and Corsica (where competence in English is correspondingly low); in Lusatia it is rated to be exactly on a par with Sorbian. Since several Sorbian commenters referred to the inundation of English through pop music and slang words, I assume this is why English gets a significantly higher score; my own experiences in these three countries has also left me with the impression that English is more visible in the German media than in either the Spanish or French, possibly due to a higher competence in the general population.

Question 30 asked respondents to rate the attitude they believe their national government holds toward the minority language. As explained earlier, it was envisaged to have three minority languages that represented three different orientations of national governments, ranging from accommodating (Spain), to tolerant (Germany), to hostile (France). This is not exactly represented in the perceptions of the respondents, however.

**Table 6.37.** *Survey Question 30: What do you think is the attitude of your national government towards Corsican/Galician/Sorbian?*

	<i>Very Positive</i>	<i>Somewhat Positive</i>	<i>A Little Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>A Little Negative</i>	<i>Somewhat Negative</i>	<i>Very Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	1	5	6	6	8	21	29	76
	1.3%	6.6%	7.9%	7.9%	10.5%	27.6%	<b>38.2%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	3	10	23	88	106	116	135	481
	.6%	2.1%	4.8%	18.3%	22.0%	24.1%	<b>28.1%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	0	11	31	36	25	9	2	114
	.0%	21.9%	27.2%	<b>31.6%</b>	7.9%	9.6%	1.8%	

Germany, despite a lack of strong commitment to its minority groups, is perceived to have the most positive attitude. Spain is second, despite the considerable power and autonomy granted to regional government; this is no doubt largely connected with the political situation at the time of the survey in which the right-wing *Partido Popular* ruled the central government and was responsible for clampdowns on minority activism and freedom in other minority regions (for example, the Basque political party *Herri Batasuna* as well as a prominent Basque-language newspaper were both shut down by Spanish authorities in 2002-2003). Nevertheless, the most negative attitude is perceived to be that of the French government, which follows from their historical anti-minority stance and strong centralised structure.

I certainly expected this question to elicit some passionate responses, but I was surprised at both the volume and the sentiments expressed. Galicians and Corsicans both lashed out at their central governments, accusing them of doing their best to help their languages disappear. As one Galician commenter remarked,

*“They’ll be extremely happy (and relieved) when it’s gone.”*

Another Galician said that although the stance is officially positive, in reality Spanish has more privileges in Galicia than Galician,

*“...thanks to a constitution that makes knowledge of the former a duty and knowledge of the latter a privilege.”*

Corsicans drew attention to France’s unashamed repression of all its minorities.

*“They continue regarding our language as a patois,”*

one commenter said; another claimed that France has made sure that even those who speak Corsican have no place in which to do so. A few Corsican commenters pointed to the need for France to support obligatory Corsican-language education; considering, however, that even the local population has proven to be divided on this issue (see chapter 4.4.4), it is unlikely that the French administration would support this. Among the Sorbs there were general grumbles about the failure of the German government to deliver anything other than promises:

*“They promise a lot, but they do nothing.”*

*“When the elections are over everything is forgotten.”*

Others expressed the view that that the German central administration barely knows that the Sorbs exist; several others complained that support for Sorbian language and culture at the end of the day comes down to nothing more than a question of finances in Berlin (referring specifically to several school closures due to lack of funding).

Question 31 followed on this with the same question concerning EU attitudes.

**Table 6.38.** Survey Question 31: What do you think is the attitude of the EU towards Corsican/Galician/ Sorbian?

	<i>Very Positive</i>	<i>Somewhat Positive</i>	<i>A Little Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>A Little Negative</i>	<i>Somewhat Negative</i>	<i>Very Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	1	12	20	21	4	1	2	61
	1.6%	19.7%	32.8%	<b>34.4%</b>	6.6%	1.6%	3.3%	
<b>Galician</b>	3	16	51	156	54	47	38	365
	.8%	4.4%	14.0%	<b>42.7%</b>	14.8%	12.9%	10.4%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	4	24	38	26	2	0	0	94
	4.3%	25.5%	<b>40.4%</b>	27.7%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	

In contrast to national governments, the EU is generally seen as a more benevolent force by all three groups. Sorbs rate the attitude of the EU the highest, with the largest percentage (40.4%) giving it a rating of ‘a little positive’. Corsicans are split between ‘a little positive’ (32.8%) and ‘neutral’ (34.4%), whereas it seems Galicians are not convinced, overwhelmingly rating its attitude as ‘neutral’ (42.7%). Although this stands in marked contrast to the perceptions about the national government, it doesn’t speak too highly for the perception of the EU’s minority-targeted measures (more on this in the discussion).

The majority of Galician comments suggest that they feel a distinct lack of interest or involvement from the EU, calling the institution “*indifferent*”, and “*ignorant of all its minority languages*”. According to one commenter:

*“The truth is that I don’t have any proof that the EU is concerned with the fate of Galician. What started out as a union of people that supposedly wanted to safeguard diversity, now more and more seems like a multinational company with its headquarters in London, Paris and Berlin, that uses the rest of us as its construction labourers.”*

Among Corsicans, several who remarked that it seems the EU does nothing acknowledged that this is most likely because France doesn’t allow them to:

*“They don’t have enough power to change the position of the French government.”*

A Sorbian commenter rated the EU’s attitude as

*“Generally positive, as long as it doesn’t cost them anything.”*

Another contrasted the Sorbs with the Corsicans and Basques, saying

*“Because we’re not militant we’re of no interest to them.”*

There were several commenters from each group, however, who called attention to the *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* as an illustration of the positive attitude of the EU, obviously unaware that this document is not part of the EU’s framework at all but instead belongs to the Council of Europe.

As we saw in chapter 3, Europeanists heralded one of the benefits of EU integration to be the way in which minority language communities would be more able to cross-fertilise by sharing information, strategies and success stories with one another. Question 32 thus asked if more awareness of other minority groups had come about as a result of the EU.

**Table 6.39.** *Survey Question 32: Has the EU made you more aware of other minority language communities?*

	<i>Very Much</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>A Little</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	0	9	20	40	69
	.0%	13.0%	29.0%	<b>58.0%</b>	
<b>Galician</b>	3	42	78	345	468
	.6%	9.0%	16.7%	<b>73.7%</b>	
<b>Sorbian</b>	5	24	24	34	87
	5.7%	27.6%	27.6%	<b>39.1%</b>	

The answer for each of the three communities appears to be ‘no’, though with varying degrees of certainty. Galicians seem most adamant, with 73.7% denying any

heightened awareness as a result of EU policy; the Corsicans are slightly less convinced with 58% saying ‘no’, Sorbs are the most split on this opinion with 27.6% each choosing ‘some’ and ‘a little’, and the largest percentage, 39.1% choosing ‘no’. Of the few who commented here, most simply re-stated their ignorance of EU policy; a few others said that they know about other minorities through their own efforts to educate themselves, not thanks to any influence from the EU. Two respondents – one Galician and one Corsican – voiced the opinion that the EU has indeed influenced language awareness, though not of other minority languages, but of English.

In light of the efforts put into minority language matters by the EU, two questions relating to the effect of EU efforts on both speakers of these languages and government were asked. Question 33 asked respondents to assess the change in attitude (if any) the EU has caused among speakers of the languages in question, specifically asking if people feel more pride in using their language as a result of EU measures.

**Table 6.40.** *Survey Question 33: How has the EU influenced people's attitude to using Corsican/Galician/Sorbian?*

	<i>People are much more proud</i>	<i>People are a little more proud</i>	<i>There has been no change</i>	<i>People are a little less proud</i>	<i>People are much less proud</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	0	9	54	1	0	64
	.0%	14.1%	<b>84.4%</b>	1.6%	.0%	
<b>Galician</b>	0	29	406	9	5	449
	.0%	6.5%	<b>90.4%</b>	2.0%	1.1%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	3	30	56	3	0	92
	3.3%	32.6%	<b>60.9%</b>	3.3%	.0%	

An overwhelming majority of Corsicans (84.4%), Galicians (90.4%) and Sorbs (60.9%) responded that there had been no change whatsoever due to the influences of the EU. The only group that indicated any significant improvement in attitude was the Sorbs, with roughly a third (32.6%) believing the EU has had a positive effect. A couple of Sorbian commenters made reference to the eastward expansion of the EU as a boost for attitudes toward Sorbian, as it will undoubtedly open up more economic opportunities for speakers of a Slavic language. Most comments, however, reiterated the perceived ignorance, ineffectiveness and/or impotence of EU policy on minority language issues; one Galician commenter argued that if the EU wants to influence attitudes in minority language communities, they need to make minority languages official in their institutions.

**Table 6.41.** *Survey Question 34: How has the EU influenced your national government's attitudes to Corsican/Galician/Sorbian?*

	<i>The government is now much more favourable</i>	<i>The government is now a little more favourable</i>	<i>There has been no change</i>	<i>The government is now a little more negative</i>	<i>The government is much more negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Corsican</b>	0	19	36	2	1	58
	.0%	32.8%	<b>62.1%</b>	3.4%	1.7%	
<b>Galician</b>	2	40	338	7	7	394
	.5%	10.2%	<b>85.8%</b>	1.8%	1.8%	
<b>Sorbian</b>	2	29	52	1	0	84
	2.4%	34.5%	<b>61.9%</b>	1.2%	.0%	

Question 34 asked about the EU's impact on governmental attitudes, and here again the communities share the same opinion: a majority of Galicians (85.8%), Corsicans (62.1%) and Sorbs (61.9%) believe that there has been no impact. However, there



does appear to be slightly more difference of opinion here; a third of both Sorbs and Corsicans think their government has responded to EU pressure by improving their own policies on minority languages. Galicians remain sceptical, however, and only a tenth (10.7%) of the respondents see any positive change at all. Two Galicians had similar comments:

*“They (the government) do try to look a bit more ‘civilised’ in general, but I don’t see that it has any real effect.”*

*“They have changed the way their face looks to the audience, but over here things are exactly as they were before, if not worse.”*

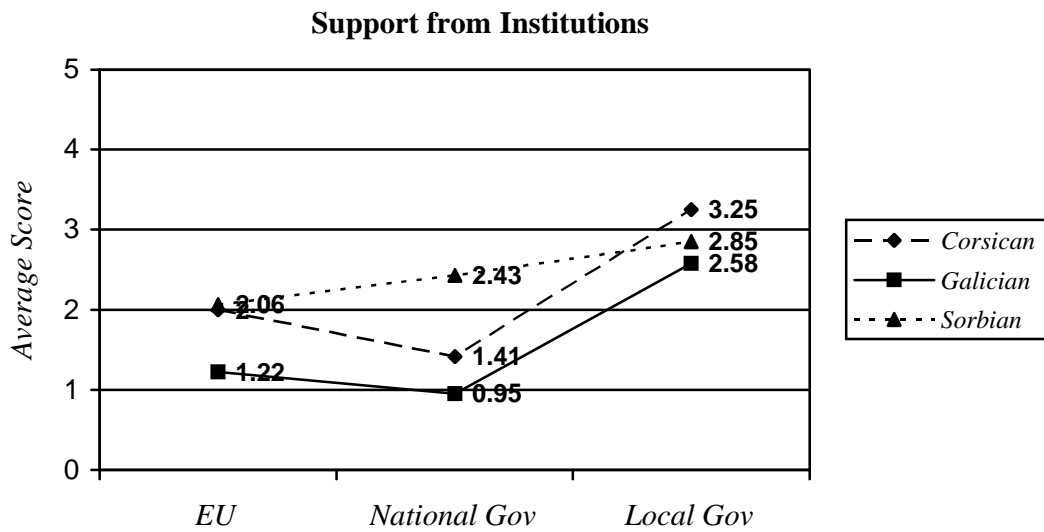
A Corsican commented that:

*“[The EU] might have been favourable, but France refuses to cooperate.”*

Several commenters from all three groups again made reference to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, highlighting it as a notable positive effect; a number of these, however, expressed dismay that there is no designated EU authority that has the power to enforce the Charter’s provisions, or in the case of Corsicans, to force France to ratify it. It is quite possible that this confusion over the true source of the ECRML has led to a higher general estimation of the EU’s effect on government attitudes than would have been expressed otherwise.

Question 35 asked respondents to rate the amount of tangible support, whether economic, social or cultural, that they believe their minority language receives from the EU, from their national government, and from their local government. They were asked to rate the support on a scale of 0 (no support) to 5 (very high level of support).

**Figure 6.2.** Survey Question 35: Please rate the level of support you think minority languages get from the EU/your national government/your local government.



The chart above shows average scores from all three groups. A quick glance shows that everyone seems to agree that local governments are doing the most, as these scores (3.25, 2.85 and 2.58 for Corsican, Sorbian, and Galician respondents respectively) are all higher than those assigned to the EU and national government efforts. As for whether the EU or national governments seem to be providing more support, opinions are mixed. The Sorbs believe the German government does more to support them than the EU; they rate the EU's support at an average of 2.06 and the national government's support at 2.43. Both the Galicians and the Corsicans, however, believe the EU is doing more than the national government. Galicians rate the EU's efforts at 1.22 and the Spanish government's at 0.95, while the Corsicans rate the EU's at 2.06 and the French government's at 1.41.

A couple of other trends seem noteworthy here. First of all, the Galicians seem to perceive the lowest amount of support of all the groups; their ratings for all three institutions fall behind their Corsican and Sorbian counterparts'. The Sorbs, by

contrast, rate all three institutions quite highly and seem to recognise little difference between the amount of support provided by local, national, and European sources. Corsicans show the biggest internal disparity; their rating for the French government is nearly two points lower than their rating for the Corsican administration. Among Galician commenters, again, there seems to be significant rancour against all the institutions measured here for failing to do more. The *Xunta* is singled out as providing only the minimum amount of support to Galician needed to win votes for the administration, while the EU and the Spanish government are criticised for a lack of interest and/or commitment:

*“The Xunta could really do much more than it does. It does what is obligated by law, nothing more.”*

*“In terms of support that is real, tangible and effective, we don’t get any from any of these institutions.”*

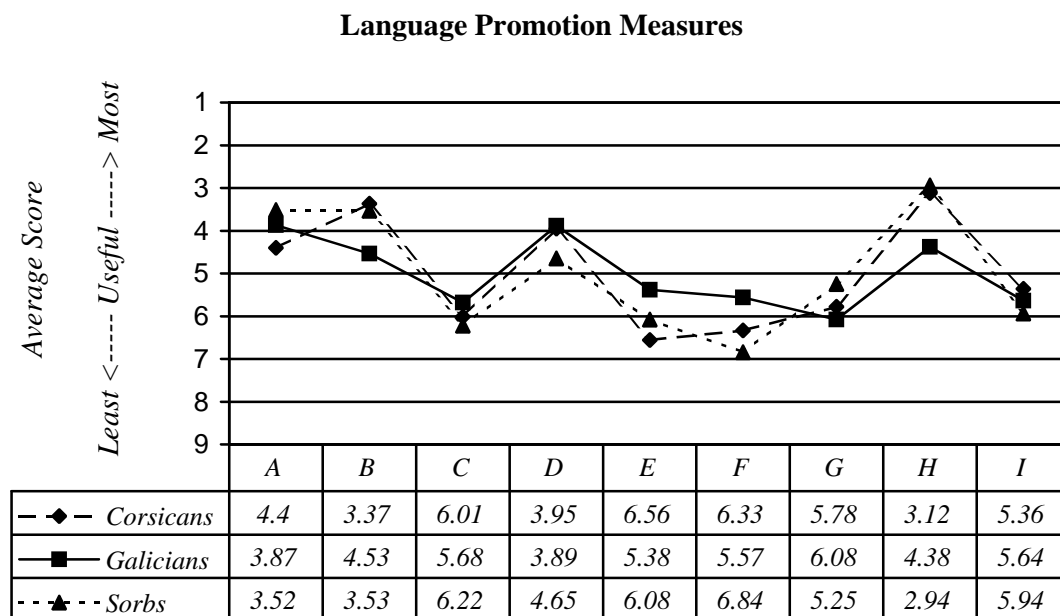
*“Maybe the EU does something, but we don’t notice it here.”*

Financial support seems to be the key topic for Sorbs; the majority of comments revolve around the amount of money provided by the three institutions, with some praising the amount of money that is channelled into Sorbian affairs, others criticising the paucity of funds, and still others complaining that Sorbian should be receiving types of support other than just financial. There were a couple, however, who single out the local government as responsible for recent school closures, and have given this institution correspondingly low scores on this account.

The survey’s final question contained a list of measures commonly employed as part of language normalisation programmes. Respondents were asked to rate each measure according to how useful they think each one *is* (if it exists already) or *could*

be (if it does not), on a scale of 1 (most important) to 9 (least important). They were asked to assign each number only once.

**Figure 6.3.** Survey Question 36: Please rank the following according to how useful you think they are or could be for helping Corsican/Galician/Sorbian to survive in your community. Please assign each number only once.



*Legend*

- A: Corsican/Galician/Sorbian-speaking preschool programmes*
- B: Bilingual primary/secondary schooling*
- C: University courses of study through the medium of Corsican/Galician/Sorbian*
- D: Mass media in Corsican/Galician/Sorbian*
- E: Jobs requiring knowledge of Corsican/Galician/Sorbian*
- F: Official/Government services available in Corsican/Galician/Sorbian*
- G: Traditional/cultural activities in the community*
- H: More families using Corsican/Galician/Sorbian in the home*
- I: More political power/autonomy for Corsica/Galicia/Lusatia*

The above chart shows that there was a remarkable amount of coherence in the average scores of all three groups. The concurrent peaks indicate that the same types of measures were perceived as being important in all three areas, despite the very different socio-historical and current sociolinguistic context of the languages.

Here is a breakdown of the highest-scoring measures, both by average score and by percentage of respondents:

*Top three measures for each group based on average score*

**Corsicans:**

1. More families using it in the home (3.12)
2. Bilingual primary/secondary schooling (3.37)
3. Mass media in Corsican (3.95)

**Galicians:**

1. Galician-speaking preschool programs (3.87)
2. Mass media in Galician (3.89)
3. More families using it in the home (4.38)

**Sorbs:**

1. More families using it in the home (2.94)
2. Sorbian-speaking preschool programs (3.52)
3. Bilingual primary/secondary schooling (3.53)

*Top three measures for each group based on percentage of respondents assigning it a '1'*

**Corsicans**

1. More families using it in the home (46.6%)
2. Bilingual primary/secondary schooling (15.1%)
3. Corsican-speaking preschool programs (8.2%)

**Galicians**

1. More families using it in the home (27.0%)
2. Galician-speaking preschool programs (17.3%)
3. Mass media in Galician (15.6%)

**Sorbs**

1. More families using it in the home (55.8%)
2. Sorbian-speaking preschool programs (13.0%)
3. Bilingual primary/secondary schooling, Official/Government services available in Sorbian, Traditional/cultural activities in the community (all 6.5%)

In terms of both average scores and percentage of respondents assigning the highest score, four measures stand out as being most important to all three groups: *use in the home, minority-language preschool programmes, bilingual primary/secondary programmes, and presence in the mass media.* Things like *university courses of study in the minority language, government services and traditional/cultural activities, and more political power for the minority language*

*region* were universally perceived as having less importance. The Corsicans and Sorbs gave the highest average score to *use in the home* while the Galicians gave it to *preschool programmes*; in terms of percentages, however, *use in the home* was selected by the largest number of people for all three language groups. Looking at the percentages is useful because it tells us that there were varying amounts of internal cohesion in the three groups; Galicians, for instance, seem less convinced of their first choice than the other two groups, evidenced by the fact that there are comparatively small gaps between the percentages that gave the top three choices the highest score – there is only a ten percent difference (27% vs. 17.3%) between ‘use in the home’ and ‘preschool programmes’, for instance. The Sorbs, by contrast, were remarkably unified, with 55.8% giving ‘use in the home’ the top score, a full 42% more than the percentage that selected ‘preschool programmes’ (13%), the second most popular choice. The Corsicans, though not as unanimous as the Sorbs, still had a 30% margin between ‘use in the home’ (46.6%) and their second choice of ‘bilingual primary/secondary schooling’ (15.1%).

Galicians gave the impression of being less enthusiastic about many of the measures than the other two groups. A recurring bone of contention among Galician commenters was the type of schooling proposed; many argued that more important than bilingual primary and secondary schooling was monolingual Galician schooling, with Castilian as an auxiliary subject – this, presumably, is because bilingual schooling is so institutionalised already. A few suggested that another important measure would be to reconnect ties with Portuguese as a way of gaining prestige and speakers for the language (although, as we have seen in section 4.2.3, this ‘reintegrationist’ viewpoint is far from universal). Overall, though, there was a sense

of pessimism among Galician commenters, pointing out that although most of these measures are already in place, the fact that they are carried out without enthusiasm or motivation has meant they have done very little to improve the language situation. Others spoke of the difficulty in changing attitudes, and spoke of how they believe too many negative connotations are attached to the language. In the words of one commenter:

*“If we don’t find a way to make people proud to speak Galician to each other, in a few years the language will be dead. In fact, I believe it’s already dead.”*

For Corsicans the critical issue seems to be obligation. On one hand there seem to be a large number of Corsicans who are concerned about the fate of the language, but are loathe to see any measure promoting it to become obligatory: “interest in learning Corsican resides in the choice and not in the obligation to use it” was the opinion of one commenter, and “aggressive protection policies can be dangerous... to me it seems essential to maintain a certain freedom of choice,” was that of another. Others are of the opposite opinion, declaring that for language survival it is crucial that Corsican be officially recognised and mandatory in schools. From the numbers, though, it is clear that a majority of people share the sentiments of this commenter:

*“The most important thing is re-learning to use Corsican in daily life! This is the only thing that will assure its survival.”*

Sorbs, on the whole, seem more optimistic in their commentary, with many remarking that all the measures are indispensable for language survival. Various commenters picked out individual issues, stressing the need to increase Sorbian’s visibility in the media as well as the need to bring the image of the culture ‘up to date’, without which it will not appeal as much to young people. One measure that

does not seem to be as popular is the prospect of more political power for Lusatia, which is surprising as this region arguably has the least autonomy of all three communities. The arguments against this were that Sorbs are not in enough of a numerical majority in this region to justify it, and also that this might cause unwanted tensions between the German and Sorbian communities. Many also support the importance they place on schooling in the comments, arguing that trivialities such as financing should not get in the way of this important need to formalise and develop the language learned at home. It is at home, however, where Sorbs, like everyone else, see the most pressing need for action. As one Sorb said,

*“The most important thing is quite simply that Sorbian families need to speak Sorbian at home, and so doing pass on the language to their children. Everything else is naturally important and helpful, but the daily usage of the language must form the foundation.”*

## **6.2 DISCUSSION**

The answers and commentary given for all the survey questions give us valuable insight into both language vitality and the types of support these communities are receiving. In this section, however, I will attempt to pick out and summarise some of the most important trends that emerge from this data, concentrating first on the overall picture of vitality that is painted by these three communities’ responses, and then reflecting on the perceptions of language support and what implications these hold for changes in policy. I will conclude the discussion of survey results by offering some generalizations about specific trends in vitality and policy which I believe hold relevance for other minority language communities and the people working for their revitalisation.



### 6.2.1. Assessment of Vitality

Galician, from the outset, looked to be the strongest language of the three, and indeed, many of the numbers support this assessment. Language competence is extremely high, with close to 100% of respondents reporting near-perfect abilities in speaking, understanding, reading and writing. Two-thirds of respondents say they speak it to some extent at home and report that in most communities a majority of their neighbours have high competence in it as well. Galician is taught in schools, according to nearly all the respondents, and begins at an early age; it has an important presence in the media and is generally well-supported institutionally.

Nevertheless, the weaknesses are impossible to ignore. The gap between the percentage of people reported to be *able* to speak Galician and the percentage that *regularly* speaks it is large, and despite the increases Galician has made in institutional spheres over the last three decades, its speakers report that every ten years has seen a decline in speakers rather than an increase. Galician still suffers from surprisingly low prestige compared to both Spanish and English; in terms of taking pride in their unique cultural identity, Galicians rate themselves as lower than either Sorbs or Corsicans. While some regard Galician as helpful to finding a job, nearly as many say it really doesn't matter, despite Galician's status as an official language of the autonomous community. Galician-speakers are, likewise, reported to have much less influence over economic and political matters than their Spanish-speaking counterparts, and immigration away from Galicia is reported to still be quite high. Galicians in their commentary sound despondent and pessimistic, many expressing the belief that the recent positive changes to language attitudes and behaviour are superficial at best.

It would seem that Galician is presenting a classic case of top-down language planning whereby measures being implemented in higher (public/official) domains are doing nothing to address the gradual erosion in home and community use. It may be that twenty-five years is simply too short a time to see real changes in use and prestige due to institutional support, and this low vitality is improving, albeit slowly. It seems, however, that if there was an improvement the community would perceive it, and there would be considerably less pessimism than there is. From what they report, Spanish is simply too dominant and too useful, and failure to address the underlying issues of prestige and economic incentive have left competent speakers of Galician with little motivation to make it a part of their daily life. Although still not anywhere near moribund, Galician is suffering consistent language decline and will continue to do so unless a turnaround in practice occurs with the younger generations.

Sorbian, though possessing a very different demographic and political profile, seems to have equally contradictory signs where vitality is concerned. On the positive side, while speaker competence is not quite as good as among Galicians, it is remarkably good for a language of Sorbian's size. In addition, a higher percentage of speakers than either Galician or Corsican report that they learned the language natively and speak Sorbian exclusively at home. Sorbs seem to perceive a very strong link between language and identity, citing the former as nearly indispensable to the latter, and report that language is generally seen as helpful to know, both for local job prospects and for relating with Lusatia's Czech and Polish neighbours. Finally, Sorbian is well-protected institutionally, with legislation guaranteeing a climate of tolerance, a presence in schools, and funding for cultural organisations.

The other side of the coin cannot be ignored, however. First, the speaker numbers are tiny – only about 60,000 people are reported to have any competence in Sorbian. The demographics are also less than favourable in that even within the territories of Upper and Lower Lusatia, Sorbs represent a minority of the population; most survey respondents report that within their communities less than one-quarter of the population has any knowledge at all of Sorbian. The language is also concentrated in small towns and therefore offers few employment opportunities for people who choose to remain in these communities. Sorbs are perceived to have correspondingly little influence over economic and political matters in their communities, and the language's relative prestige is rated the lowest of all three minority languages. Language loss is perceived to be progressing at a frighteningly fast pace, with more unified perceptions of decline expressed than for either Galician or Corsican, and in terms of economic out-migration, Lusatia seems to lose more people each year than either of the other two areas. Above all, Sorbian seems to be at a crucial watershed; the relative insularity and stability of existence under the GDR protected the vitality of Sorbian until fairly recently, but now, faced with the pressures of a globalised, capitalised society, the cracks are widening and vitality is beginning to plummet. Unfortunately the small speaker base doesn't leave much room for manoeuvring; if any measures are to be successful at stemming this slide, they must be implemented soon, before the language is unquestionably moribund.

The Corsicans clearly present the most paradoxical set of vitality indicators. On one hand, variables that deal with highly subjective attitudinal and perceptual domains tend to score higher on average than the other two languages. For example, the prestige attached to Corsican is rated much higher than either Galician or

Sorbian, speakers of Corsican are perceived to have more control over both economic and political matters than their other minority-language counterparts, Corsicans are perceived to be extremely proud of their language, culture and history, and more of them say they have taught or will teach their children Corsican than their Galician and Sorbian counterparts. On the other hand, variables that concern an objective assessment of personal language use and proficiency give a much lower indicator of vitality. Competence in all areas of language ability, for example, are much lower than they are for the other two groups, and language use in the community and in the home are much lower than the subjective variables would lead us to expect.

It is this second group of variables, I believe, that probably reflects a truer picture of the actual vitality of Corsican. If even the most ardent activists in the community (which I assume constitute the basis of my sample) neither consider themselves proficient in the language nor use it actively in the home, there is very little chance that intergenerational transmission is happening. I was, however, surprised by the comparatively large percentage of Corsicans to report that they consider Corsican to be their native language, as this does not seem to go hand-in-hand with language use or competence. In delving deeper into this question I realised that this question may have less of an 'objective' slant for Corsicans than I had assumed. Alexandra Jaffe (1999), who spent fourteen months living on Corsica and observing language practices comments on the highly politicised nature of the identity-language link there, and the often problematic nature of calling oneself 'Corsican'. She explains that "language in Corsica has become one of the key symbolic sites in which issues of identity are articulated", and that for many Corsican

nationalists there exists “an extremely powerful image of a pure and unproblematic link between speaking and feeling/being Corsican,” which often does not match up with actual linguistic competence (1999:15). In other words, she found that there is a prevalent ideology that in order to consider oneself a true and “authentic” Corsican one must speak the language, and that preferably from birth. My guess is that although this ‘pure and unproblematic link’ is not as strong as it was when Jaffe was doing her fieldwork in the early 1990s (evidenced by the responses to question 22, in which the majority of respondents indicate that speaking Corsican is not necessary for identification as a Corsican), I believe it does, on a deeper level, explain the desire to ascribe mother-tongue status to Corsican regardless of how competently it is spoken. Simply put, where Corsicans would like there to be an unproblematic link, there is actually a very problematic one, with issues of identity and belonging muddying the waters of any objective mother-tongue assessment. In light of this, then, I am more inclined to trust reported competence as the more accurate reflection of general proficiency.

In terms of the high scores on other subjective variables, it could simply be a failure to distinguish between the language and other facets of ‘Corsicanness’, which as we have seen exist here alive and well as an oppositional identity to everything French. By rating these subjective variables highly, respondents are simply revealing how much symbolic value is still accorded to things considered traditionally ‘Corsican’. It may also be that a lack of proficiency in the language has caused it to take on some kind of ‘mythical’ status, so that it is glorified for what it represents (i.e. a linguistic form of resistance against French domination) rather than for how it actually functions in Corsican society. I suspect this may be the explanation behind

such high ratings for the prestige of Corsican, which are a reflection of ideology rather than objective status, and which when coupled with a lack of understanding of the meta-linguistic concept of prestige have created a misleading picture about Corsicans' commitment to the language itself. In any case, I believe it is evident that this strong emotional attachment to Corsican does not apparently translate into language practice, as use, proficiency and transmission are lower among Corsicans than either of the other groups.

The picture painted by all these variables is that vitality is distressingly low for all three communities, despite the considerable efforts being put into language revitalisation and normalisation programmes. While all three communities in this study have their differences of opinion and of situation, they all agree on what is needed the most. There need to be more native speakers created by home-based transmission, and these speakers need to have sufficient motivation to use the language in everyday life. Unfortunately, this is exactly what existing language support has failed to provide.

### **6.2.2. Assessment of Support**

As we saw in chapter 2, the European Union has been directing support in the form of funding and parliamentary resolutions to minority languages for the past twenty-five years. Because of its lack of explicit language policy and therefore power to hold states responsible for their actions in this arena, however, it has been a matter of debate just how much impact this support is actually having in the communities themselves. Several questions in this survey were thus designed to gauge exactly this. Specifically, I wanted to know from the perspective of the minority

communities themselves if there are any discernible changes happening in state policy as a result of the influence of the EU, if members of these communities are actually seeing any of the EU's direct support trickle down to them, and if there other subtler effects of integration that are having a positive influence on minority language vitality.

What my research has shown above all is that there seems to be a prevalent belief among members of these minority language communities that there is not. Three-quarters of Corsican and Galician respondents believe their national government expresses an overtly negative attitude towards their minority language; Sorbs are the exception, but still the largest percentage believe this attitude to be neutral. Likewise on the question of tangible support, all three communities make it clear that very little is coming their way from these governments, and indicate that if anything is provided, it is usually the bare minimum. All three communities are vocal about the ignorance, hostility and inactivity their governments display.

These perceptions alone would indicate that the European Union's activities are having very little effect on national governments, but the responses to questions specifically about the EU take this impression to the realm of certainty. A clear majority of all three language groups believes the EU has had no effect on either people's attitudes to using the minority language, or to the government's attitude to accommodating it, and the EU is seen as providing only marginally more support overall than national governments. In addition, most respondents say their awareness of other minority groups has not been increased at all by virtue of belonging to the Union. This point is particularly important, as this seemed one of the most self-evident gains that minority language speakers could expect from increased

integration. Temple, (1994), for example, in a survey of Breton speakers in the early 1990s, found a widespread belief that integration would result not only in mutual support but in fostering cooperation among minority language communities, possibly extending to coordinated campaigns to achieve legislative changes. It seems from the responses to this survey, however, that this has yet to happen.

Perhaps the most significant finding to emerge from the survey, however, is that the EU's attitude toward minority languages is seen as overwhelmingly neutral. The fact that these language communities are not aware of any positive effects indicates that the EU has effectively failed on many counts. Not only has it failed to sway the negative policies of national governments, it has failed to offer a more receptive political forum for the needs of minority language communities, and it has failed to fulfil its promise of being champion and protector of diversity in Europe. With so much rhetoric coming from Brussels on the EU's commitment to minority languages, one would expect the perception of this institution and its actions to be anything but neutral; the fact that it does surely indicates that the EU has yet to figure out how to turn rhetoric into reality.

Many respondents had no trouble putting their frustration with the EU into words, calling attention to inactivity and empty rhetoric of the institution in their comments. Both Corsicans and Galicians expressed frustration that the EU seems powerless to provide any support that isn't diluted through the filters of their oppressive national governments.

*"The EU has an ambiguous attitude," according to one Galician respondent, "which on the surface seems to reflect a concern about the situation of Galician and other minority languages, but at the same time doesn't translate into effective measures or put pressure on those member states with discriminatory practices, which is just about all of them."*



People in all three areas also speak of being ‘ignored and forgotten’ with the interests of both their government and the European Union hinging solely on political strategizing and not on actual concern for the minorities’ survival. The Corsicans and Galicians seem painfully aware that the general hostility of their state governments is neither being addressed nor penetrated by the activities of the European Union in support of minority language speakers, and a significant number of all three groups are frustrated that the Union does not allow their groups representation on the European stage.

These perceptions of the EU touch right at the heart of the weaknesses in EU language politics. Without a coordinated language policy, the EU is effectively powerless to stop discriminatory state practices. The states that have had traditionally hostile relationships with their minorities continue to have them, and the only country of the three profiled that seems to be having any positive relationship with its minorities (Germany), does so not because of European pressure, but because of its own efforts to distance itself from its political past. A rhetoric of respect for diversity is obviously not enough; to effect change in minority-member state relations, protection with the force of law behind it will have to be implemented.

It would, of course, be wrong to overstate the responsibility of the EU in the realm of language decline; obviously the main burden of language survival, particularly in the most crucial domains, must fall to the speakers themselves. Nevertheless, there are a myriad of social conditions which encourage or discourage language use, many of which are under the influence of policymakers. It is evident by now that the EU, by paving the way to integration, is having a direct influence on language patterns across Europe, and that this influence is as great, if not greater than

the influence currently being exerted by the member states themselves. What these survey results indicate more than anything else is that the EU, despite having a direct impact on these changes, is failing to do anything to steer impact in the right direction.

### **6.3. GENERALISATIONS**

I conclude this chapter with a summary of what I perceive to be the most important points to emerge from my survey results, and some of their possible implications. I posit them as generalisations, that is, as tendencies uncovered by the responses from my three case studies which are applicable to other minority situations in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

#### *1. Size does not guarantee vitality.*

I came into this study with the supposition that Galician, primarily due the size of its speaker base, would show stronger signs of vitality on nearly every count than the other two languages. As we can see, however, on many counts Galician seems to have lower vitality than the others. From the reports of limited use in the home to low prestige and lack of use in many domains, Galician displays a remarkably weak set of vitality indicators for a language spoken competently by 2.5 million people. In contrast, Sorbian, spoken by less than 60,000 people, scores higher in several areas, and even Corsican manages to outdistance Galician in ratings of prestige and status. I do still believe that overall Galician is in a stronger position than the other two, and indeed it is stronger than many other minority languages in Europe, but the picture painted by the survey indicates that size alone is not enough to base assumptions of

strong vitality (cf. Crowley 1999). In other words, just because a language has a large number of competent speakers does not mean that it is immune to the many of the same fundamental pressures that threaten much smaller languages. In fact, it may be that minority languages with large speaker bases are more vulnerable in some ways, since both researchers and the language's speakers are easily lulled into a false sense of security with the assumption that the language is not under imminent threat. Naturally where prioritising of funds and resources is an issue, smaller languages under threat of extinction need assistance first; nevertheless the strength and persistence of vitality of larger groups should in no way be taken as a given solely on account of its size.

## *2. Proficiency does not equate to usage.*

The observation that competence and usage are two often unrelated facets of language behaviour is, I feel, another important revelation from the Galician data. Although the same thing can be found in many different kinds of language situations (for example in all kinds of second-language learning scenarios), I believe the relevance of this observation for minority languages is especially great because a great deal of conscious effort is often put into creating competence, while comparatively less attention is given to encouraging use. As we can see with Galician, language planning in education can be applauded for creating a new generation of highly competent speakers; indeed, as Table 3 shows, nearly 100% of my survey respondents claimed good or perfect competence in all four areas of Galician language abilities. Nevertheless, as evidenced by specific questions about use in the home and use in the community, this high competence does not match up

with actual usage, even for this group concerned enough with language issues to respond to my survey. Naturally creating competence is a crucial part of any language planning effort, and in many ways it is the most easily controllable for language planners; however just as important is putting the competence to use in the community by encouraging and motivating people to use it.

*3. The prestige attached to language can reflect many social and ideological perceptions that do not relate to the language's true market value.*

The traditional model of language vitality (cf. section 2.2.1) holds that language prestige is, like speaker numbers and institutional support, one of the main pillars upon which vitality is established. The three-sided model also implies that prestige should have some sort of a dependent relationship with the other indicators of vitality, so that changes to one would have an impact on the others. As we have seen with our three communities, however, when it comes to the variable of language prestige, this relationship is problematic. It would seem from the survey results, in fact, that the variable of prestige can in fact vary widely without impacting directly on the other indicators of vitality, as the language with the lowest apparent vitality (Corsican) is accorded the highest prestige, while the language with the highest apparent vitality (Galician) has been accorded the lowest. This unpredicted configuration would seem to have less to do with actual language prestige in the community, as understood, for example, within the classic dichotomy of H and L varieties in diglossia, and more to do with complex issues of identity, nationalism and the nature of the relationship with the majority language and culture. It is also no doubt partly the result of varying interpretations of prestige by members of the

different communities. For purposes of assessing vitality, then, it may be worth making a conceptual distinction between prestige and market value, both of which tend to be lumped together under the heading of the former, but which obviously can have very different assessments, as we have seen in the Corsican data.

*4. Regardless of individual language circumstances, the most crucial domain for language revival is the home.*

As we saw in Figure 6.3, the three minority groups were unanimous in their selection of ‘more use in the home’ as the single most important measure in their view to insure the survival of their languages. This was surprising, considering the different circumstances and levels of vitality each language currently has, not to mention the vastly different types of language planning that have been carried out in each community. The fact that it was chosen by all three indicates its fundamental importance to minority language communities regardless of situation.

Its selection raises some questions, however, since it is the only one of the proposed measures that is not implementable through standard language planning efforts. Since the opportunity to use a language in the home is the one domain that arguably is not under the control of any external authority, the selection of this option by all three groups begs the question of why it is not already happening. There are, of course, outside factors that influence the choice of language in the home and the community’s desire to speak it there, chief among them the prestige and economic opportunity attached to the language. Ultimately, though, using it there is a question of individual decisions. By asking this question I was hoping to elicit opinions from members of these communities on the most effective intervention

points for future language planning; unfortunately the opinion that more people need to speak these languages in the home does not give much of a concrete road map to planners for how to help facilitate this. It is, however, valuable to know just how crucial this variable is perceived to be, and presumably any efforts that are targeted at increasing use in the home will be beneficial.

*5. The prestige of English is eroding minority language vitality.*

As we saw in chapters 2 and 3, English is increasingly being used as a lingua franca both around the world, and within Europe. A result of globalisation trends and the increased mobility afforded by integration, the perceived value of knowing English is being amplified across the continent, affecting language learning, language use and language status.

As we can see from the results in all three minority language communities, it appears that English is being afforded a more privileged role than the minority languages themselves; it is perceived as more helpful for finding jobs, it has more prestige, and it even has a stronger presence in the educational system in Corsica and Lusatia. Comments indicate as well that its perceived value is great; particularly in these economically and socially marginalised areas people feel that English offers them and their children real opportunities for advancement, while the minority language does not. It no doubt forces difficult choices upon people in these communities, that faced with limited time and resources to devote to second language learning and development they feel they must choose between, on one hand, a language they know will provide opportunities, and on the other, a language

they know to have immense symbolic, personal and identificational value but little usefulness.

Naturally, the sociolinguistic status of English and the relative importance of knowing it varies considerably across countries and communities in Europe, and in many places the discourses about its role in society are inextricable from broader discourses about globalisation, modernisation and liberalisation, but ultimately I believe that this is an issue that must, at least in part, be tackled by language planners and policy makers. Realistic language planning goals need to take into account that people will continue to want to develop competence in English, and therefore a more equitable balance will need to be struck between promoting competence and motivation to master all three languages: the majority language, the minority language, and English.

*6. State support cannot single-handedly bolster language vitality, however lack of state support can have a visibly negative impact on it.*

The question of state support is a large one for minority languages – it is often seen by groups that do not have it as the key to language survival. Nevertheless, as we can see from the example of Galician (not to mention other examples like Irish), merely institutionalising the language and providing for its use in government, education and the media will not by itself significantly increase vitality. It may increase competence, but competence does not necessarily translate into practice (see Point 2 above). Conversely, however, the survey data indicate that oppressive state policies and a refusal to institutionalise the language can have a visibly detrimental effect on language vitality, as in the case of Corsican. A comparison of language behaviour in

the most crucial domain of home and family (cf. tables 6.4, 6.5) shows Corsican to be in the most precarious position of all three languages, and the factor that most sets it apart from the other two is the abysmal level of support it receives from the French state. The lesson from all this seems to be that state support is necessary but not sufficient; in other words, without it a language will surely experience decline, but alone it will not guarantee language survival.

*7. The EU seems unable or unwilling to translate rhetoric into tangible support.*

Finally, as we can see in the answers to questions 31-35, all three minority language communities feel that the EU is failing to provide any tangible benefits to minority languages in Europe. Many seem to be aware that the institution has vocally supported diversity in general and minority languages in particular, but few see any support as a result of this; even the dream of cross-border cooperation between minorities seems to have gone unrealised. There may indeed be minority groups in Europe who feel they are benefiting from actions at the European level, but if these three communities profiled here are representatives of the majority, then most are not. The worrying thing is that these three communities are not the only ones currently being affected by this inactivity of the European institutions. There are, by conservative count, more than 54 minority languages in present-day Europe, including more than 20 in the recently-acceded countries of Eastern and Southern Europe, and they are all experiencing – or will soon experience – the same decline we have seen profiled here.

Indeed, integration is showing no signs of slowing down; with each year that passes Europe's population gets more mobile, more affluent, and many would argue,



more culturally homogenous. Language and economic opportunity are becoming increasingly linked, with an exclusive subset of European languages (chief among them English) being seen as more and more necessary for social and economic advancement. All of Europe's language minorities will be affected by these changes sooner or later, and based on the data examined here, these effects do not look like they will be favourable to language survival. It would thus seem imperative that European policymakers recognise the strain their lack of actions are placing on the survival of minority languages, the additional difficulties their *laissez faire* position is placing on speakers who must choose between the language of home and the language of advancement, and begin to develop a coordinated policy that tackles the minority language crisis from every angle it can.

#### **6.4. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I presented and analysed results from my sociolinguistic survey of members of the Galician, Corsican and Sorbian language communities. I looked at responses to questions that had asked respondents about their language behaviour and competence, their opinions and attitudes to various language-related variables, and their perceptions of the sufficiency of support their languages receive. Overall I was struck by the similarity of their situations. Despite the fact that patterns on individual questions varied considerably, particularly in response to questions of competence and attitudes, an overall picture of language decline is painted by all three communities, seemingly propelled by limited economic benefit, restricted domains of use, and general neglect on the part of the national administration. The perceptions of support are remarkably similar as well, with no group believing that

the EU is providing any tangible benefits to minority language communities. Perhaps the most surprising finding, however, is that these three groups even agree on what they perceive to be the most crucial step to be taken to combat language loss, namely more use in the home, with other variables targeting encouraging competence among young children a close second.

As we have seen in the discussion, these trends have led me to assess that both the actual vitality of these three languages and the amount of support they get are lower than commonly assumed, and that especially as this relates to the EU there should be some re-thinking of this institution's role in matters of language policy. Overall, the task of comparing the situations and responses of three minority groups has proven valuable, as it has allowed me to formulate a number of generalizations based on themes to emerge from the data, which I believe are applicable and useful for minority language researchers, planners and policymakers in a broad variety of contexts, both in Europe and beyond.

The next chapter brings this thesis to a close with a summary of the preceding work and general conclusions. In the first section I recap the topics discussed in each chapter and provide a brief recount of my survey results and the conclusions I have drawn from them. The second section looks beyond the scope of this thesis to ask why this research is useful more generally, and who else might benefit from its dissemination. In the final section, I return to the subject of the European Union to propose some possible steps this institution could take to solidify its commitment to minority language survival and begin to correct the linguistic imbalance in Europe that is being created partly as a result of its actions.

## **7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1. THESIS SUMMARY AND FINDINGS**

This thesis set out to investigate the problems facing minority languages in Europe, and attempted to assess whether current trends including globalisation and the integration of states under the European Union are having a positive or negative effect on minority language vitality. To do this I profiled three individual language groups, analysing their reported behaviours, perceptions and attitudes. By adopting a micro-level perspective to gain insights into a macro-level issue, I hoped to build a comprehensive picture of the situation of these minority languages which would be generalisable to minority languages across the European context.

Chapter 2 looked in detail at the theoretical foundations of minority and endangered language research. I gave an overview of the general language situation in the world today, in which 90% of the world's languages are predicted to disappear within the next generation. I examined the challenges globalisation and the spread of English are having on smaller languages around the world, and I profiled some of the responses to the 'endangered languages crisis' in both scholarly and lay circles. From there I moved on to retrace the theoretical development of the concept of language vitality, offering different definitions, identifying the relevant factors that influence it, and looking at the theory and practice of revitalisation and the kinds of strategies that have been developed to carry it out. I discussed what constitutes a 'minority', the competing definitions that have been proposed for this complex term, and offered a profile of language minority situations around the world. I briefly touched on the debates surrounding the division between language and dialect and commented how

despite the fact that this continues to be hotly-contested terrain in the study of language, it has potential real-world consequences for regional and minority languages and the level of recognition and support they receive.

I looked at the link between language and identity, and reflected on the proposition that language seems to be a ‘core cultural value’ for some groups but not others, and how simultaneously it seems to be a constantly-evolving facet of identity. I briefly touched on the relationship between language and nationalism, and examined how the idea that every nation needs a state and every state is a nation has evolved in Europe, effectively shutting out the many ‘stateless nations’ that inhabit current states and encouraging many minority language communities to feel compelled to seek political autonomy. From there I moved on to a discussion of language policy and planning, explaining the differences between the two and highlighting the many types of each that states commonly engage in. I looked at language rights, concentrating in particular on the debate surrounding whether the right to language should be considered a fundamental human right, or whether language rights should be classed as a separate, but still legitimate, category of rights. I also outlined the history of language rights in the international context as it has evolved over the past two centuries. I discussed the differences between negative rights and positive rights, indicating that for the most part minority language rights have overwhelmingly been regarded as implying negative rights, that is, not requiring any special effort on the part of states to uphold them.

In chapter 3, the scope was narrowed to Europe. I began by outlining the process of integration and showing how quickly the nation states in the European Union have come to relinquish a great portion of their sovereignty. I looked at the

way globalisation is affecting Europe, with English becoming seen as more and more essential to social and economic advancement, and in effect functioning as an unofficial ‘lingua franca’ across the continent. From there I moved on to the question of language, first outlining what the exact status of Europe’s own official policy on language is, and from there looking at how Europe deals with its minority languages. I outlined the presumed effects integration and globalisation are having on minority language use in Europe, and then looked at how the EU has responded to this by making minority language support a topic of debate. I analysed the specific actions the EU has taken in support of minority languages, including the founding of research and promotional institutions, the collection of data, and the passing of resolutions at the parliamentary level. I also looked at how the current wording of EU restrictions on legislating cultural policy has been interpreted to effectively prohibit the institution from interfering in language matters, instead leaving this important domain solely in the hands of the member states.

Chapter 4 presented my three case study languages. I provided a section on each of the states that are home to my selected minorities, profiling the development of language-based identity in the state and examining how language issues have historically been perceived and dealt with. I concluded that Spain, France and Germany all have experienced the cultivation of a strong link between ‘state’, ‘identity’ and ‘language’, though it has manifested itself in radically different ways. I held to my assessment that France is the country that has historically had the worst record for tolerance and accommodation of its minorities, while Spain has the best recently; overall, however, Germany has inflicted the least pressure to assimilate over the past two centuries. I profiled the relevant minority communities in each

state, the Galicians, Corsicans and Sorbs, and looked at how the developments in language ideology of their respective states has affected their present situation. I outlined their present circumstances and the status of the language, as it has been reported by other researchers and studies, intending to frame the situation for my own survey results, as well as in some cases provide a benchmark against which to compare the vitality indicators that emerge from my study.

Chapters 5 and 6 presented and analysed all my survey results. I looked at a multitude of variables that relate to competence, language use in different spheres, the status and prestige attached to the language, perceptions of its growth or decline, issues of identity, and the kinds of support that the languages receive from various sources including local, state and European sources. Several important findings emerged: first, that all three languages are suffering a continuing decline in vitality, that while competence is increasing intergenerational transmission is failing, that institutionalising and officialising these languages are not effectively stemming the tide of decline, that English is posing more of a threat than ever before, that national governments are still seen as overwhelmingly hostile to minorities and their aims, and that the EU's policies and rhetoric of support are having little to no effect on either member state attitudes and policies or on the vitality of the languages themselves. It also emerged that despite the differences between these three language communities, all of them agreed that the most essential area in which revitalisation needs to take place is the home, where it is essential to reintroduce these languages as a natural means of everyday communication.

In light of these findings, I concluded that current social, economic and linguistic realities in Europe seem to be hastening the decline of Europe's minority

languages and that, at least from the perspective of this group of dedicated minority-language speakers, the EU has in effect failed at what it claims to be trying to achieve, namely to provide a social and political climate that is favourable to minority language maintenance, to provide a forum for minorities to express grievances against their member states, to positively influence member states' relationships with their minorities, and to provide minority communities with the opportunity to gain strength and support from cross-border cooperation. I argued that if these three communities are experiencing such rapid language decline, it is likely that it is being experienced in other communities, perhaps in every European minority language community, and unless the EU rethinks current policy, this trend will no doubt continue.

## **7.2. WHY DOES THIS RESEARCH MATTER?**

As we saw in chapter 1, many language researchers believe that humanity is perched on the brink of a massive language extinction. While there are many who triumph the economy and efficiency of a world in which a few select languages of mass communication are used, there are far more people who recognise what an unfathomable loss to humanity this extinction represents. As a result of this realization, there has been a growth in efforts over the last two decades to figure out how to stem the tide of language decline, and indeed, begin to reverse it; this task has been approached with a particular sense of urgency as this decline is progressing as rapidly as the world is globalising, and it is most likely irreversible once it has reached its end.

A significant amount of the research into language decline over the last few decades has focused on the instrumental aims of reversing language shift. On the theoretical side this has involved identifying factors and coming up with theories to explain why shift happens. On the practical side it has involved policy changes and setting revitalisation programmes into place based on these theories. There has been a great deal written about both of these aspects; nevertheless comparatively few studies have attempted to evaluate exactly what kind of impact these efforts are having on specific languages, particularly in the European context. This is a grave oversight in my view. Not only is a systematic evaluation necessary to inform individual communities of the success of their efforts, but it is important to evaluate the institutions that are lending support to minority languages. Good intentions are admirable, but if this support is not having any noticeable effect on language behaviour, or worse, a detrimental effect, its providers and implementers need to know – preferably before it is too late to change tactics. There are, of course, many more avenues into this very topic that need to be explored, including some quality longitudinal studies, and naturally my own contribution to this evaluation is small, but to the extent that it serves to establish a trend of evaluating these efforts in an attempt to improve them, I am deeply satisfied.

Another powerful by-product of this type of minority language research is the very impact of the research itself in the minority communities. Minorities very often have the impression that no one outside their community cares about their plight, a perception that often makes language revitalisation efforts even more of an uphill battle. If, on the other hand, they see concern from the international community, this can have a powerful motivating factor on speakers of the language. My visit to the



Sorbian community in Upper Lusatia provides a perfect illustration. In mid-2003, just before I conducted my survey on Sorbian, I was briefly in Bautzen (the largest city in Upper Lusatia) and arranged to meet with a journalist who works for *Serbske Nowiny*, the Upper Sorbian daily newspaper, in order to ask him a few questions. I was surprised, upon meeting him, to learn that he also wanted to interview me for the newspaper. He had brought along a photographer, and prepared a series of questions about my background and my research, and within the next month an article proudly describing my study appeared in both the Sorbian and German-language versions of the newspaper (see Appendix B). It was apparent – and of course gratifying – that this Sorbian community was delighted to have a foreign researcher taking an interest in them, their community, and their language. I would not presume to generalise about all minority-language communities, but based on my experience I would hypothesise that a good deal of minority language research, whether for instrumental or documentary purposes, has a potentially positive rubbing-off effect on local communities, particularly where the community has perceived their plight and/or claims to linguistic legitimacy to have previously received little attention from outside sources.

The final reason that I think this study is of particular value is that it tells us about the effectiveness of using new technologies to conduct language research. As funding for many types of social science research becomes increasingly scarce, a way of reliably collecting information remotely becomes almost a necessity – surely without it I could not have researched this topic myself. Although it may not yet replace lengthy field visits in terms of depth and completeness, and there are regrettable drawbacks as outlined in section 5.4, I believe that internet research holds

tremendous potential to both complement traditional methods of data collection and stand in for it when more traditional methods are not possible, as I believe this thesis has demonstrated. Hopefully, as internet connectivity grows and finds its way to more remote parts of the world, and as technology itself improves, this will become an increasingly attractive and reliable option for many more kinds of language research, and scholars will be able to draw upon my successes and failures to develop even more effective uses of it to fulfil their data collection needs.

### **7.3. THE EU AND THE FUTURE OF POLICY**

This thesis has been built around an investigation of the effect of European and national policy on three minority language communities, and in establishing the results of my sociolinguistic survey and their implications I have hopefully contributed something valuable to both the field of linguistics and the study of minority languages. However, I believe my research also begs a few questions, particularly in the area of policy improvement, and thus, in this final section of this thesis I move beyond facts, analysis and interpretation to the realm of suggestion and hypothesis. Specifically, I wish to touch on some of the issues raised by my analysis of the European Union's minority language activities, and suggest a possible path forward for this institution's efforts.

This thesis has placed a lot of responsibility on the shoulders of the European Union for the minority language decline that is happening within its political frontiers. It is in fact quite easy to pick the EU as a scapegoat for all of Europe's minority language problems, particularly as they have demonstrated a conspicuous lack of commitment to language issues. However, I will be the first to admit that

these criticisms of the European Union tend to reflect a somewhat distorted picture of the responsibility this institution has towards the language situation in all three areas. In my survey, while many of the respondents were eager to criticise the lack of support from all sides, there was very little acknowledgment of the responsibility that the language communities themselves shoulder. In particular, there was no overt recognition of the process by which the low status of the language is perpetuated through the language choices of the speakers themselves, and not just by the lack of recognition and support.

While many of the respondents' criticisms of the EU are no doubt valid, these communities must recognise that the institution itself will never be able to single-handedly rescue any minority language. The most the EU will ever be able to do is provide a foundation of legal and financial support for the language, and to help foster the conditions for its (probably limited) use and recognition at the European level. The communities themselves will be responsible for language planning from the bottom-up, for creating native speakers and constructing social networks that provide a forum for the language, and for taking advantage of any resources and expertise that are offered from the European level. It would therefore be false to say that the success of language revitalisation in all three of these communities depends entirely on a stronger commitment to minority language protection from the EU; while this will be a necessary step in the right direction, the speakers of these languages need to be willing to play their part in reforming existing language structures, on a personal and a community level, in order to ensure that any changes in EU policy have an actual impact on language vitality.

On the other hand, the role the EU is currently playing is clearly not adequate if it is truly committed to upholding Europe's linguistic diversity. It is also clear that at the moment the EU has neither a blank check nor unlimited legislative power to devote to minority language protection. Although it seems somewhat paradoxical, a comprehensive policy of minority language protection is not likely to be forthcoming without a fundamental change in orientation of many of the Union's member states, but a fundamental change here is not likely to happen without increased pressure from the European level.

Yet even given the present configuration, there are steps the European Union could take to solidify its commitment to minority languages. To illustrate a few possibilities I have briefly outlined some ways I believe the EU could consolidate its power over language issues and move towards a more equitable language policy where minority languages are concerned:

- *Clarification of rights and obligations.* Simply stating that the European Union will respect linguistic diversity is not enough – a detailed description of both individual rights and a breakdown of Member State obligations toward upholding this diversity are needed in a treaty context, as is an inclusion of language in the Constitution's non-discrimination clause. This is the only way to ensure an adequate and enforceable system of minority language protection.
- *Working-language policy reform.* The EU would benefit in many ways from a reform of the current working languages policy to align more with the de facto reality of only a few *lingua francas*. A reduction in the number of working languages could free up an enormous amount of funds which might be used in affirmative action schemes to provide minority language communities with increased resources to fund projects that advance language normalisation and encourage language use.
- *Official recognition of all European languages.* It would be both practical and feasible to grant some official status to regional and minority languages within the European Union, not at the level of a working language but as part of a multi-tiered system of recognition, whereby the EU would acknowledge the communicative legitimacy of these languages and provide an amount of interpretation and translation commensurate with the demand. This would

also supply a much-needed status boost to dozens of languages struggling with limited domains of use (see also Nic Shuibhne 2002).

- *Structured involvement in state language affairs.* The EU should develop its role as minority language policy advisor and coordinator for its member states, which would avoid the roadblock of policy non-harmonisation (see chapter 3) yet help achieve measures for the protection and promotion of minority languages that are appropriate to each community's needs. This could include the creation of an official body concerned with overseeing the implementation of state policy measures and coordinating minority language projects generally (see Nelde 2000 for more ideas on this topic).
- *Parallel promotion of minority languages and English.* The EU engages in a significant amount of awareness-raising where language is concerned, much of it specifically targeted at education. Their LINGUA programme, for example, aims to “raise citizens’ awareness of the multilingual character of the Union; improve access to language learning resources and increase the support available for those learning languages; and promote the dissemination of information about innovative techniques and good practices in foreign language teaching in Europe, especially among decision-takers and key education professionals.” This currently centres only on the learning of other official member state languages. A component of this campaign could involve promoting the idea that learning English (or indeed any foreign language) does not have to come at the expense of learning minority languages. The EU could offer economic or other incentives, as well as advice, support and resources to schools specifically adopting this strategy.

It is difficult to predict what the Europe of the future will mean to minority language communities. As Nic Shuibhne (2002:292) stresses, a “distorted linguistic environment” has been created as a result of European integration, which has not only had a marked impact on the relative utility of many smaller European languages, but has placed Europe’s minority languages in an even more precarious position. Integration has also caused the economic dimension of language choice to become more significant than it has ever been before.

Yet, as many communities are already aware, integration in theory also holds the potential to facilitate a renaissance for regional and minority languages. The present situation in Europe is unique in that minority language communities have a

level of economic and political protection under the European Union that they have never enjoyed under their traditional nation-states, and benefit from the support of an administration that at least in theory is committed to upholding regional diversity and pluralism. Integration also presents the opportunity to cross borders effortlessly to exchange experience and ideas with other minority language groups throughout the Union, and to create a dialogue of support between language communities struggling with similar problems. What remains to be seen is whether the EU can help these communities to harness the potential benefits of integration in such a way as to counterbalance the threat integration is already posing to them.

It is clear that minority languages in Europe are facing enormous pressure as a result of both integration and global trends. From my perspective it is also clear that the European Union, which itself is in a unique position as both a contributor to and deterrent to these forces, has an enormous responsibility to help swing the linguistic pendulum in the right direction and to prevent its own actions from further eroding the diversity upon which it has been built. Nic Shiubhne (2002:293) argues that "...[o]nly the [European Union] can tackle effectively the widespread and disruptive influence of intensifying integration on language patterns throughout the Member States. The implementation of counterbalancing EC policies is not just a goodwill gesture. It is a responsibility. If the Community portrays itself as a political entity that protects fundamental rights, cultural diversity and citizenship, then it must ensure that this benevolent image is a real one."

It is apparent that pursuing a policy of non-involvement is not the seemingly innocuous position it appears to be for the EU. By refusing to involve itself, the EU is making a highly political statement, and one which runs counter to its professed

ideals of cultural and linguistic pluralism. It is difficult to say whether a coherent policy that not only *protects* but actively *promotes* minority language rights and resources throughout the Union would be able to effect a major turn-around for the dozens of declining minority languages within its borders, but it seems clear that the current state of affairs is contributing to their demise. It seems to me imperative that the EU recognise the responsibility it shoulders in the integration process to insure the survival of its diverse linguistic communities. Particularly with enlargement now a fact and dozens of new minority languages now placing their hopes with the EU as well, a coordinated, inclusive and pluralistic language policy is needed more than ever. The problem of language decline in Europe is not going to be easily solved, but as an emerging global model of pluralism, tolerance and peace, the European Union should be doing everything it can to make these ideals accessible to each and every one of its 450 million citizens.

## Appendix A: The Surveys

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### A.1. GALICIAN

#### Encuesta sobre el gallego

Gracias por contestar algunas preguntas sobre el gallego.

Soy una estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Edimburgo y estoy haciendo un proyecto de reconocimiento sobre las lenguas minoritarias de Europa y las políticas lingüísticas que las afectan. He escrito esta encuesta para saber qué tipo de opiniones y observaciones tienen sobre la lengua gallega las personas que viven o han vivido en Galicia. Por favor, conteste cada pregunta lo mejor que pueda. Si quiere hacer algún comentario, puede Ud. hacerlo en los espacios que siguen a cada pregunta o en el otro lado de la página. Toda la información que proporcione será tratada con la máxima discreción y no será compartida con nadie.

Muchas de estas preguntas son acerca de la situación lingüística actual en Galicia. Si hace tiempo que Ud. no vive allí, por favor conteste sólo si conoce la situación de primera mano.

*Por favor escoja una respuesta para cada pregunta. Si Ud. está haciendo la encuesta por correo electrónico, por favor sustituya una 'X' por la caja de su respuesta.*

1. ¿Cuántos años tiene Ud.?: \_\_\_\_\_ años
2. Es Ud:  Hombre  Mujer
3. ¿Nació Ud. en Galicia?  Sí  No
  - a. Si no, ¿cuántos años ha vivido allí? \_\_\_\_\_ años
  - b. ¿Vive Ud. en Galicia en el momento?  Sí  No
4. ¿Cuántos habitantes aproximadamente tiene la ciudad o pueblo donde vive?
5. Por favor, describa su conocimiento del gallego.
  - a. ¿Es el gallego su lengua materna?  Sí  No
  - b. ¿Cómo habla Ud el gallego?  
 Perfectamente  Bien  Así así  Un poco  Nada
  - c. ¿Cómo entiende el gallego?  
 Perfectamente  Bien  Así así  Un poco  Nada
  - d. ¿Cómo lee el gallego?  
 Perfectamente  Bien  Así así  Un poco  Nada



e. *¿Cómo escribe el gallego?*

Perfectamente  Bien  Así así  Un poco  Nada

6. *¿Qué idioma habla Ud. normalmente en casa?*

Gallego  Castellano  Gallego y castellano  Otro

7. *¿Qué idioma hablaba Ud. normalmente en casa cuando era niño/a?*

Gallego  Castellano  Gallego y castellano  Otro

8. En su opinión, ¿de qué prestigio gozan los siguientes idiomas en Galicia?

a. Gallego:

*Mucho prestigio* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún prestigio* No sé

b. Castellano:

*Mucho prestigio* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún prestigio* No sé

c. Inglés:

*Mucho prestigio* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún prestigio* No sé

9. Por favor, valore la importancia de hablar gallego para encontrar trabajo en Galicia:

Es indispensable

Es útil

No es importante

Ser un hablante de gallego perjudica las posibilidades de encontrar trabajo

No sé

10. Por favor, valore la importancia de hablar castellano para encontrar trabajo en Galicia:

Es indispensable

Es útil

No es importante

Ser un hablante de castellano perjudica las posibilidades de encontrar trabajo

No sé

11. Por favor, valore la importancia de hablar inglés para encontrar trabajo en Galicia:

Es indispensable

Es útil

No es importante

Tener un conocimiento del inglés perjudica las posibilidades de encontrar trabajo

No sé

12. En su opinión, ¿qué importante es un conocimiento del gallego en otros campos (no relacionados con el trabajo)?

Muy importante  Bastante importante  Un poco importante  No es importante  No sé

13. En su opinión, ¿quiénes de los siguientes grupos dominan las instituciones de negocio y comercio en Galicia y en qué grado?
- a. Hablantes de gallego: *Dominan todo* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *No dominan nada* No sé
- b. Hablantes de castellano sólo: *Dominan todo* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *No dominan nada* No sé
14. En su opinión, ¿cuánto poder político tienen los siguientes grupos en Galicia?
- a. Hablantes de gallego: *Poder exclusivo* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún poder* No sé
- b. Hablantes de castellano sólo: *Poder exclusivo* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún poder* No sé
15. ¿Se enseña gallego en los colegios o los institutos públicos en su comunidad?
- Sí No No sé
- Si sí, ¿a partir de qué edad aproximadamente? \_\_\_\_\_ años
16. ¿Se enseña inglés en los colegios o los institutos públicos en su comunidad?
- Sí No No sé
- Si sí, ¿a partir de qué edad aproximadamente? \_\_\_\_\_ años
17. ¿Cuánto tiempo cree Ud. que se debe dedicar al gallego en los colegios o los institutos en relación con lo que se dedica al castellano?
- Más tiempo que al castellano
- La misma cantidad que al castellano
- Menos tiempo que al castellano
- No se debe enseñar gallego en los colegios o los institutos
- No sé
18. ¿Cuánto tiempo cree Ud. que se debe dedicar al gallego en los colegios o los institutos en relación con lo que se dedica a lenguas extranjeras (p.ej. el inglés)?
- Más tiempo que a las lenguas extranjeras
- La misma cantidad que a las lenguas extranjeras
- Menos tiempo que a las lenguas extranjeras
- No se debe enseñar gallego en los colegios o los institutos
- No sé
19. ¿Qué presencia tienen los siguientes idiomas en los medios de comunicación en Galicia (p.ej. televisión, radio, libros, periódicos)?
- a. Gallego:  
*Mucha presencia* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ninguna presencia* No sé
- b. Castellano:  
*Mucha presencia* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ninguna presencia* No sé
- c. Inglés:  
*Mucha presencia* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ninguna presencia* No sé

20. ¿Cómo se identifica Ud.?
- Exclusivamente gallego/a
  - Más gallego/a que español/a
  - Gallego/a y español/a a partes iguales
  - Más español/a que gallego/a
  - Exclusivamente español/a
  - Ni gallego/a ni español/a
  - No sé
21. ¿Qué influencia cree que tiene su conocimiento del gallego para su respuesta en (18)?
- Mucha influencia
  - Bastante influencia
  - Un poco de influencia
  - Ninguna influencia
  - No sé
22. ¿Cree que alguien que no habla gallego puede identificarse como gallego/a?
- Sí
  - No
  - No sé
23. ¿Enseñó o va a enseñar Ud. a sus hijos a hablar gallego?
- Sí
  - No
  - No he decidido todavía
  - No tengo hijos y no los voy a tener
24. En su opinión, ¿cómo valora la gente gallega su lengua, su historia y su cultura?  
*Está muy orgullosa* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *No está orgullosa* No sé
25. ¿Cuántos hablantes nativos del gallego cree Ud. que hay hoy en Galicia comparado con:
- a. Hace 10 años?*
- Muchos más
  - Bastantes más
  - Algunos más
  - La misma cantidad
  - Algunos menos
  - Bastantes menos
  - Muchos menos
  - No sé
- b. Hace 20 años?*
- Muchos más
  - Bastantes más
  - Algunos más
  - La misma cantidad
  - Algunos menos
  - Bastantes menos
  - Muchos menos
  - No sé
- c. Hace 30 años?*
- Muchos más
  - Bastantes más
  - Algunos más
  - La misma cantidad
  - Algunos menos
  - Bastantes menos
  - Muchos menos
  - No sé
26. ¿Cuántas personas cree Ud. que se marchan de Galicia cada año (p.ej. para encontrar trabajo en otro lugar)?
- Muchas personas
  - Bastantes personas
  - Algunas personas
  - Casi nadie o nadie
  - No sé
27. ¿Qué proporción aproximadamente de la población de la comunidad en que Ud. vive sabe hablar gallego?
- Casi 100%
  - Más de 75%
  - Entre 50% y 75%
  - Cerca del 50%
  - Entre 25% y 50%
  - Menos de 25%
  - Casi 0% ó 0%
  - No sé

28. ¿Qué proporción aproximadamente de esa comunidad habla gallego habitualmente?  
 Casi 100%  Más de 75%  Entre 50% y 75%  Cerca del 50%  Entre 25% y 50%  Menos de 25%  Casi 0% ó 0%  No sé
29. ¿Qué proporción aproximadamente de la población de Galicia sabe hablar gallego?  
 Casi 100%  Más de 75%  Entre 50% y 75%  Cerca del 50%  Entre 25% y 50%  Menos de 25%  Casi 0% ó 0%  No sé
30. En su opinión, ¿cuál de las siguientes opciones describe mejor la actitud del gobierno español hacia el gallego?  
 Muy positiva  Bastante positiva  Un poco positiva  Neutral  Un poco negativa  Bastante negativa  Muy negativa  No sé
31. En su opinión, ¿cuál de los siguientes frases describe mejor la actitud de la Unión Europea hacia el gallego?  
 Muy positiva  Bastante positiva  Un poco positiva  Neutral  Un poco negativa  Bastante negativa  Muy negativa  No sé
32. ¿Cree que gracias a la Unión Europea Ud. sabe más sobre otras lenguas minoritarias de España o de Europa?  
 Sí, mucho  Sí, bastante  Un poco  No  No sé
33. En su opinión, ¿qué efecto ha tenido la Unión Europea sobre la actitud de la gente en Galicia para hablar gallego?  
 La gente tiene mucho más orgullo de hablar gallego gracias a la UE  
 La gente tiene un poco más de orgullo de hablar gallego gracias a la UE  
 La gente tiene un poco menos de orgullo de hablar gallego gracias a la UE  
 La gente tiene mucho menos orgullo de hablar gallego gracias a la UE  
 La actitud de la gente no ha cambiado hacia el uso del gallego gracias a la UE  
 No sé
34. En su opinión, ¿qué efecto ha tenido la Unión Europea sobre las políticas o actitudes del gobierno español hacia el gallego?  
 Hay muchas más políticas o actitudes favorables hacia el gallego gracias a la UE  
 Hay unas pocas más políticas o actitudes favorables hacia el gallego gracias a la UE  
 Hay unas pocas más políticas o actitudes negativas hacia el gallego gracias a la UE  
 Hay muchas más políticas o actitudes negativas hacia el gallego gracias a la UE  
 Nada ha cambiado en las políticas o actitudes del gobierno gracias a la UE  
 No sé
35. ¿Cuánto apoyo (económico, político y/o social) cree Ud. que los siguientes instituciones dan a lenguas minoritarias como el gallego?

a. La Unión Europea:

*Apoyo muy fuerte* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún apoyo* No sé

b. El gobierno español:

*Apoyo muy fuerte* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún apoyo* No sé

c. El gobierno autónomo  
de Galicia:

*Apoyo muy fuerte* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Ningún apoyo* No sé

36. Por favor ponga en orden las siguientes opciones según la utilidad que Ud. cree que tienen o podrían tener para asegurar que el gallego sobreviva en su comunidad. Por favor utilice cada número una sola vez.

*1=lo más útil, 9=lo menos útil:*

- a. Guarderías gallegohablantes \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Colegios e institutos bilingües (gallego y castellano) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Programas de estudio en la Universidad en gallego \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Televisión, películas, radio, libros, periódicos etc. en gallego \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Puestos de trabajo que exijan un conocimiento del gallego \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Servicios oficiales en gallego \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Actividades culturales en gallego (p.ej. fiestas, exposiciones de música o baile tradicionales) \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Familias que se esfuerzan en hablar sólo gallego en casa \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Más poder regional para hacer propias políticas lingüísticas \_\_\_\_\_

## A.2. CORSICAN

### Enquête sur la langue Corse

Merci de prendre le temps de répondre à quelques questions sur la langue corse.

Je suis une étudiante en doctorat à l'université d'Edimbourg et je fais de la recherche sur les langues européennes minoritaires et les politiques liées aux langues. J'ai écrit cette étude afin de connaître l'opinion et la perception de la langue Corse par les personnes ayant vécu en Corse. Veuillez répondre à chaque question le mieux possible. Si vous souhaitez ajouter des commentaires supplémentaires, vous êtes invité à le faire dans l'espace à la fin de chaque question. Sachez que toutes les informations contenues dans ce questionnaire sont entièrement confidentielles.

Les questions sont spécifiques à la situation actuelle de la langue Corse. Si vous n'y vivez plus, veuillez répondre aux questions uniquement si vous êtes au courant de la situation présente. Enfin, je voudrais préciser que cette enquête se fait en français pour des raisons logistiques, et que cela ne reflète en aucun cas un sentiment politique. En utilisant le français, j'essaie simplement de rendre l'enquête accessible au plus grand nombre de personnes possible.

*Veuillez choisir une seule réponse par question.*

1. Quel est votre âge?: \_\_\_\_\_ ans
2. Etes-vous: Homme Femme
3. Etes-vous né(e) en Corse ? Oui Non
  - a. Si non, combien de temps avez-vous vécu en Corse? \_\_\_\_\_ ans
  - b. Vivez-vous en Corse maintenant? Oui Non
4. Quelle est la population de la ville dans laquelle vous vivez? \_\_\_\_\_ personnes
5. Veuillez décrire votre compétence en la langue corse.
  - a. *Le corse est-il votre langue maternelle?* Oui Non
  - b. *Comment parlez vous le corse?*  
Parfaitement Bien Passablement Un peu Pas de tout
  - c. *Comment comprenez vous le corse?*  
Parfaitement Bien Passablement Un peu Pas de tout
  - d. *Comment lisez vous le corse?*  
Parfaitement Bien Passablement Un peu Pas de tout
  - e. *Comment écrivez vous le corse?*  
Parfaitement Bien Passablement Un peu Pas de tout
6. Quelle langue parlez-vous le plus chez vous?  
Corse Français Corse et français Autre

7. Quelle langue parliez vous le plus chez vous lorsque vous étiez enfant?  
Corse Français Corse et français Autre
8. D'après vous, comment sont perçues ces différentes langues en Corse?  
 a. Le corse:  
*Extrêmement bien* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas bien du tout* Ne sais pas  
 b. Le français:  
*Extrêmement bien* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas bien du tout* Ne sais pas  
 c. L'anglais:  
*Extrêmement bien* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas bien du tout* Ne sais pas
9. D'après vous, est-il important de parler corse pour trouver un emploi en Corse?  
C'est essentiel  
Cela aide  
Aucune importance  
Parler corse diminue les chances de trouver un emploi  
Ne sais pas
10. D'après vous, est-il important de parler français pour trouver un emploi en Corse?  
C'est essentiel  
Cela aide  
Aucune importance  
Parler français diminue les chances de trouver un emploi  
Ne sais pas
11. D'après vous, est-il important de parler anglais pour trouver un emploi en Corse?  
C'est essentiel  
Cela aide  
Aucune importance  
Savoir parler anglais diminue les chances de trouver un emploi  
Ne sais pas
12. D'après vous, est-il important pour quelqu'un de parler corse, pour des raisons autres que professionnelles?  
Très important Important Peu important Pas important Ne sais pas
13. Quel est le degré de contrôle détenu par les groupes suivants sur l'économie et les activités commerciales en Corse?  
 a. Les personnes parlant corse:  
*Contrôle exclusif* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Aucun contrôle* Ne sais pas  
 b. Les personnes parlant français seulement:  
*Contrôle exclusif* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Aucun contrôle* Ne sais pas

14. Quel est le degré de contrôle détenu par les groupes suivants sur la politique en Corse?
- a. Les personnes parlant corse:  
*Contrôle exclusif* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Aucun contrôle* Ne sais pas
- b. Les personnes parlant français seulement:  
*Contrôle exclusif* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Aucun contrôle* Ne sais pas
15. Le corse est-il enseigné à l'école dans votre commune?  
Oui Non Ne sais pas  
 Si oui, à quel âge approximativement commence l'enseignement? \_\_\_\_\_ ans  
 Si oui, est-ce une matière obligatoire ou optionnelle? Obligatoire Optionnelle  
Ne sais pas
16. L'anglais est-il enseigné à l'école dans votre commune?  
Oui Non Ne sais pas  
 Si oui, à quel âge approximativement commence l'enseignement? \_\_\_\_\_ ans  
 Si oui, est-ce une matière obligatoire ou optionnelle? Obligatoire Optionnelle  
Ne sais pas
17. D'après vous, quelle attention devrait-on donner à la langue corse par rapport à la langue française à l'école?  
Plus d'attention que le français  
Le même degré d'attention que le français  
Moins d'attention que le français  
Le corse ne devrait pas être enseigné à l'école  
Ne sais pas
18. D'après vous, quelle attention devrait-on donner à la langue corse par rapport aux langues étrangères à l'école (ex : l'anglais)?  
Plus d'attention que les langues étrangères  
Le même degré d'attention que les langues étrangères  
Moins d'attention que les langues étrangères  
Le corse ne devrait pas être enseigné à l'école  
Ne sais pas
19. Dans quelle proportion ces différentes langues sont-elles présentes dans les médias en Corse (ex : TV, radio, livres, journaux)?
- a. Le corse:  
*Une présence très forte* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas de présence* Ne sais pas
- b. Le français:  
*Une présence très forte* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas de présence* Ne sais pas



c. L'anglais:

*Une présence très forte* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas de présence* Ne sais pas

20. Comment vous identifiez vous?

- Complètement corse
- Plus corse que français/e
- Aussi corse que français/e
- Plus français/e que corse
- Complètement français/e
- Ni corse, ni français/e
- Ne sais pas

21. Pensez vous que votre connaissance et pratique de la langue corse influencent votre réponse à la question 20?

- Beaucoup
- Assez
- Peu
- Pas
- Ne sais pas

22. Pensez vous que quelqu'un qui ne parle pas corse puisse toujours se considérer comme corse?

- Oui
- Non
- Ne sais pas

23. Avez-vous appris ou allez-vous apprendre le corse à vos enfants?

- Oui
- Non
- Je n'ai pas encore décidé
- Je n'ai pas d'enfants et ne pense pas avoir

24. Quel est le degré de fierté de la plupart des corses par rapport à leur langue, culture et histoire?

*Très fiers* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas du tout fiers* Ne sais pas

25. Actuellement, quelle proportion de personnes natives de la langue corse pensez-vous qu'y a-t-il en Corse par rapport à:

a. *Il y a 10 ans?*

- Beaucoup plus
- Plus
- Un peu plus
- La même quantité
- Un peu moins
- Moins
- Beaucoup moins
- Ne sais pas

b. *Il y a 20 ans?*

- Beaucoup plus
- Plus
- Un peu plus
- La même quantité
- Un peu moins
- Moins
- Beaucoup moins
- Ne sais pas

c. *Il y a 30 ans?*

- Beaucoup plus
- Plus
- Un peu plus
- La même quantité
- Un peu moins
- Moins
- Beaucoup moins
- Ne sais pas

26. Combien de personnes, pensez-vous, émigrent de Corse chaque année (pour trouver un emploi ailleurs)?  
 Beaucoup  Un certain nombre  Peu  Presque aucune ou aucune  Ne sais pas
27. Approximativement quelle proportion de la communauté dans laquelle vous vivez sait parler corse?  
 À peu près 100%  Plus de 75%  Entre 50% et 75%  À peu près 50%  
 Entre 25% et 50%  Moins de 25%  À peu près 0% ou 0%  Ne sais pas
28. Approximativement quelle proportion de cette communauté utilise régulièrement le corse?  
 À peu près 100%  Plus de 75%  Entre 50% et 75%  À peu près 50%  
 Entre 25% et 50%  Moins de 25%  À peu près 0% ou 0%  Ne sais pas
29. Approximativement quelle proportion de la population de la Corse sait parler corse?  
 À peu près 100%  Plus de 75%  Entre 50% et 75%  À peu près 50%  
 Entre 25% et 50%  Moins de 25%  À peu près 0% ou 0%  Ne sais pas
30. Parmi les propositions suivantes qu'est ce qui décrit le mieux l'attitude du gouvernement français par rapport à la langue corse?  
 Très positive  Assez positive  Un peu positive  Neutre  Un peu négative  Assez négative  Très négative  Ne sais pas
31. Parmi les propositions suivantes qu'est ce qui décrit le mieux l'attitude de l'Union Européenne par rapport à la langue corse?  
 Très positive  Assez positive  Un peu positive  Neutre  Un peu négative  Assez négative  Très négative  Ne sais pas
32. Pensez-vous que l'Union Européenne vous a sensibilisé par rapport à l'existence d'autres langues minoritaires dans votre pays ou dans d'autres pays de l'Union Européenne?  
 Oui, beaucoup  Oui, assez  Un peu  Non  Ne sais pas
33. Comment pensez-vous que l'Union Européenne a influencé la façon dont les gens se sentent de parler la langue corse en Corse?  
 L'UE a donné aux gens beaucoup plus de fierté à parler corse  
 L'UE a donné aux gens un peu plus de fierté à parler corse  
 L'UE a donné aux gens un peu moins de fierté à parler corse  
 L'UE a donné aux gens beaucoup moins de fierté à parler corse  
 L'UE n'a pas changé les sentiments des gens par rapport à la langue corse  
 Ne sais pas
34. Comment pensez-vous que l'Union Européenne a affecté la politique du gouvernement français ou son attitude envers la langue corse?

- L'UE a provoqué beaucoup plus de politiques ou attitudes favorables envers le corse
- L'UE a provoqué un peu plus de politiques ou attitudes favorables envers le corse
- L'UE a provoqué un peu plus de politiques ou attitudes défavorables envers le corse
- L'UE a provoqué beaucoup plus de politiques ou attitudes défavorables envers le corse
- L'UE n'a pas eu d'effets notoires sur la politique ou attitudes du gouvernement français
- Ne sais pas

35. Quel degré de support (financier, politique, social) pensez-vous que les institutions suivantes donnent au corse ou aux autres langues minoritaires en Europe?

a. L'Union Européenne:

*Très fort support* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas de support*  Ne sais pas

b. Le gouvernement français:

*Très fort support* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas de support*  Ne sais pas

c. Le Conseils régionaux et la Collectivité Territoriale de la Corse:

*Très fort support* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Pas de support*  Ne sais pas

36. Classez les différentes propositions selon l'importance qu'elles ont ou auraient d'après vous pour la survie de la langue corse en Corse. Attention chaque nombre ne doit être utilisé qu'une fois!

*1= La plus utile, 9= La moins utile:*

- a. Programmes d'enseignement de la langue corse avant l'école \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Écoles primaires et secondaires bilingues français/corse \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Cours d'université en langue corse \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Médias en langue corse (TV, radio, journaux, livres, films) \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Emplois nécessitant la connaissance du corse \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Services officiels ou gouvernementaux accessibles en corse \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Activités qui célèbrent la culture corse (ex : festivals, musique traditionnelle, événements dansants) \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Les familles utilisant le corse comme langue à la maison \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Plus de pouvoir régional pour la Corse pour déterminer sa propre politique linguistique \_\_\_\_\_

### A.3. SORBIAN

#### Fragebogen über die Sorbische Sprache

Danke, dass Sie sich die Zeit genommen haben, ein Paar Fragen über das Sorbische zu beantworten.

Ich bin eine Doktorandin an der Universität von Edinburgh und arbeite an einem Projekt über europäische Minderheitensprachen und Sprachpolitik. Ich habe diese Umfrage erstellt, um herauszufinden, welche Meinungen und Empfindungen Leute, die in der Ober- oder Niederlausitz leben, oder gelebt haben, über die Sorbische Sprache haben. Bitte beantworten Sie jede Frage so ehrlich und objektiv wie nur möglich. Wenn Sie zusätzliche Anmerkungen machen möchten, dann tun Sie das bitte an der dafür vorgesehenen Stelle im Anschluss an jede Frage. Seien Sie versichert, dass jede Information, die Sie hier geben, absolut vertraulich behandelt wird.

Bitte beachten Sie, dass manche Fragen sich mit der aktuellen Sprachsituationen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz beschäftigen. Sollten Sie nicht mehr dort leben, beantworten Sie bitte diese Fragen nur, wenn Sie mit der aktuellen Lage dort vertraut sind.

Bitte geben Sie nur eine Antwort pro Frage. Sollten Sie das Gefühl haben, dass eine bestimmte Frage nicht auf die Situation der sorbischen Sprache zutrifft, dann erklären Sie bitte in der für Kommentare vorgesehenen Spalte im Anschluss an die jeweilige Frage, wieso Sie dieser Meinung sind.

1. Wie alt sind Sie?: \_\_\_\_\_ Jahre alt
2. Sind Sie: Männlich Weiblich
3. Wurden Sie in der Ober-/Niederlausitz geboren? Ja, in der Oberlausitz Ja, in der Niederlausitz Nein
  - a. Wenn nicht, wie lange leben Sie/lebten Sie dort? \_\_\_\_\_ Jahre
  - b. Leben Sie jetzt in der Ober-/Niederlausitz? Ja, in der Oberlausitz Ja, in der Niederlausitz Nein
4. Wieviele Einwohner hat der Ort in dem Sie wohnen? \_\_\_\_\_ Einwohner (circa)
5. Bitte geben Sie an, wie gut Ihre Sprachkompetenz im Sorbischen ist:
  - a. *Ist Sorbisch ihre Muttersprache?* Ja Nein
  - b. *Wie gut sprechen Sie Sorbisch?*  
Perfekt Gut Passabel Ein Wenig Gar nicht
  - c. *Wie gut verstehen Sie Sorbisch?*

Perfekt  Gut  Passabel  Ein Wenig  Gar nicht

*d. Wie gut können sie Sorbisch lesen?*

Perfekt  Gut  Passabel  Ein Wenig  Gar nicht

*e. Wie gut können Sie Sorbisch schreiben?*

Perfekt  Gut  Passabel  Ein Wenig  Gar nicht

6. Welche Sprache sprechen Sie zu Hause am öftesten?  
 Sorbisch  Deutsch  Sorbisch und Deutsch  Eine andere Sprache
7. Welche Sprache haben Sie zu Hause am öftesten benutzt als Sie noch ein Kind waren?  
 Sorbisch  Deutsch  Sorbisch und Deutsch  Eine andere Sprache
8. Wie angesehen sind Ihrer Meinung nach die folgenden Sprachen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz?  
a. Sorbisch:  
*Sehr angesehen* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Nicht sehr angesehen*  Weiss nicht  
b. Deutsch:  
*Sehr angesehen* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Nicht sehr angesehen*  Weiss nicht  
c. Englisch:  
*Sehr angesehen* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Nicht sehr angesehen*  Weiss nicht
9. Wie wichtig ist Ihrer Meinung nach die Kenntnis des Sorbischen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz um einen Job zu finden?  
 Essentiell  
 Hilfreich  
 Spielt keine Rolle  
 Kenntnis des Sorbischen hat einen negativen Einfluss auf Jobaussichten  
 Weiss nicht
10. Wie wichtig ist Ihrer Meinung nach die Kenntnis des Deutschen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz um einen Job zu finden?  
 Essentiell  
 Hilfreich  
 Spielt keine Rolle  
 Kenntnis des Deutschen hat einen negativen Einfluss auf Jobaussichten  
 Weiss nicht
11. Wie wichtig ist Ihrer Meinung nach die Kenntnis des Englischen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz um einen Job zu bekommen?  
 Essentiell  
 Hilfreich  
 Spielt keine Rolle  
 Kenntnis des Englischen hat einen negativen Einfluss auf Jobaussichten  
 Weiss nicht

12. Wie wichtig ist es Ihrer Meinung nach, Sorbisch aus anderen Gründen zu können (nicht jobbedingt)?
- Sehr wichtig  
 Halbwegs wichtig  
 Ein bisschen wichtig  
 Überhaupt nicht wichtig  
 Weiss nicht
13. Wieviel Kontrolle/ Einfluss haben Ihrer Meinung nach die folgenden Sprecher-Gruppen auf wirtschaftliche und geschäftliche Institutionen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz?
- a. Personen, die Sorbisch sprechen können:  
*Exclusive Kontrolle* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Kontrolle*  Weiss nicht
- b. Personen, die kein Sorbisch sprechen können:  
*Exclusive Kontrolle* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Kontrolle*  Weiss nicht
14. Wieviel Kontrolle über politische Angelegenheiten üben Ihrer Meinung nach die folgenden Sprecher-Gruppen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz aus?
- a. Personen, die Sorbisch sprechen können:  
*Exclusive Kontrolle* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Kontrolle*  Weiss nicht
- b. Personen, die kein Sorbisch sprechen können:  
*Exclusive Kontrolle* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Kontrolle*  Weiss nicht
15. Wird Sorbisch in den öffentlichen Schulen in ihrer Gegend unterrichtet?
- Ja  Nein  Weiss nicht  
Wenn Ja, ab welchem Alter ungefähr? ab \_\_\_\_\_ Jahre alt  
Wenn Ja, ist das freiwillig oder verpflichtend es zu lernen?  Freiwillig  
 Verpflichtend  Weiss nicht
16. Wird Englisch in den öffentlichen Schulen in ihrer Gegend unterrichtet?
- Ja  Nein  Weiss nicht  
Wenn Ja, ab welchem Alter ungefähr? ab \_\_\_\_\_ Jahre alt  
Wenn Ja, ist das freiwillig oder verpflichtend es zu lernen?  Freiwillig  
 Verpflichtend  Weiss nicht
17. Wieviel Zeit sollte Ihrer Meinung nach dem Sorbischen in öffentlichen Schulen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz im Vergleich mit Deutsch gegeben werden?
- Mehr Zeit gegenüber dem Deutschen  
 Die gleiche Zeit  
 Weniger Zeit als gegenüber dem Deutschen  
 Sorbisch sollte nicht in Schulen unterrichtet werden  
 Weiss nicht

18. Wieviel Zeit sollte Ihrer Meinung nach dem Sorbischen in öffentlichen Schulen in der Ober-/Niederlausitz im Vergleich mit Fremdsprachen ( z.B.: Englisch) gegeben werden?
- Mehr Zeit als Fremdsprachen gegenüber  
 Die gleiche Zeit  
 Weniger Zeit als gegenüber Fremdsprachen  
 Sorbisch sollte nicht in Schulen unterrichtet werden  
 Weiss nicht
19. Welche Präsenz zeigen Ihrer Meinung nach die folgenden Sprachen in den Medien (z.B. TV, Radio, Bücher, Zeitungen) in der Ober-/Niederlausitz?
- a. Sorbisch:  
*Sehr starke Präsenz* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Präsenz*  Weiss nicht
- b. Deutsch:  
*Sehr starke Präsenz* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Präsenz*  Weiss nicht
- c. Englisch:  
*Sehr starke Präsenz* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Präsenz*  Weiss nicht
20. Halten Sie sich selbst für?
- Komplettsorbisch  
 Mehr sorbisch als deutsch  
 Gleichermassen sorbisch und deutsch  
 Mehr deutsch als sorbisch  
 Komplettddeutsch  
 Weder sorbisch noch deutsch  
 Weiss nicht
21. Wieviel Einfluss hat Ihrer Meinung nach die Kenntnis des Sorbischen auf Ihre Antwort in Frage Nr. 20?
- Grossen Einfluss  Einigen Einfluss  Geringen Einfluss  Keinen Einfluss  
 Weiss nicht
22. Denken Sie, dass jemand, der des Sorbischen nicht mächtig ist, sich dennoch als Sorbe bezeichnen kann?
- Ja  Nein  Weiss nicht
23. Haben Sie, oder werden Sie Ihren Kindern Sorbisch beibringen?
- Ja  Nein  Ich habe mich noch nicht entschlossen  Ich habe und werde keine Kinder bekommen
24. Wie stolz sind Ihrer Meinung nach die meisten Sorben auf ihre Sprache, Kultur und Geschichte?
- Sehr stolz* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Nicht stolz*  Weiss nicht
25. Wieviele Menschen sprechen Ihrer Meinung nach heutzutage Sorbisch als Muttersprache in der Ober-/Niederlausitz verglichen mit:

a. Vor 10 Jahren?

Viel mehr  Einige mehr  Ein paar mehr  Die gleiche Menge  Ein paar weniger  Einige weniger  Viel weniger  Weiss nicht

b. Vor 20 Jahren?

Viel mehr  Einige mehr  Ein paar mehr  Die gleiche Menge  Ein paar weniger  Einige weniger  Viel weniger  Weiss nicht

c. Vor 30 Jahren?

Viel mehr  Einige mehr  Ein paar mehr  Die gleiche Menge  Ein paar weniger  Einige weniger  Viel weniger  Weiss nicht

26. Wieviele Menschen ziehen Ihrer Meinung nach jährlich aus der Ober-/Niederlausitz weg (z.B. Um woanders Jobs zu finden)?  
 Sehr viele  Einige  Ein paar  Fast keine oder keine  Weiss nicht
27. Welcher Bevölkerungsanteil kann Ihrer Meinung nach in der Gemeinde in der Sie leben Sorbisch sprechen?  
 Fast 100%  Mehr als 75%  Zwischen 50% und 75%  Um 50%  
 Zwischen 25% und 50%  Weniger als 25%  Fast 0% oder 0%  Weiss nicht
28. Welcher Bevölkerungsanteil spricht Ihrer Meinung nach in der Gemeinde in der Sie leben regelmäßig Sorbisch?  
 Fast 100%  Mehr als 75%  Zwischen 50% und 75%  Um 50%  
 Zwischen 25% und 50%  Weniger als 25%  Fast 0% oder 0%  Weiss nicht
29. Welcher Bevölkerungsanteil der Ober-/Niederlausitz kann Ihrer Meinung nach Sorbisch sprechen?  
 Fast 100%  Mehr als 75%  Zwischen 50% und 75%  Um 50%  
 Zwischen 25% und 50%  Weniger als 25%  Fast 0% oder 0%  Weiss nicht
30. Welche der folgenden Optionen beschreibt Ihrer Meinung nach die Einstellung der deutschen Bundesregierung gegenüber dem Sorbischen am Besten?  
 Sehr positiv  Überwiegend positiv  Halbwegs positiv  Neutral  Ein bisschen negativ  Überwiegend negativ  Sehr negativ  Weiss nicht
31. Welche der folgenden Optionen beschreibt Ihrer Meinung nach die Einstellung der Europäischen Union gegenüber dem Sorbischen am Besten?  
 Sehr positiv  Überwiegend positiv  Halbwegs positiv  Neutral  Ein bisschen negativ  Überwiegend negativ  Sehr negativ  Weiss nicht
32. Glauben Sie, dass die Europäischen Union Ihre Aufmerksamkeit anderen Minderheitensprachen in Ihrem Land oder in anderen europäischen Ländern gegenüber gesteigert hat?  
 Ja, sehr  Ja, irgendwie schon  Ein bisschen  Nein  Weiss nicht



33. Auf welche Art und Weise hat Ihrer Meinung nach die E.U. die Einstellung der Sorbischsprecher in der Ober-/Niederlausitz bezüglich des Sorbisch-sprechens beeinflusst?
- Die E.U. hat Leute sehr viel stolzer gemacht, Sorbisch zu sprechen
- Die E.U. hat Leute ein wenig stolz gemacht, Sorbisch zu sprechen
- Die E.U. hat Leute ein bisschen weniger stolz gemacht, Sorbisch zu sprechen
- Die E.U. hat Leute viel weniger stolz gemacht, Sorbisch zu sprechen
- Die E.U. hat die Einstellung der Sorbisch-sprecher bezüglich des Sorbischen nicht verändert
- Weiss nicht
34. Wie hat die E.U. Ihrer Meinung nach die deutsche Regierung in ihren Ansichten oder ihrer Politik gegenüber dem Sorbischen beeinflusst?
- Dank der E.U. ist die Politik oder Einstellung dem Sorbischen gegenüber viel positiver
- Dank der E.U. ist die Politik oder Einstellung dem Sorbischen gegenüber ein bisschen positiver
- Dank der E.U. ist die Politik oder Einstellung dem Sorbischen gegenüber ein bisschen negativer
- Dank der E.U. ist die Politik oder Einstellung dem Sorbischen gegenüber viel negativer
- Die E.U. hat keinen spürbaren Einfluss auf die Politik oder Einstellung der Regierung
- Weiss nicht
35. Wieviel Unterstützung (finanzieller, politischer, und/oder sozialer Art) bekommt Ihrer Meinung nach das Sorbische oder andere Europäische Minderheitensprachen durch folgende Institutionen?
- a. Die Europäische Union:  
*Sehr starke Unterstützung* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Unterstützung*  
 Weiss nicht
- b. Die deutsche Regierung:  
*Sehr starke Unterstützung* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Unterstützung*  
 Weiss nicht
- c. Ihre Bezirks-, oder Landesregierung:  
*Sehr starke Unterstützung* 5 4 3 2 1 0 *Keine Unterstützung*  
 Weiss nicht
36. Bitte stufen Sie die folgenden Optionen danach ein wie hilfreich sie Ihrer Meinung nach für das Überleben des Sorbischen in Ihrer Gemeinde sind oder sein könnten. *Bitte vergeben Sie jede Nummer nur einmal.*  
*1 = am hilfreichsten, 9 = am wenigsten hilfreich:*
- a. Sorbische Kindergartenprogramme \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Zweisprachige Grund- und weiterführende Schulen (Sorbisch/Deutsch) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Studiengänge in Sorbisch an Universitäten \_\_\_\_\_

- d. Fernsehen, Radio, Bucher, Zeitung, etc. in Sorbisch \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Jobs die Kenntnisse des Sorbischen voraussetzen \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Offizieller Amts- oder Verwaltungsleistungen in Sorbische Sprache  
möglich zu verwenden \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Aktivitäten die die Sorbische Kultur feiern (z.B. Festivals, traditioneller  
Musik- und Tanzveranstaltungen) \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Sorbisch wird von Familien zu Hause benutzt \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Mehr regionale Macht für Ober-/Niederlausitz um die eigene  
Sprachpolitik besser selbst bestimmen zu können \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Sorbian Press

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PJATK, 5. SEPTEMBRA 2003

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### Doktorandka prosy wo podpěru Zwisk k serbstwu třěbny

Edinburgh/Budyšin (SN). Melissa Kronenthal je doktorandka na uniwersiće w šotiskim Edinburghu. Wona zaběra so z projektom, kotryž přepytuje wuskutkowanjne europskeje integracije na mjeńšinowe rěče. Serbsčina je nimo korsičiny w Francoskej, galicišiny w Španiskej a rěče Wlachow w Grjekskej jedyn příklad, kotryž wona přepytuje. Nětko pyta wona ludźi, kotrymž je rěčne položenje w Hornjej abo Delnjej Lužicy znate, zo bychu woni naprašnik wupjelnili. Štóž chce to činić, njetrjeba w kóždym padze serbsčinu wobknjezić. Jeničke wuměnjnje je, zo bydli we Lužicy abo je tam bydlił a zo ma zwisk k serbstwu. Naprašnik nańdžeće w interneće pod adresu <http://www.ling.ed.ac.uk/~melissa/surveyhome.html>. Trjebaće tam jeno swoje wotmołwy do kašćikow zapisać a potom z kliknjenjom na myšku wotposłać. Štóž internet nima, njech zapoda swoju adresu redakciji SN. Tuta ju knjeni Kronenthal posrědkuje a wona wam podložki připósćeće.

*Item 1.* This article describing my research appeared in the Sorbian-language daily newspaper *Serbske Nowiny* on September 5, 2003.

# Die Anregung kam aus Prag

Melissa Kronenthal ist Doktorandin an der Universität von Edinburgh und arbeitet an einem Projekt über europäische Minderheitensprachen und Sprachpolitik. Nun ist es nicht außergewöhnlich, dass an europäischen Universitäten minderheitenspezifische Themen erforscht werden. In diesem konkreten Fall ist es doch etwas Besonderes. Melissa Kronenthal ist amerikanische Staatsbürgerin und in Seattle (US-Staat Washington) aufgewachsen. Ihr Interesse für die Angelegenheiten kleiner Völker entdeckte sie während eines Schüler-Austauschjahres, das sie 1994/95 ins Baskenland nach Spanien führte. Über das Verhältnis zwischen Minderheiten- und Mehrheitssprache wollte sie jedoch mehr wissen. So studierte sie später in New Orleans und befasste sich dort bereits mit Aspekten der spanischen Sprache in Kalifornien. Aber auch mit der sprachlichen Situation der Navorho-Indianer in Nordamerika und der Maori in Neuseeland hat sie sich schon beschäftigt.

Inzwischen arbeitet sie im dritten Jahr an ihrer Doktorarbeit im schottischen Edinburgh. In vier selbst vorgeschlagenen Fallstudien untersucht sie neben dem Sorbischen das Korsische in Frankreich,

Galizisch in Spanien und die Sprache der Vlach in Griechenland. „In meine Untersuchungen wollte ich Minderheitensprachen einbeziehen, die noch nicht so umfangreich erforscht wurden wie das Bas-



**Melissa Kronenthal aus Seattle/USA ist Doktorandin an der Universität Edinburgh. Sie untersucht die Rolle der sorbischen Sprache in der Lausitz.** Foto: at

kische, Irische oder Walisische. Den Tipp für Sorbisch habe ich von Dr. Leoš Šatava aus Prag erhalten“, berichtet die 25-Jährige. Ihr empirisches Material bezieht sie aus einer Befragung im Internet. „Ich habe diese Umfrage erstellt, um herauszufinden, welche Meinungen und Empfindungen Leute, die in der Ober- oder Niederlausitz leben oder gelebt haben, zur sorbischen Sprache haben.“ Über das Sorbische und die Sorabistik hat Melissa Kronenthal bisher nur gehört. Bei einem Kurzbesuch in Bautzen verriet sie aber, dass sie nun die deutsche Sprache erlernt, um auch sorabistische wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen lesen zu können und auf diese Weise mehr über unser kleines Volk zu erfahren.

Die Fragebögen sollen gleichzeitig Auskunft über das Verhältnis der jeweiligen Regierungen zu den Minderheitensprachen in ihren Ländern geben. Natürlich erhofft sie sich Aufschluss darüber, wie die Bestimmungen der Europäischen Charta für regionale und Minderheitensprachen verwirklicht werden. Zweifellos freut sich die junge Frau über jeden Lausitzer, der sich an ihrer Befragung beteiligt. **A. Arlt**

[www.ling.ed.ac.uk/~melissa/surveyhome.html](http://www.ling.ed.ac.uk/~melissa/surveyhome.html)

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