INTRODUCTION

At the intersection of language, conflict, and security

Theoretical and empirical perspectives

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While conflicts involving language are always intertwined with other issues such as ethnic and racial identity, religion, and democratic participation, the importance of the linguistic dimension is often underestimated, along with the difficulties of achieving effective, just and sustainable solutions through language legislation and policy. Language policies have political and social consequences; they can reinforce or diffuse conflicts and social unrest between language groups, they can accelerate language loss or facilitate language revitalization, and they can be instruments of inclusion or exclusion affecting the stability and security of the society. Against this background, this Special Issue aims to shed light on how language diversity impacts conflict and security. In particular, the SI will look at how issues revolving around language diversity interplay with security concerns and which dynamics trigger processes of securitization of language issues. How to balance language diversity to prevent conflict and promote security of linguistic majorities and minorities? How to reconcile the demands for linguistic diversity and political stability and unity? What is the role of international organizations in these processes? And how can the risk of the essentialization of linguistic communities and minority cultures leading to the division of societies into us-versus-them antagonisms thereby be overcome?

Keywords: linguistic diversity, conflict, security/securitization, identity, minority language policies

Linguistic diversity is a normal aspect of human society. There are more than 7,000 languages spoken in the world, of which about 200 are on the European continent, not counting dialect forms. The idea of monolingual societies and nation-states thus clashes with what Skutnabb-Kangas (2005: 280) defines as a "normal accident of reality".

Such linguistic diversity can lead to situations of conflict and security concerns. Language can indeed be instrumentalized and manipulated as an existential element for the survival of a community and can easily become a symbol around which communities and groups of people mobilize (Deen & Romans 2018). In particular, linguistic minorities, whether long-standing groups (the so-called 'old minorities') or groups stemming from recent migratory flows (the so-called 'new minorities'), are often considered as a challenge and a threat to the concept of the assumed culturally homogeneous nation-state. Minorities' claims for opportunities to express their linguistic identities and diversities at an individual and group level can be perceived as antagonistic to the maintenance and development of the state official language and a monolingual understanding of society (Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018; Medda-Windischer & Constantin forthcoming). Such tensions between majority and minority languages are made more complex by processes of globalization, wherein a few languages, primarily English, have become global and acquired enough international prestige to influence linguistic choices and use.[1]

Against this background, this Special Issue aims to shed light on how linguistic diversity interplays with conflicts and security concerns. Indeed, while conflicts involving language are always intertwined with other issues such as ethnic and racial identity, religion, democratic participation, and socio-economic interests, the importance of the language dimension is often underestimated. The Special Issue contribute to filling this gap, pursuing a twofold goal. First, it aims to reveal the complexity of language situations in regard to areas of conflict and security concerns. Second, it addresses the difficulties of achieving sound and sustainable solutions through language legislation and policies, given their political and social consequences. These policies can reinforce or diffuse conflicts, tensions or social unrest between language groups, they can accelerate language loss or facilitate revitalization, and they can be instruments of inclusion or exclusion affecting the stability and security of the society.

This Special Issue's main assumption is that linguistic diversity is not necessarily or irretrievably a factor of division in society and does not cause conflict in and of itself. The lingering questions behind the contributions to the Special Issue are why and how language is transformed into irreconcilable difference and sparks tensions and insecurities.

To initially address such questions, it is necessary to explore the role that language plays in human society. Scholars have pointed out that language has three main functions. First, language is a mean of communication. Second, it is seen as

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1. This point is discussed in the conclusions of the 2021 Nitobe Symposium, which are included in the Appendix.

a tool that provides access to a specific societal culture. Last, but not least, most scholarship and practitioners consider it as essential element of identity at individual and group levels (Patten 2001; Weinstock 2003). Thus, language is not only an *instrumental medium* of communication, but also a substantial element for *personal and social identity formation* (Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018).[2] In this regard, Kraus & Kazlauskaite-Gürbüz (2014: 521) summarize the multifunctionality of language, defining it as a gate and as a tie. Along these lines, language politics should be considered as part of identity politics (Deen & Romans 2018).

It should be noted that some scholars problematize the link between identity and language, focusing on the processes through which such links are forged (Carlà 2007). Indeed, it is well recognized that any groupings of people are communities based on fictitious constructions and narratives, or, using Anderson's (1983) definition of nations, they are "imagined communities" resulting from the "social construction of reality". Similarly, Brubaker (2004: 79) defines ethnic groups as "collective cultural representation [...] that sustain the vision and division of the social world in racial, ethnic, or national terms". However, as Marko (2019) clarifies "(w)henever people define this situation as 'real' the consequences following from their actions are no less 'real' than the 'existence' of things" (see also Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018). In other terms, although the link between language and identity was socially constructed, it needs to be addressed.

Indeed, it is especially this identitarian dimension that helps to grasp how language comes be intertwined with conflict and security issues. In this context, it should be noted that since the 1990s the security agenda has expanded beyond its traditional focus on military threats to the state, to include new reference objects, namely that which needs to be protected like the single individual and the society, and new sectors of security, such as environmental, economic and societal. In particular, linguistic diversity intersects with the concept of societal security, which focuses on issues concerning identity and how communities and individuals define themselves. Societal security is "the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats" (Wæver 1993: 23). Within the concept of societal security, threats arise when a group perceives the possibility to survive as a community as at risk (Carlà 2016). Societal security issues might easily deteriorate because of what scholars call the 'societal security dilemma', namely the fact that "measures that one side takes to defend its societal security (strengthen its identity) are misperceived by another

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2. According to the Supreme Court of Canada: 'Language is not merely a means or medium of expression; [...]. It is a means by which a people may express its cultural identity. It is also the means by which one expresses one's personal identity and sense of individuality.' *Ford v. Quebec* (AG), [1988] 2 SCR 712.

as a threat to its own identity" (Roe 2002, 64). Subsequent countermeasures spark further societal insecurities; a dynamic that can bring about conflict and violence. Such dynamics have been observed in various contexts from the conflict between Serbs and Croats in Krajina (Croatia), to the Hungarian community in Transylvania (Romania) and the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States (Roe 2005; Herd & Lögfren 2001).

How does linguistic diversity become a societal security issue and an element of division and competition among collective identities? Attention in this regard should be given, among others, to the historical context that structures the relationship among individuals speaking different languages. In particular, scholars of ethnic politics have long highlighted how structural changes that bring traumatic experiences, and threaten the status of groups and their members, foster shared beliefs and in-group solidarity. Such experiences enforce ethnic identification, highlighting language and other cultural markers as reasons of division and conflicts. Structural changes that affect the experiences between majority and minority linguistic groups involve factors such as alteration in power relations within a polity, demographic transformation and changes in demographic balance among linguistic groups, and the socio-economic conditions of the groups' members, which affect the social status of the linguistic group, and the social prestige of the language (Carlà 2007).

Particularly helpful in this regard is the concept of securitization discussed in Peter Haslinger's contribution, which refers to the process through which an issue comes to be considered an existential threat requiring exceptional measures. Language is often securitized, considered a vital interest that requires going beyond the boundaries of ordinary politics in order to protect it (Deen & Romans 2018). In this securitizing frame, linguistic disputes are understood as a zero-sum game and any factor that may put at risk the 'purity' of language might be interpreted as a threat to the survival of the linguistic group and its members. Such developments clash with the understanding of linguistic capacity as cumulative. A person can learn multiple languages and the acquisition of new languages does not imply the loss of the old tongue (Deen & Romans 2018; Zolberg & Woon 1999). Incidentally, as pointed out by Alessandro Rotta and Slava Balan in their contribution, securitization can also be understood in positive terms, as providing security and rights to individuals and linguistic minorities.

The link between language, conflict and security is related to the fact that language intersects with a specific mode of development of the nation-state. In the Western world, language has historically represented one of the principal bases for the formation of bounded nations (Zolberg & Woon 1999). The process of nation-building, combined with modernization processes, brought about a process of linguistic standardization of the hegemonic group, which was followed by linguistic

homogenization. Monolingual habitus were created that permeate all sectors of social life, from education to the economy, administration, and politics, introducing a hierarchy of languages, with minority language usually considered as inferior and an obstacle to upward social mobility. In such light, linguistic minorities and their idioms are seen as a problem or at best as an exception to the rule of monolingualism (Marko 2019; Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018). The role of language in nation-building process is highlighted in Ljubica Djordjević's contribution, which points how in the successor states of former Yugoslavia the varieties of languages labelled "Serbo-Croatian" acquired distinct names, definitions and status, being at times understood within a "We are not them" framework.

Against this background, the second focus of this special issue emerges, namely how to counteract such dynamics, thereby avoiding linguistic conflicts and tensions. In this regard, several complementary questions shape the research agenda and are touched upon by Philip McDermott and Mairead Nic Craith and by Alessandro Rotta and Slava Balan in their contributions: How to balance language diversity to prevent conflict and promote security of both linguistic majorities and minorities? How to reconcile the demands for linguistic diversity and political stability and unity, or how to create a political community that is both cohesive and stable while satisfying the legitimate aspirations of minorities? Which public policies should be implemented to achieve this aim? What is the role of international organizations in these processes? And how to thereby overcome the risk of essentialization of linguistic communities and minority cultures by political mobilization leading to the division of societies into us-versus-them antagonisms?

Debates on language policies are not unequivocal and the matter presents several complexities. Most states have specific regulations which shape various aspects of their language policy, declaring one or more languages as official state language(s). Provisions concerning languages are contained in the Constitutions of 125 of some 200 sovereign states in the world (Marten 2016: 76). The question arises whether these provisions and policies also provide for an effective protection of minority languages (Medda-Windischer & Constantin forthcoming). Indeed, it is not clear which specific legal obligations states have in linguistic matters towards minority groups and their members. This is even less clear when they are connected to claims for special measures to ensure appropriate conditions for the preservation and development of group identities (Medda-Windischer 2021). Legitimate limitations might be placed on the exercise of language choice and linguistic rights might be balanced against other (often relatively abstract) interests

such as general societal interests – e.g. requirements of the 'common good' or of 'public policy' – or more specific interests (Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018).[3]

In addition, further complexities derive from the fact that language policies are multisectoral. They do not regard only one domain of social life but should be addressed systematically across multiple areas.[4] These include, for example, communications with public authorities, the toponymy of geographical and personal names, the language of public media, and the organization of the education system (Carlà 2007). In this regard, an unresolved question concerns whether linguistic rights (and minority rights in general) have a collective or an individual dimension.[5]

Such complexities have been addressed by scholars on language policy and rights with different perspectives depending on the ordering of priorities (Carlà 2007). In some cases, the need to guarantee the efficiency of the state is stressed; this approach is considered as raising objections to language policies that can endanger state's unity (Coulombe 2001; Arel 2001; May 2001; Patten & Kymlicka 2003). Other scholars focus on preserving language diversity, considered to have an intrinsic value (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Nettle & Romaine 2000; Boran 2003) or on protecting linguistic groups and their identity (Coulombe 2001; Taylor 1994; Hogan-Brun & Wolff 2003). Other approaches put at their center the well-being of individuals, considered endangered by language policies that do not respect individual rights (Hartney 1995; Barry 2001; Appiah 2005), or by discriminatory practices against minority members (Kymlicka 1995; Patten 2001; Levy 2003; de Varennes 1996; Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018). Some scholars focus on the effect of language policies on the relationship among linguistic groups and their perceptions towards linguistic diversity (Carlà 2007). Moreover, language issues have been addressed from an economic perspective, exploring the intersection between economic and linguistic processes (Grin 2018; Gazzola & Wickström 2016).

How then it is possible to reconcile all these different priorities? Three main observations should be made in this regard. First, a "benign neglect" approach according to which states guarantee freedom of linguistic choice in the private sphere without supporting any particular language in the public sphere, is not

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3. In this regard, the European Convention of Human Rights or the EU Fundamental Rights Charter spelled out economic or political concerns as possible "substantive limitations" for state interference (Shuibhne 2002: 189).

4. This point is discussed in the conclusions of the 2021 Nitobe Symposium, which are included in the Appendix.

5. On this question, Marko (1997: 87) argues that, "[t]hese two forms of rights not only can, but even must be used cumulatively when organising equality on the basis of difference".

tenable. Indeed, "state neutrality in the field of language policy is a myth" (Marko 2019: 304). As pointed out by Zolberg & Woon (1999: 21), "the state necessarily engages in linguistic choices. It can make itself blind – to religion, race, ethnicity – but it cannot choose to become deaf or mute". Accordingly, in the long run, such approach can only result in the assimilation of minority groups (Medda-Windischer & Constantin forthcoming).

Second, it is acknowledged that the idea of minority protection is twofold. It aims at allowing minorities to live alongside the rest of the population in a position of equality, while at the same time, preserving their characteristics and diverse identities (Medda-Windischer 2009). This double-track system of minority protection is well established in international law since the activities of the League of Nations and has been confirmed by the International Court of Justice.[6]

Third, the protection of linguistic diversities should go hand in hand with efforts to foster a common sense of belonging. As pointed out by Marko & Medda-Windischer (2018), the challenge for diversity governance is "the problem how to foster *multiple integration* into the (…) society, but simultaneously to allow for a remaining identification with the culture of the (…) minority group within this society". According to the authors, protecting and strengthening a minority language should neither compete with nor replace the requirement of skills and fluency in the official language of the country, which is necessary to make the state work and assure integration and social cohesion (Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018). In other terms, language policies should promote intra-community as well as inter-community solidarity, in this way sustaining shared public spaces.[7] Along these lines, Philip McDermott and Mairead Nic Craith's contribution stresses the need to encourage dialogue within and across language barriers. However, at the same time it must be emphasized that solidarity and social cohesion require not only policies that recognize diversity but also tackle social structures and practices that result in discrimination, deprivation and exclusion of minorities (Marko & Medda-Windischer 2018; Balint & de Latour 2013: 205).

States and decision-makers are not alone in the endeavor of developing sound policies to govern linguistic diversity in order to avoid conflicts. At the international level, there are various legally binding and non-binding instruments as well as decades of interpretative jurisprudence of international judicial bodies, which guide and limit state actions. The legal guidelines emerging from international instruments and case-law represent a veritable toolkit for policy makers aiming to

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6. See the International Court of Justice's leading case on the *Minority Schools in Albania*. PCIJ, *Minority Schools in Albania*, Advisory Opinion, 6 April 1935, XXXIV Session, Series A-B, No.64.

7. See the conclusions of the 2021 Nitobe Symposium, which are included in the Appendix.

reconcile the need for social cohesion with the preservation of linguistic diversity (Medda-Windischer & Constantin forthcoming). In their contribution, Alessandro Rotta and Slava Balan discuss some of the actions undertaken by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to promote state language while protecting minority language across various sectors, from public administration to economic life.

In addition, state-directed top-down solutions might not be the optimal approach when dealing with linguistic diversity. Preferable is a participative and collaborative approach, which is more conducive to foster positive dialogue, mutual respect and understanding, and is beneficial for democratic societies as a whole. In this regard, Medda-Windischer (2021) suggests that all actors involved in linguistic diversity-related issues, from public authorities, to employers, educational authorities, as well as single individuals, "should be encouraged to play an active role as promoters of mediation and dialogue through concerted solutions aimed at achieving a fair balance of the conflicting interests at stake".

To summarize, while linguistic diversity might be related to conflicts and security concerns, instruments are available to prevent and resolve such issues. In the following pages the articles of this Special Issue contribute to these debates and research questions through both theoretical reflections and empirical explorations. We start with Peter Haslinger's contribution, which explores the intersection between securitization studies, multilingualism and language issues, highlighting theoretical and methodological gaps as well as overlaps. Such intersection has been so far understudied, which is surprising given the relevance of speech acts in securitization theory. The author's endeavor starts with showing how contact linguistics contributes to the understanding of securitization, passes through a variety of language conflicts and the role of translations in securitization processes, and ends with showing how securitization might explain language conflicts. On the one hand, the author points out that using contact linguistics' understanding of language groups as communities of practice helps to unpack the concept of the public audience endorsing securitization processes, by showing its heterogeneity in multilingual contexts. On the other hand, the concept of securitization shed lights on the fact that linguistic boundaries often seem to turn into tensions and conflicts. Indeed, in multilingual societies language markers can become symbolic expressions of collective values, cohesion and survival and are associated with power asymmetries between state/majorities and minorities. This scenario gives raise to competitive language claims that act in a zero-sum game. Therefore, developing proper language policies is a difficult task and even emancipatory laws might spark tensions, since they do not unfold in a neutral context and are interpreted based on the security concerns of the different language communities.

From a comparative perspective, Ljubica Djordjević's contribution analyses the dual concepts of language as identity marker and language as a means of communication in the context of four countries – B-H, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia – and of the fragmentation of the Serbo-Croatian language following the break-up of Yugoslavia in four languages, i.e. Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian. According to the author, by ignoring the mutual intelligibility among the four languages and reflecting nationalistic approaches the linguistic policies adopted in the selected countries reinforce ethnic divisions and contradict the principles of reasonability and proportionality. The linguistic policies analyzed are in essence – Djordjević argues – nationalistic and intolerant as languages are primarily used for internal unification and external demarcation replicating the 'us vs them' polarization. On a more practical level, Djordjević notes that the linguistic policies adopted in the selected countries ignore the linguistic reality of commonalities among the four languages leading to trivial and absurd situations such as translation in official communication of otherwise similar languages where the differences between the versions are almost unnoticeable. By using the concept of 'basic comprehensibility' from the Slovakian linguistic legislation – praised by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities – and inspired by the 2017 "Declaration on the Common Language" adopted by a group of intellectuals and activists from the four analyzed countries calling for a more integrative linguistic approach, the author calls for a more sophisticated approach, which while acknowledging the symbolic aspects of language, the risk of 'expansionist nationalism' and the existing ethnic diversity, at the same time, accommodates linguistic reality.

Reflecting on such types of approaches is among the goals of the contribution by Philip McDermott and Mairead Nic Craith. Addressing how language diversity might continue to be politicized and create boundaries and tensions in post-conflict societies, the authors highlight the need to include language issues in peacebuilding processes. In this context, they argue that linguistic recognition and accommodation of linguistic claims and rights should be intertwined with the promotion of a multidirectional dialogue both within and between communities. Indeed, bottom-up language activisms and claims, though vital for the survival of language groups, tend to be 'inward facing' and thus might risk antagonizing other linguistic communities, whereas states and international organizations' attempts to mitigate linguistic tensions through top-down recognition of language rights might not be endorsed on the ground. Exploring a wide range of case studies, from Northern Ireland to North Macedonia and Cyprus, McDermott and Craith point out that internal dialogue and reflections within communities about language diversity and wider linguistic heritage is a prerequisite for successful dialogue across communities. Such processes have the potential to deconstruct

prejudices vis-à-vis other language and language groups and dilute the linguistic cleavage, thereby re-framing the relationship between language communities and strengthening peace-building projects.

Finally, Alessandro Rotta and Slava Balan's contribution brings us from the national to the international level, focusing on the role of the OSCE High Commissioner of National Minorities in language issues, conflict prevention and diversity management. The authors present the evolution of the HCNM role from detecting and alerting the OSCE system about tensions that could escalate into conflict, to trying to assist OSCE participating states in devising policies that can prevent conflict along ethnic lines. This evolution reflects the view that focusing on long-term prevention and addressing root causes, rather than dealing with consequences, is generally more beneficial when dealing with conflicts and tensions. The main assumption of this approach is that societies in which social cohesion prevails and diversities, including language diversity, are integrated are intrinsically more stable and peaceful. Finally, the authors introduce and discuss the concepts of negative and positive securitization of language issues: the former refers to the idea of treating languages and minorities as security concerns in an adversarial worldview, reinforcing a paradigm of 'us' versus 'them' perpetuating discontent and conflicts. The latter refers to the idea that global and regional security is predicated on the security and well-being of individuals and groups. Thus, if issues concerning languages and minorities are treated in a 'non-politicized', inclusionary, and integrative rights-based manner then this builds peace and strengthens security.

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Appendix. 8th Nitobe symposium: "Language, conflict, and security"

July 26–27, 2021 • Belfast, Northern Ireland / Zoom

Conclusions and reflections

Mark Fettes (Simon Fraser University) & Michele Gazzola (Ulster University)

Day 1 – What we heard

In his welcome address, *Paul Carmichael* (Ulster University) reminded us of the stakes involved in the use of language in conflict situations, referring to mistakes in interpretation made in US-Japan negotiations prior to the bombing of Hiroshima. He evoked the value of Inazô Nitobe's example in using the facts on the ground to argue for more enlightened language policy in the League of Nations.

From *Sarah Williams* (Belfast City Council) we heard of the challenges and complexities of integrating multilingual languages policies and practices in the operations of a modern city. She emphasized the importance of stakeholder involvement and the value of sharing knowledge and ideas across jurisdictions, working towards a "maturity model" of urban mulitlingual management across many domains of language use.

Philip McDermott (Ulster University) noted how language can become a "political football" in deeply divided societies, comparing Northern Ireland with North Macedonia, South Africa, Guatemala and Cyprus. He observed that recognition of previously oppressed languages often starts as inwards-facing community activism, and suggested that more attention needs to be paid to encouraging dialogue across community divides.

The current political situation in Northern Ireland was addressed by *Janice Carruthers and Mícheál Ó Mainnín* (Queen's University, Belfast) through an analysis of the language policies in the key document "New Decade, New Approach" (2020). Despite gains for Irish and Ulster Scots, little progress has been made on the larger challenge of embedding language in equality policy, e.g., availability of foreign language programs correlates strongly with income level of pupils' families.

Niall Comer (Ollscoil Uladh / Ulster University) reminded us of the long history of colonial oppression and community resistance underlying current struggles over the status of the Irish language. In his experience, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages has shown itself to be a useful means of holding local councils to account; many of the 11 councils in Northern Ireland are not yet fulfilling their Charter obligations.

Insights into the linguistic integration of "newcomer" families in Northern Ireland were shared by *Raffaella Folli, Juliana Gerard, Lynda Kennedy, Susan Logue and Christina Sevdali* (Ulster University). The high diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds means that needs are likewise diverse. Along with educating and supporting teachers to respond effectively, the Ulster Centre on Multilingualism has noted the value of play-based extra-curricular activities for reducing language barriers.

Drawing on years of intensive collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Carmen Delgado Luchner* (University of Fribourg) described the complexities of interpretation in the context of humanitarian aid. Commitments to impartiality and neutrality mean that locals cannot be used, and the short time frame of most aid work precludes extensive prior training. These and other constraints suggest that the most promising way to improve the quality of interpretation is train mobile ICRC staff to use interpreters better.

Javier Alcalde (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) concluded Day 1 with an analysis of the links between language and peace at a global level. While those links are often asserted to exist, the causal relationship is unclear. If democracy is treated as a mediating factor, trade-offs between efficiency, equality and identity/solidarity point to the potential value for peace of a global auxiliary language such as Esperanto.

Day 1 – Thematic reflections

Principles and practices. Many presentations coupled acknowledgment of the value of political declarations and formally adopted principles with observations of the difficulties involved in translating them into consistent practice. Indeed, as in the case of humanitarian interpretation, certain principles can actually complicate the search for effective multilingual practices. There seems to be a potential for deeper dialogues between policy makers and practitioners with extensive experience in multilingual settings – whether the practices are those of city management, community organizing, classroom teaching, or interpretation and translation. That is, influence should ideally run both ways. How might this be encouraged and supported? Are there ways to synthesize and communicate the lessons of practice in order to better inform the work of addressing conflict and security at the political level?

Intra-community and inter-community solidarity. The role of language in cultivating a shared community identity and political voice was apparent in several presentations, in aspects both positive (the promotion of pluralism and social justice) and negative (the deepening of divides and political polarization). These discussions highlighted the importance of cultivating dialogues across language barriers, or "shared public spaces" where language is an instrument of inter-community solidarity. Studies of language in social context tend to focus on its intra-community role, or (in the case of dominant/colonial/official languages) on majority-minority relations. How might the study of language as a mediator of peaceful inter-community dialogue be encouraged and supported? What kinds of research questions would be of greatest relevance for policy makers, both in national contexts and in international policy-making bodies such as the OSCE?

Day 2 – What we heard

The day began with a brief overview of the goals and activities of the Centre for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems by *Angela Tellier* (CED) and remarks on the objectives of the Nitobe symposia by *Humphrey Tonkin* (University of Hartford). Placing language equality and linguistic justice on the agenda of scholars, policy makers and others requires an acknowledgment of the power and impact of language rivalries and hierarchies, in which those at the bottom are simply not heard. In fact, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals make no mention of language at all. That's why the current symposium is important, particularly at this time and in this setting.

According to *Alessandro Rotta* (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE), the office of High Commissioner on National Minorities began in 1992 as a kind of trip-wire or early warning system, but has come to focus on the integrated, structural prevention of

conflict. While a perfect balance is not achievable, the "magic formula" is simultaneously to promote the state/official language(s) and to maintain/promote/protect minority languages across diverse sectors (administration, health care, citizenship, voting, place names, justice, economic activities); see the Oslo Recommendations (1998) and the Ljubljana Guidelines (2012). Work is underway on "Oslo 2.0" to address new issues (e.g., digital technologies, new minorities).

How can the implementation of the Ljubljana Guidelines be measured? *Roberta Medda-Windischer* (Institute for Minority Rights, Eurac Research) and *Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark* (Åland Islands Peace Institute) presented an extensive review and mapping of existing indexes that include such factors as language use, language attitudes, and awareness of language rights in their measures of social integration. They highlighted the City of Vienna as a good urban model, with its emphasis on building multilingual competencies among its staff.

The key role of cities was emphasized by *Sarah McMonagle* (University of Hamburg), in view of the growing urbanization of populations around the world. She suggested that some of the constraints of national policies may be overcome at the urban level, yet cities often lack good data on their population because national data is not broken down. Although research in this field is growing, it would benefit from more conflict prevention perspectives.

Sonja Novak Lukanovič (University of Ljubljana) reviewed the situation in Slovenia, with particular reference to ethnically mixed areas bordering Italy and Hungary. Surveys suggest strong support by those local populations for institutional bilingualism, including shared schools where all students learn the minority language. It is possible to create such supportive situations for diversity through a multi-pronged approach.

The complexities of the situation in other regions of the former Yugoslavia were analysed by *Ljubica Djordjević (*European Centre for Minority Issues). The language varieties formerly grouped under the label "Serbo-Croatian" now have varying names, definitions and status in different jurisdictions; Montenegrin, Bosnian/Bosniak, and Bunjevać, a Croatian dialect, are among the topics of dispute. Some distinctions are opposed by both nationalists and anti-nationalists; in others, negative identification plays a key role: "We are not them."

A global perspective was reintroduced by *Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg* (UNESCO), who described the organisation's activities and goals in relation to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–32). The greater part of the world's linguistic diversity is at stake, so the Decade also represents a concerted effort to promote multilingualism through policy-making and resource allocation in all member countries of the United Nations.

The distributional effects of multilingual policies were the focus of the presentation by *Michele Gazzola* (Ulster University) and *Mark Fettes* (Simon Fraser University), who summarized their work with economist Bengt-Arne Wickström on designing an index of linguistic justice. Such an index would be of value in diagnosing language-related inequalities as a potential source of conflict, and to promote more inclusive and equitable approaches to managing diversity.

Day 2 – Thematic reflections

Multi-sectoral, multi-level language policy. Many presenters emphasized the importance of not confining language policy to just one or two areas of social life, but addressing language diversity in a systemic way across multiple domains. Language choices cannot be avoided in such areas as the administration of civil and criminal justice, the police and the courts, public administration in general such as the registry office and the tax office, and in public services that are part of modern welfare state systems such as health care and education. Different approaches may also be needed at different levels of government, e.g., in regions with a distinctive linguistic

profile and in multilingual cities. While symbolism is important, it also matters what people are able to do and to be (what their capabilities are) within the limits of their linguistic repertoire. Finding ways of evaluating and comparing governments' performance across levels and sectors may be a key strategy for enhancing the management of cultural and linguistic diversity in a systemic way. What might be some practical steps towards developing such a research programme?

The impact of local and global linguistic hierarchies. The tendency of states to favour one or two dominant languages (the most common foundational language policy at the national level) can obscure the role of language hierarchies at both the supra-national and sub-national levels. Local attitudes to different languages and language varieties shape people's responses to language policies, and vice versa, while the international prestige of certain languages such as English can also have major implications for language choice and language use, e.g., among migrant populations. In an increasingly globalized and virtually connected world, is there a role for supranational language policies and planning? What kinds of research programme might address the mutual interaction of linguistic hierarchies at global, national and local levels and support effective policy making at all system levels? What should be the role of lingua francas (languages of wider communication) in such policy systems? Is there a policy role for Esperanto as a language of inter-individual and inter-group solidarity at the global level?

Further questions for discussion

The 8th Nitobe symposium has clearly established the relevance of language to issues of conflict and security around the globe. It has confirmed the complexity of language situations in zones of conflict, and in multilingual contexts in general, showing how vital it is to understand the linguistic beliefs, attitudes and capabilities of all the groups involved. Finally, it has helped identify a number of key issues where collaboration between researchers and policy makers might enable significant advances in our understanding of the peaceful management of diverse societies.

To summarize the four thematic areas identified above, these key issues include:

1. How to encourage and support **deeper dialogues between policy makers and practitioners** with extensive experience in multilingual settings, including city management, community organizing, classroom teaching, and interpretation and translation. Are there ways to synthesize and communicate the lessons of practice in order to better inform the work of addressing conflict and security at the political level?

2. How to encourage and support the study of **language as a mediator of peaceful inter-community dialogue**. What kinds of research questions would be of greatest relevance for policy makers, both in national contexts and in international policy-making bodies such as the OSCE?

3. How to **systematically evaluate and compare governments' performance across levels and sectors** in the management of cultural and linguistic diversity. What might be some practical steps towards developing such a research programme?

4. How to develop a research programme that can **address the mutual interaction of linguistic hierarchies at global, national and local levels** and support effective policy making at all system levels? What should be the role of lingua francas (languages of wider communication) in such policy systems? Is there a policy role for Esperanto as a language of inter-individual and inter-group solidarity at the global level?

We would like to conclude by expressing our deepest thanks to all participants for an enriching and thought-provoking event.

Riassunto

I conflitti legati a questioni linguistiche sono spesso l'effetto della concatenazione di diversi fattori come, ad esempio, questioni identitarie, religione, e partecipazione democratica. Tuttavia, nell'analisi dei conflitti la dimensione linguistica è spesso sottovalutata rendendo difficile identificare strumenti giuridici e politiche linguistiche che siano efficaci, eque e sostenibili. Le politiche linguistiche hanno un impatto politico e sociale: possono rafforzare conflitti e tensioni tra gruppi linguistici, possono accelerare la scomparsa di una o più lingue ma, allo stesso tempo, possono facilitarne la rivitalizzazione, e possono essere strumenti di inclusione o esclusione con un forte impatto sulla stabilità e la sicurezza della società. In questo contesto, questo numero tematico si propone di analizzare l'impatto della diversità linguistica sui conflitti e la sicurezza. In particolare, il numero tematico esaminerà le dinamiche che ruotano intorno alla diversità linguistica e come queste intersecano e innescano processi di securitizzazione. Ma come bilanciare la diversità linguistica per prevenire i conflitti e promuovere la sicurezza fra maggioranza e minoranze linguistiche? Come conciliare le esigenze legate alla diversità linguistica con la stabilità e l'unità politica? Qual è il ruolo delle organizzazioni internazionali in questi processi? E come superare il rischio che comunità linguistiche e culture minoritarie siano strumentalizzate allo scopo di dividere le società in antagonismi e accrescere la polarizzazione?

Resumo

Kvankam konfliktoj rilataj al lingvoj ĉiam interligiĝas kun aliaj demandoj, kiel ekzemple etna kaj rasa identeco, religio, kaj demokratia partopreno, oni ofte subtaksas la gravecon de la lingva dimensio, kiel ankaŭ la malfacilecon atingi efikajn, justajn kaj daŭripovajn solvojn por lingvaj leĝoj kaj politikoj. Lingvaj politikoj havas politikologiajn kaj sociajn konsekvencojn: ili povas refortigi aŭ pacigi konfliktojn kaj socian maltrankvilon inter lingvaj grupoj, ili povas rapidigi lingvoperdiĝon aŭ faciligi lingvan revivigon, kaj ili povas roli kiel iloj por inkluzivo aŭ ekskluzivo kiuj influas la stabilon aŭ sekuron de la koncerna socio. Havante tiun fonon, la nuna speciala numero celas prilumi la efikon de lingva diverseco je konflikto kaj sekureco. Specife, la numero ĵetos rigardon al la interrilato de lingvodiversecaj demandoj unuflanke kaj sekurecaj zorgoj aliflanke, kaj distingos la dinamikojn kiuj produktas procezojn de sekurecigo de lingvaj demandoj. Kiel oni ekvilibrigu lingvan diversecon por preventi konflikton kaj fortigi sekurecon de lingvaj majoritatoj kaj minoritatoj? Kiel kongruigi postulojn de lingva diverseco unuflanke kaj politika stabileco kaj unueco aliflanke? Kiun rolon havu internaciaj organizoj en tiuj procezoj? Kaj kiel superi la riskon de esencigo de lingvaj komunumoj kaj minoritataj kulturoj, kio konduku al dividoj de socioj en antagonismojn "ni-kontraŭ-ili"?

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