



Sustainable Development in a Diverse World (SUS.DIV)

STRATEGIC PAPER OF RESEARCH TASK 1.2

“Cultural diversity as an asset for human welfare and development”

Future Research Activities and JPA for the next 18 months

Participants

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Introduction

Task Group 1.2. is clearly interdisciplinary. The researchers have different backgrounds:

sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, economy, architecture and law. The interaction of different fields is very positive but at the same time challenging when organizing a common research strategy.

In the next coming years this group will work on four research themes which focus mainly on linguistic diversity and multilingualism as part of cultural diversity. Research on these themes involves both theoretical and empirical analysis and has an interdisciplinary approach. The three general aims of the four themes are the following:

- 1) To analyse the bring together research theories and methodologies used in economics, sociolinguistics and education
- 2) To deepen our knowledge of the added value of linguistic diversity
- 3) To explore the potential of economic valuation techniques to support decision making for the protection and promotion of multilingualism

Four research themes:

1.How can the economic values provided by multilingualism and cultural diversity (understood as the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity) be defined?

The aim of this theme is to define use and nonuse values of multilingualism: direct use value, indirect use value, bequest value, existence value. This theme links research on the multiple approaches to study identity in specific contexts and economic studies on biodiversity.

This research theme is very important in studies in multilingualism, linguistic and cultural diversity because there have been attempts to discuss the added value of multilingualism but the economic value of multilingualism has not drawn much attention. The methodology for this study involves quantitative and qualitative analyses and the data will be collected mainly in the Netherlands and Spain.

Research partners: Fryske Akademy, , University of the Basque Country, FEEM, University of Nottingham, CIIL.

2. How is linguistic and cultural diversity mapped in the linguistic landscape?

This theme will study the linguistic landscape of different cities and will also focus on the costs and benefits of using different languages in the linguistic landscape. It will use qualitative and quantitative techniques. One of the methods used will be conjoint choice-state modeling using attributes and attribute levels. The study of the linguistic landscape provides relevant information about the visibility of linguistic and cultural diversity. The data will be collected mainly in cities in the Netherlands and Spain.

Research partners: Fryske Akademy, , University of the Basque Country, FEEM, University of Nottingham, CIIL

3. How is linguistic and cultural diversity mapped in education?

Education has a very important role in the maintenance and development of linguistic and cultural diversity. This theme aims at analysing the costs and benefits of using different languages in education. The methodology to be used will be similar to that of theme 2 but with specific questions on education.

Research partners: Fryske Akademy, , University of the Basque Country, FEEM, University of Nottingham, CIIL.

4. How is linguistic and cultural diversity mapped by individuals?

This theme takes a broader perspective and focuses on individual citizens and their perception of linguistic and cultural diversity. It will also analyse the costs and benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity. The methodology will be similar to that used in themes 2 and 3 but using general questions about different aspects of multilingualism.

Research partners: Fryske Akademy, , University of the Basque Country, FEEM, University of Nottingham, CIIL.

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A few websites:

www.ethnologue.com/ (languages of the world)

<http://portal.unesco.org> (Head portal of the UNESCO)

www.linguapax.org (Linguapax International Network)

www.terralingua.org (Website of the non-profit organisation Terralingua, for the promotion and protection of cultural and natural diversity)

Appendix: Research projects of the research teams

1. Host institution:

Fryske Akademy, Social Science Research Department
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The Netherlands

Team-leader

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Research project 1: Comparing the diversity of linguistic landscapes

Researchers

Durk Gorter and Loulou Edelman, PhD candidate (Un. van Amsterdam)

Objective

The aims of the project are to investigate:

(1) the linguistic landscape as expression of multilingualism in various locations (Which languages are displayed and what is the relative weight of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual signs? What are the distinctive characteristics in different geographic areas with

varying degrees of urbanization? Which similarities and differences exist between different areas where a minority language is in use? Are there differences in top-down and bottom-up signs? Which symbolic and identity-formation functions do the signs display?)

(2) phenomena of language contact, in particular language mixing and blending (What are the linguistic features - spelling, lexicon, grammar, cross-linguistic influences - of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual signs? Which differences exist between various combinations of languages?)

(3) How the diversity of locations (degree of urbanization/type of minority situation) is related to the diversity of various language contact phenomena (Are more fluid forms

of language mixing related to more urban environments? Does language policy - top-down - have an influence on the linguistic features observed?)

Research methodology

Multidisciplinary approaches from linguistic, sociological or sociolinguistic perspectives are also relevant for a better understanding of the linguistic landscape. Moreover, for instance, certain perspectives in economy and geography can give us more insight into possibilities for a deeper knowledge of multilingualism.

To study the linguistic landscape is also to study cultural heritage. Languages are part of the cultural heritage and the sustainable development of linguistic diversity is seen as an important aspect of our heritage. According to the Unesco Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity “all persons have therefore the right to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the languages of their choice” (Unesco 2002). The sustainability of cultural diversity is an important issue for policy development. Models of environmental economics can contribute to the discovery of non-market benefits and the added value of the multilingualism, in order to understand better the ways in which the linguistic landscape is an important part of the preservation and the continued existence of different languages.

In principle the research technique seems rather simple: take digital pictures of all texts that you observe in a public space. Then code the images and enter the data in e.g. SPSS to analyze them statistically. There are, however, some complications, such as the area to be studied, the sample, the unit of analysis, etc. Decisions can be taken in different ways.

The project here chooses different dimensions. Data will be collected in Friesland in three smaller villages and in three larger towns, to compare the differences between the towns and the countryside. As second the larger areas around Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam are part of the sample, to compare the metropolitan area with the provincial region.

Research field

In a thorough sense of the word our world at the beginning of the 21st century is a multilingual. The idea of monolingualism by country - one state, one language - has become obsolete and has been overtaken by a complicated interplay of many languages.

Truly monolingual countries were always an exception, but globalisation with its ensuing migration flows, spread of cultural products, and high speed communication has led to more multilingualism in stead of less. There are many ways in which ethnic, socio-cultural, religious and commercial diversity are related to linguistic diversity. The process of 'glocalisation' in the international arena leads to new expressions of cultural mix and diversity in music, food and clothing, but also in languages. Innumerable language contact situations cause a high incidence of multiple forms of bilingualism.

A diversity of expressions of language is all around us in textual form as it is displayed on shop windows, commercial signs, posters, official notices, traffic signs, etc. Most of the time people do not pay much attention to the "linguistic landscape" that surrounds them. However, in recent years an increasing number of researchers have started to take a closer look and study the language texts that are present in public space. They are concerned with multilingualism and the use of language in its written form in the public sphere. The study of the linguistic landscape is a relatively new development. There are several reasons why it can be expected that a trend for more attention will persist in the near future. One reason is that linguistic diversity and multilingualism are important aspects of all such studies. At the same time the process of globalisation is made visible through the growing presence of English in the linguistic landscape. Next to globalisation there is also a process of regionalization or localization going on. Emphasis there is given to maintenance and revival of regional diversity and to identities and regional languages. Together these processes have been called 'glocalisation'. The effects of these simultaneous processes can be seen. More is possible now in the study of the linguistic landscape in relationship to gain more knowledge about multilingual phenomena that represent cultural diversity.

Governmental agencies regulate the use of signs to some extent and thus are part of what is categorized in the foregoing studies as 'top-down'. Some states, provinces or cities have developed more precise or far reaching legal measures than others.

Traffic signs are usually an important part of the linguistic landscape and typically those signs are placed there by an official agency. Traffic signs are already for a long time under international consideration. How these signs are designed and regulated has some impact on the outcome of a study into the linguistic landscape.

Among American sign regulators and designers there is an interesting debate going on between two perspectives. One view is that signs primarily serve an indexing function

telling people what to find where or what to do or not to do. According to this view signs have to be regulated and limitations can be placed upon them for aesthetic reasons. Signs, including private and commercial signs, are seen as a form of land use activity and governmental planners should play a role in controlling them (Mandelker and Ewald 1988). The opposing view sees signs to “serve multiple functions beyond indexing, including marketing, advertising, way-finding, providing information, building image, educating, and creating a visually stimulating retail environment.” (Claus et al 2004: 1). In this perspective larger and more conspicuous signs are more valuable. Signs are conceived of as speech rather than activity. Thus, signs can be ‘shouting’ or ‘screaming’ for attention and the economic value of a sign becomes an important issue.

In bilingual countries or regions signage can also be of great symbolic importance and dispute. In particular the use of place names in a minority language or in the dominant state language has been a regular issue of linguistic conflict (Gorter 1997, Hicks 2002). This multilingual reality dictates that studies of linguistic landscape should aim at discovering patterns in the underlying diversity. It is of utmost importance that theoretical models and approaches, such as proposed by Ben Rafael et al (2006) are developed further.

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Research project 2: Diversity in educational provisions for minority language groups

Researchers

Durk Gorter, Cor van der Meer, Sytske de Jong, Tseard de Graaf, Piet Hemminga (all at Fryske Akademy)

Objective

Research will take place in the context of the Mercator-Education project, hosted by the Fryske Akademy. Mercator Education has the following three aims: (a) exchange of

information, (b) maintain a databank of documentation and (c) carry out research through comparative analysis.

The basic objective of this study is to carry out an overall comparison of the educational provisions of a sample of some 40 language groups in the European Union.

Research methodology

How education can contribute to language maintenance and development in certain cases depends on background factors and characteristics of the minority language group, such as demographic facts (size, location), and socio-cultural differences as they influence policies.

A special working method has been used in the conduct of the inventory studies (see also Sikma 1994, or Renkema 1995). After it has been decided that a certain topic, which may comprise a level of education (e.g. pre-primary) or a problem area (e.g. learning materials) is going to be studied, a thematic list of questions is drafted. This 'item-list' has to be used by the key informants who are going to write up a monographic file (that is a report or dossier) for the topic under consideration for their own language group.

By presenting the informants with a well structured item list, their reports ought to include specific items of information in specified sections, which is helpful in comparison afterwards. Because the information thus gathered is also going to be stored in the Mercator data base, a special component has to be designed for the data base. After the data have come in, they are analyzed into a synthesis report.

In order to place the inventory studies in a wider theoretical and methodological framework the field comparative education is of great relevance. Mercator-Education attempts to construct, elaborate and refine theory for better explanation of the diversity found in the educational arena for the numerous European language groups. In particular the use of multiple case study designs seemed a promising way forward.

Research field

Education is important for maintaining and revitalizing minority languages and the relationship between education and society is bidirectional. Education can contribute to the development of proficiency in minority languages by teaching these languages and through these languages but it also reflects the demography and status of minority

languages in society. Understanding the diversity of situations essential. Structured systematic comparison is of importance to further the knowledge about the continued existence of these groups. The focus is on the use of different languages in education in European regions in which an autochthonous, minority language is spoken. In these regions, speakers of the minority languages are usually proficient in the majority national language and learn additional languages at school. In many cases speakers of the majority languages also learn the minority language.

Because education is of such prime importance in the revival and development of minority or regional languages, almost all language groups have taken some initiatives. The provisions in the field of education vary widely, from barely any attention at all, to an almost complete educational system parallel to the state-system. To make research information accessible in a standardized form may be of great help to the target groups of Mercator, in particular policy-makers and researchers, but also teachers, parents, journalists and 'the public at large'.

Minority languages and cultures have become an increasingly important social issue over the last three to four decades. Today, language, identity and maintenance of diversity are no longer just part of just this or that 'revivalist' movement. These issues have come to the front of the stage of global politics. A basic assumption in all this is that preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity is important.

In the context of these international developments the field of education is one of the key-areas. In many cases one of the first measures to stimulate a minority language is the creation of some form of bilingual education. Where, when and how such provisions are established, by whom and with what results, is frequently not well known outside the area where the initiatives are taking place.

Policy is also shaped to a large degree by national background factors. States have build over a longer period of time a national educational system, which is not easily going to be adapted for the sake of a minority language group. A role of importance is also played by the history of attitudes to language and literacy. A stumbling block in trying to improve the provisions are often also persisting administrative traditions.

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Research project 1: Multilingualism in the linguistic landscape

Researchers

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Objective

The aims of the project are to investigate:

- (1) The use of different languages in the linguistic landscape in the city of San Sebastian. It will look at different areas of the same city and will compare top-down and bottom-up signs.
- (2) To get data on the perception of multilingualism in the linguistic landscape and the use of the minority language
- (3) To discuss this findings as related to other sociolinguistic contexts and theories on identity and attitudes towards diversity

Research methodology

It will combine quantitative and qualitative methods.

Digital pictures of all texts seen on different streets will be taken and analysed. The coding scheme used will include type of sign, branch, the number of languages on the sign, the languages on the sign, top-down vs. bottom up signs, first language on bilingual signs, signs of the languages on bilingual signs and type of font on bilingual

signs. The data will be analysed with SPSS and comparisons among the different streets will be carried out as well as with other cities in other contexts.

The perception of the linguistic landscape and the value of multilingualism will be measured by using questionnaires, interviews and focused discussions.

Research field

Linguistic diversity and multilingualism are common phenomena which can be studied from different perspectives including the use of languages in the sociolinguistic context. One of the possibilities is to analyse languages in context by focusing on the written information that is available on language signs in a specific area. This perspective is known as the study of the linguistic landscape which has been defined as follows:

‘The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. The linguistic landscape of a territory can serve two basic functions: an informational function and a symbolic function (Landry and Bourhis, 1997: 25)’

According to Landry and Bourhis (1997) the linguistic landscape has at least three functions: i) it serves to delineate the geographical territory of a language community, that is to establish boundaries between linguistic communities; ii) it gives information about the language or languages used to communicate or to obtain services and iii) it can provide information about the sociolinguistic context in a specific territory.

Research in this area will look at the relationship between linguistic landscape and the sociolinguistic context. This relationship is bidirectional. On the one hand, linguistic landscape reflects the relative power and status of the different languages in a specific sociolinguistic context. In this sense it is the product of a specific situation and it can be considered as an additional source of information about the sociolinguistic context along with censuses, surveys or interviews. The majority language of a language community is more likely to be used more often in place names or commercial signs while the minority language or languages will not be as common. On the other hand, linguistic landscape contributes to the construction of the sociolinguistic context because people process the visual information that comes to them, and the language in

which signs are written can certainly influence their perception of the status of the different languages and even affect their own linguistic behaviour. The linguistic landscape or parts of the linguistic landscape can have an influence on language use.

When analysing the signs available in the linguistic landscape it is important to make a distinction between government or top-down signs (for example official signs for street names) and private or bottom-up signs (for example signs on shops). Both types contribute to the linguistic landscape but top-down signs are usually the result of a specific language policy while bottom-up signs reflect individual preferences.

The study of the linguistic landscape is particularly interesting in bilingual and multilingual contexts. The linguistic landscape can provide information about the sociolinguistic context and the use of the different languages in language signs can be compared to the official policy of the region and to the use of the language as reported in surveys. The study of the linguistic landscape can also be interesting because it can analyse the differences between the official language policy that can be reflected in top-down signs and the impact of that policy on individuals as reflected in bottom-up signs. Finally it can analyse citizens' perceptions of multilingualism and give information about the relationship between multilingualism, identity and attitudes.

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Research project 2: Multilingual education

Researchers

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Objective

Research in this area focuses on the acquisition of communicative competence in different languages at school with a special focus on Basque, Spanish and English. It aims at i) analysing the effect of using the minority language as the main language of instruction on academic and linguistic development; analysing the effect of age when the educational curriculum includes different languages; iii) analysing the value of multilingualism as related to attitudes and identity.

Research methodology

This research will use qualitative and quantitative methods and an interdisciplinary approach. The specific methodology used will be the following:

1. To conduct a meta-analysis of research on the interaction between languages in multilingual education with a main focus on the effect of bilingualism in the acquisition of a third language. In order to do so research studies on this issue will be analysed and compared.

2. A quasi-experimental longitudinal design will be used to analyse the short and long term effects of age, cross-linguistic influence and teaching methods on the acquisition of English phonetics, lexis, morphology, syntax, discourse and pragmatics. It also analyses the development of attitudes and motivation and their role in the acquisition of English.

3. Interviews and questionnaires will be used to get information about the perception of linguistic and cultural diversity in education

Research field

There is a growing body of research into multilingualism which responds to the need to identify the specific characteristics that distinguish the acquisition of several languages from second language acquisition and multilingualism from bilingualism. This has given rise to studies into cross-linguistic phenomena, and to the development of new approaches to the explanation of multilingual language acquisition and language use phenomena. Social mobility, immigration and the spread of English as an international language are powerful promoters of multilingualism and often, in order to meet new educational demands, research into multilingual acquisition has received an impetus for pragmatic reasons as well, such as studies on the question of the optimum age for the introduction of the third language in a school context where the results may be used to inform language planners.

Language policy can positively affect the development of multilingual education and at the same time, the way education has an effect on the increasing number of speakers of the minority languages. However multilingual education is a complex process regarding factors such as teacher training, material development or curriculum design. The development of bilingual and multilingual education has also had an impact on the research community and can provide evidence for different psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic theories.

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Research project 1: Ethnic diversity and urban cultural heritage: valuing heritage diversity in a multilingual setting

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Objective

The project aims to find an answer to some research questions:

1. Within the urban context of a multicultural city, which are the features of the built heritage that most attract residents from different ethnicities?
2. What is the relationship between the host country heritages preferred features and the features of the original country heritage? Do ethnic minorities identify themselves in the heritage of the host country? If not, why? Do they value its preservation?
3. What is the relationship between preferences shown by different ethnic groups towards tangible and intangible heritage of the host country? In particular, what is the role played by languages (host and home) in developing these preferences?

This project will constitute the basis for a more in depth economic valuation exercise to be developed once the results of this first phase will be available.

Research methodology

The research will focus on a multicultural city where several ethnicities live side by side. At this stage we are envisaging the historic city of Amsterdam, in order to create synergies with other research projects, where the researchers are involved together, which are also using Amsterdam as a case study.

The research will use questionnaires to be administered to selected ethnic groups. The focus will be on the relationship between Dutch Heritage and the perception and preferences that other ethnicities have of it and the way it shapes public spaces. To what extent are these ethnic groups integrated within the host community? Is this integration helping their understanding of the value (also economic value) of the heritage they live in?

We aim to identify preferences for cultural heritage features per each selected ethnic group and rank them. We will compare the obtained ranking with those of the other ethnic groups involved in the study. The way the questionnaires will be developed will make possible a second stage of the research, where a formal conjoint analysis study might be implemented to measure in monetary terms these preferences.

Research field

This research project relates to a current research stream dedicated to the economic valuation of cultural heritage. In particular, it acknowledges the controversial nature that “official heritage” can have on ethnic minorities. In fact, the definition of cultural heritage can be quite controversial, per se. In broad terms we could define cultural heritage as the record of mankind achievements and relationships with the world. Therefore, it has always a local dimension, though sometimes it embeds universally shared values. The concept of heritage is not given, but created by a community, by people who attach values to some objects, rites, languages, contexts, lifestyles, historic sites and monumental buildings. Labelling something as heritage represents a value judgment, which distinguishes that particular object from others, adding new meaning to it. Cultural heritage summarises people’s identities, shapes communities’ ones, and to this extent contributes to the creation of social capital. Many different cultural heritages can be identified, and this cultural diversity becomes a new form of capital embodied both in material (monuments, historic sites, cultural landscapes, etc) and immaterial goods (languages, traditions, religions, etc).

Heritage is a social, economic and cultural resource. At the same time it is a politicised and contested concept. Pressing questions on “whose heritage” seems to be brought to the forefront in our multicultural societies. If heritage is what we preserve from the past to inform our present, contemporary heritage cannot be but *dissonant* (Graham et al, 2000). In fact, the creation of heritage implies the distinction between those who

subscribe to it from those who don't. Heritage valuation within this context becomes a tool to better understand the significance of heritage to different sections of society. Nonetheless, this is not the only reason why we are asked to value our cultural heritage. We value to understand, but also we value to preserve, and to manage our heritage. The valuation process aims to assess existing values as attached by the relevant population. However, the ultimate aim in the context of policy analysis is to value in order to achieve the *valorisation* of our heritage, in other words, *to add new values* to the existing ones. Therefore, valuation represents a crucial step in the management of cultural heritage especially when we narrow the concept to the built environment.

Contemporary cities, at the time of globalisation, are the places where conflicts and social differences can be felt at their height. Traditionally places of contradiction and social concern, nonetheless cities turned out to become more culturally homogeneous. The idea of belonging to a "*campanile*", a bell tower, used to be enough to understand one's root and identity for many European cities. Urban cultural heritage would be the built expression of city's identity and of its symbolic values, the place where citizens could recognise themselves. In our information and global society, this is no longer true. Many cultural minorities live in places that represent a diverse culture, places they may feel estranged from, or even threatened by.

The symbolic role played by architecture and, in general, by urban cultural heritage has been symbolically brought to the forefront by events such as September 11. Striking the heart of a nation meant striking the heart of a building, the world trade centre, symbol of the capitalistic age. Thankfully, conflicts in society do not always take these extreme measures; however, understanding the public perception of cities, their heritage and their transformations seems a crucial element to achieve social cohesion. Dialogue and participation to the city governance process are the major factor of success in minimising conflicts. Today there is the need to develop new tools and methodologies capable to account for social differences and preferences.

All urban policies related to cultural heritage, both mobile and immobile, have crucial impacts on the economic development of most world cities. In Europe, *cultural tourism* is one of the most important industries. Some management policies may cause distress to both residents and the cultural heritage itself. Therefore, it is important to develop new cultural heritage management tools that may account for urban changes and help decision makers to develop appropriate policies, accounting for people's preferences,

considering minority and disadvantaged groups and their interests. Within this framework, valuation methods acquire specific relevance.

Economic valuation of non-market goods has represented an important step towards incorporating economic considerations in decision-making about natural resources, environmental quality, and the quality of life in urban areas. Attaching monetary values to intangible features, such as quality of natural beauty and built environments, helps accounting for them in *benefit-cost analyses*, and hence in *decision making processes*, especially those dealing with *conservation* issues. A change in the provision of a non-market commodity, such a transformation of the built environment caused by a regeneration project, has social and economic impacts and can be perceived either as a gain or as a loss by the affected population. Sometimes the loss is related to symbolic values that the public perceive as disregarded by the project, despite the overall improved conditions. Nonetheless, in practice, the public's preferences for aesthetic and use attributes are rarely elicited, despite their potential importance in decision-making.

This research project aims to bridge a gap in the current literature. Whilst several studies have been developed using non market valuation methods to elicit people's preferences for cultural heritage (Navrud and Ready, 2002), to the best of our knowledge none has tackled directly the issues of how the economic values of historic heritage varies according to cultural identities of different minorities groups. We would like to discuss the relationship among ethnic related variables and cultural heritage features.

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