CHAPTER 2
LANGUAGE AND REGIONALISM
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Introduction

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to describe regionalism without reference to language or linguistic variety. Most of the European regionalist movements in the last 150 years are at least partly constructed on linguistic grounds, and in the majority of the chapters of this book, language as a factor is more or less present when describing the evolution of regionalism in different areas of Europe. In this chapter, some of the situations that are treated more comprehensively in other chapters will be focused upon in order to show, from a linguistic point of view, the significance of language in regionalist debates and in order to demonstrate that linguistic regionalism can be described with reference to a series of parallelisms and antagonisms which help to structure the particular facts. If we try to analyse the differences between European regional language situations and the varying importance of language in regionalism, we must go back in history and identify the factors and moments when these differences emerged. It is difficult to say how deeply rooted the present situation is, but we can identify some factors which during the last 150 years have had a decisive impact. This chapter will not offer a comprehensive overview on the relationship between regionalism and language since the nineteenth century; it will rather, with reference to certain exemplary moments and situations in the past, illustrate some factors which played a role in this relationship. Owing to the author's background, focus will be mainly placed on situations in Western Europe.

Regionalism is strongly linked to questions of linguistic identity or identity construction. However, the importance of language for defining regions is not uniform, neither in the different regions nor over time. Moreover, even if some dominant tendencies like 'globalization' or 'new regionalisms' can be identified in a certain period, this does not exclude their presence in other periods as well. This means that the chronological scheme chosen for this chapter is a relative one, with some prototypical facts which, in a broader context, should be further specified.

Language universalism and particularism

'Language' is not an unambiguous term. English distinguishes between the bare noun *language* and *a language*, with a determiner. The founder of modern linguistics, the Swiss scholar Ferdinand de Saussure,[1] used a distinction given in the French language to separate terminologically *language*, *langue* and *parole*: language as a universal, a social and

an individual phenomenon. Language in the sense of *language* is the main characteristic of humans as opposed to other primates; but language never exists as such in a purely universal manner: we always speak *a language*, and we do it with individual variation.[2] There is a general tension between linguistic convergence and divergence: speakers accommodate to others in order to be understood or in order to be integrated socially. However, speakers also search for differentiation and create and enhance individual and social boundaries. Both tendencies display the aim of communicating with others without linguistic limits, on the one hand, and the aim of marking a particular linguistic identity, on the other.

In early childhood, the so-called 'first language' or L1 is usually acquired in a natural environment, and very early speech perception and speech production is marked by this 'mother tongue'.[3] The identification with the group of L1-speakers is probably an evolutionary advantage linked to the evolution of language as such: babies recognize their peer group and distinguish its most human characteristic, the language of the group, from languages of other groups. The mother tongue is the one where fundamental syntactic, phonetic and prosodic patterns are acquired; all other languages and varieties are, according to most theories of language acquisition, learned secondarily, as 'L2' in a different way, departing from the L1 structures.

However, even if the L1 has a fundamental importance for our linguistic biography, other languages and varieties are acquired later during the life of an individual and contribute to what we can call his or her 'linguistic biography'. During their life, individuals learn to move, according to the actual situation, between different languages and varieties, but they will always be marked by their mother tongue. This means that group, and a 'heading' vector, which indicates the actual social objective the individuals are aiming to integrate by the way they speak. The interplay of origin, in actual linguistic behaviour, two tendencies can be identified, tendencies we can describe as behavioural vectors: a 'stemming' vector, which indicates the linguistic origin of the speakers, and a 'heading' vector, which indicates the actual social objective the group(s) speakers are aiming to integrate by the way they speak. The interplay of origin, biographical evolution and actual communicative objective generates what we may call the *linguistic identity* of an individual.[4]

Since there is no human without language, linguistic identity is by definition a universal fact. Linguistic identity, as identity in general, is a construct, and it allows for collective constructions which may stress a regional identity as well as an identity linked to a larger communicative range. And both are neither exclusive nor stable or given. This is where regionalism and universalism foster their potential for becoming political movements of conviction and choice, even if protagonists frequently use the 'giveness' of the one or the other tendency as an argument.

As inherent tendencies, both universalism and particularism are universal and omnipresent, but there are phases and regions where one or the other tendency dominates, generally with shifts from one to another pole as a reaction to the previous period.[5] For modern European linguistic thought, the prototypical movements for the two extreme positions of linguistic universalism and particularism can be seen in the French Revolution and in Romanticism.

The fundamental principle of the French Revolution was to achieve the equality of all people by uniformization and universalization.[6] The Jacobins were faced with a

country with enormous social and regional differences and they saw uniformization as a main goal. After a first phase of translation of writings with revolutionary thought into regional languages and dialects, the opposite policy was proposed: as all areas of social organization, language was also affected by uniformization and universalization. Regions and their linguistic variety were seen as representing the Ancien Régime, hindering the spread of revolutionary doctrine over the country. The French language, a renewed and purified French (a language which corresponds to the principles, according to its defenders, of nature and analogy), was considered to be the adequate instrument for wiping out social differences. Dialects and sociolects should be destroyed, and the nation should be built on a society without variation.

The anchoring of universalism in the history of the French Revolution has led to a tendency towards a certain political connotation of regionalism with right-wing ideology. In the second half of the nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill regarded linguistic diversity within a nation as a problem for achieving freedom and a liberal society and preferred the tendency towards uniformization. Peter Kraus even argues, '(D)uring a long period of time, lasting far into the twentieth century, this preference remained a standard ideological orientation for liberal nationalists, who tended to adopt the approach *one people, one state*.'[7] Marxism and Marxist regimes often adopted linguistic uniformism due to the same tradition. This does not mean that there is a necessary link between universalism and particularism and a certain political orientation, but rather that universalism is a kind of default ideology in left-wing thinking, and that 'progressive' left-wing regionalism often needs further justification. However, maybe more important than these traditional tendencies are the current contexts, and regionalism is often just ideologically opposed to the dominating ideology in the superposed entity. In some cases, universalism was also the dominant paradigm of authoritarian and rightist central governments.

The opposite movement to universalism is the particularist thought which can be found prototypically in German idealism and Romanticism. Philosophers such as Herder, Hamann, Fichte, August and Wilhelm Schlegel, or the linguists Bernardi or Wilhelm von Humboldt, focused on language diversity as the base for the definition of nations, denying the possibility of reducing mankind to one universal language. For Herder, the particular language of the human being (not language on a universal level) was the prerequisite of human autonomy, identity and freedom.

Both movements highlight different aspects of human language, and both offer arguments that have remained part of nationalist and regionalist discourse until the present.

Universalism and particularism are two intimately related and mutually conditioned phenomena, and we will not find one without the other. For regionalist movements, this means that they are related to movements of universalization and that they have to be discussed together with their universalizing counterparts. Shortly after the French Revolution, particularist movements spread all over Europe and in the New World. Wherever the revolutionary ideal of mass education in the dominant language was realized in areas with local language diversity, resistance was articulated and the local languages and dialects were defended: dialect dictionaries such as Schmeller's

work on Bavarian or local language movements and cultural renaissances such as the Catalan *Renaixença* or the Galician *Rexurdimento* were nineteenth-century answers to the tendency of unification in a 'roof' language or variety. Similarly, when more than a hundred years later the tendency of globalization is becoming manifest after the intensification of mass communication and global mobility over recent decades, 'new regionalisms'[38] react against this unifying tendency postulating counter-reactions and stressing regional identity as opposed to global anonymity.

Region and language in Europe from the nineteenth century until the Second World War

The nineteenth century can be regarded as the century of the 'birth of regionalism' in the modern sense.[9] Language was a crucial factor in many of the regionalist movements all over Europe. The European history of language standardization has undergone a series of evolutionary steps,[10] in which vernacular languages emancipated in the medieval period and became written languages, but only a reduced number of languages underwent 'Ausbau'-processes of elaboration.[11] At the beginning of modernity, book printing and standardization were further processes which created asymmetries between languages selected for written elaboration, literature and prestigious uses and others with more restricted local functions. In areas of coexistence between standardized languages of wider communicative range and local languages or varieties, a diglossic coexistence between a written, prestigious standard language and a spoken local idiom is frequent, sometimes with restricted written usage of the local language.[12] There seems to be a linear evolution of the large-scale standard language becoming more and more important and spreading horizontally from centres to peripheries, and vertically from written to spoken use and from upper to lower social strata. This apparently linear evolution, catalysed by the ideology of the Enlightenment and the principle of linguistic *égalité*, was a fertile ground for the establishment of regional countermovements, which profited from the potential of regional diversity and constructed regional identities defined as alternative models to larger units and national roof languages. Some further external factors helped to foster these movements, basically the economic decline of peripheries in the process of industrialization, sometimes accompanied by massive emigration due to poverty or immigration which made the local linguistic particularities visible.

I should clarify at this point that we call these movements 'regional', even if some of them define themselves as 'national': the use of both terms is not always clearly differentiated and varies regionally. I will use 'national' for political and cultural constructions on a state level and 'regional' for regional constructions on a hierarchically inferior level: regions as parts of states or as entities within nations.[13] This does not prevent regionalist movements from evolving and becoming nationalist, postulating the establishment of an entity equal to the formerly superior one, as in the case of the Catalan movement until present.

Since linguistic regionalism in the nineteenth century is a movement defending the 'losers' of expansion processes from the medieval period against the 'winners', one of the most frequent metaphors used in the emancipation discourse is the rebirth, the Renaissance of languages which aims at repairing the historically given asymmetry between A-languages and B-languages in the diglossia. We find, in different regions, the Catalan *Renaixença*, the Galician *Rexurdimento*, the *Renaissance Provençale*, the Gaelic revival (*Athbheochan na Gaeilge*) and the *Renaschientscha Rumantscha*. All of these movements coincide in that they claim, to different degrees and with different contexts, the existence of some glorious past of the languages and the aim of recovering their lost importance. They all looked for delimitation of a differentiated language space and the consolidation of the local language as a dignified instrument for written usage. Poetry was generally the most important instrument for this dignification at the beginning of the process, and in poems and manifestos, the importance of the mother tongue was praised:[14] as a basic instrument of identification, the link between the ancestors and the present, and the symbol of community and home. A well-known example is Bonaventura Aribau's *Oda a la Pàtria*, published in 1833, which is considered as the foundational document of Catalan regionalism. A considerable part of the text is dedicated to the Catalan language; it states, among others, the following:

En llemosí sonà lo meu primer vagit
quan del mugró matern la dolça llet bevia;
en llemosí al Senyor pregava cada dia
e càntics llemosins somiava cada nit.
Si, quan me trobe sol, parl' amb mon esperit,
en llemosí li parl' que llengua altra no sent,
e ma boca llavors, no sap mentir ni ment,
puix surten mes raons del centre de mon pit.

My first infant wail was in Catalan
when I sucked the sweet milk from my mother's
nipple;
I prayed to God in Catalan each day
and dreamed Catalan songs every night.
When I find myself alone, I talk with my soul,
it speaks Catalan, it knows no other tongue,
and then my mouth does not lie, or know how
to lie,
and my words well up from the centre of my
breast;[15]

Apart from poetry, other manifestations of these 'rebirth' movements are collections of folk songs, phrase books and oral literature, lexicological studies and dictionaries, grammars and other linguistic works elaborated frequently by members of the local elites and often in a frame of the dominant language.

Although nineteenth-century regionalist movements had many things in common, they also differed substantially in several aspects, and principally the following:

- the degree to which they are rather conservative or rather emancipatory
- their degree of support in the population
- the degree to which there is a substance and a tradition for the construction of a local identity
- their economic background
- their respective frame of reference which gives them more support or less

In their evolution until the First World War, when the old orders in Europe were destroyed and the whole continent was newly organized, these heterogeneities prepared the ground for a diversity in evolution: while some of the nineteenth-century regional languages grew into national languages of new political units (such as in the case of the Baltic states and their languages, in Ireland or in Czechoslovakia), other regional languages or dialects were not successful in combining a cultural process with political support (such as the aforementioned Catalan) or even remained in their regional, subordinate position without strong attempts to change it (like in Bavaria or in Asturias).

In general, this is more a sociopolitical than a linguistic matter. If we look at the objective linguistic distance between languages, we can state that this seems not to be a central criterion for regional languages or varieties to become emancipated. It could be argued that the reason for the distinction between 'regional dialects' and 'regional languages' lies in the objective linguistic distance and that 'real languages' tend to emancipation whereas dialects tend to remain as such. This is, however, difficult to maintain since structural distance is not an objective criterion that would allow linguists to distinguish between languages and dialects and the survival of regional varieties does not seem to depend on their structure, as we can see if we compare different regional languages in the same political context such as the regional languages in Spain. However, language distance is a factor which might play a role in regionalist movements: whereas language distance is closely related to the language of the state, speakers might choose the strategy of speaking the local language in order to stress their local identity even in communication with speakers who only know the state language, this is not possible in situations with typologically very distant languages due to the impossibility of mutual understanding.

If structural distance is not a sufficient criterion for the distinction between a dialect and a language, other criteria must be relevant. A classical distinction in twentieth-century language sociology is the one presented by Heinz Kloss between *Abstand* languages (languages by distance) and *Ausbau* languages (languages by elaboration). An *Abstand* language is a language which, due to its obvious structural difference, may not be subsumed as a dialect to the neighbouring languages, even if it is only spoken and not elaborated as a 'language of distance'.[16] Breton, Welsh, Albanian, Estonian or Basque are examples of *Abstand* languages: it is impossible to subsume them as dialects under the roof of French, English, Serbian, Russian or Spanish/French.

The second type, in turn, is not determined by inherent structural properties of the language; there must, of course, be some difference with regards to other languages or varieties in order to 'elaborate' a dialect as a different language. But the objective distance is not the most important criterion. It suffices to have a difference considered by a group of speakers as such and to have a name, an *adiectivum proprium*, for the identification of that difference.[17] *Ausbau* or language elaboration is a process which, according to Kloss, can be measured in two dimensions: on the one hand, the 'level' of the texts (popular prose – 'elaborated prose' – 'scientific prose') and, on the other hand, the thematic scope of texts (local issues – cultural referents – scientific referents).

The process of elaboration goes from popular texts with local referents (V-E) to more developed texts and may eventually achieve the level of scientific prose (F-N).

	E	K	N
F	5	7	9
G	2	4	8
V	1	3	6

Kloss's scheme had originally been conceived for the description of Germanic minority languages but has then been applied in a more general way to language development processes. Several aspects of Kloss's scheme have been criticized: first, the distinction between both types of languages is of a different kind and an *Abstand* language can also be more or less developed (which can make an important difference). Second, the scheme only takes into account the mere existence of text types but not the respective degree of social diffusion and acceptance. It is, however, useful for a first rough distinction of languages and varieties. In the case of European regional varieties, the degree of *Ausbau* is an interesting measure which enables the differentiation of situations like those of German or Italian dialects, which generally do not go beyond the level of popular poetry or popular prose, and regional languages which underwent processes of development and achieved, in some cases like Catalan, Basque or Galician, the level of scientific prose due to conscious language planning processes. Even in regions where no political emancipation process and no linguistic *Ausbau* took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, it can be said that the second half of the nineteenth century contributed strongly to the creation of a regional identity and to the shaping of regional differences that set the arguments for future movements, which postulated regional language rights or political autonomy linked to linguistically defined areas.

An interesting example of the difference between nineteenth-century Europe and the newly emerging European order after the First World War is the Habsburg monarchy.[18] Until 1914, there were two radically different, geographically separated models of linguistic organization within the empire: on the West of the river Leitha, multilingualism was the rule and a liberal coexistence of languages and varieties was part of everyday linguistic practices; on the other side, in the Hungarian zone, a hierarchical language situation which echoed the principles of the French revolution was maintained. Both language situations had different legal bases and if we compare the constitution of Cisleithania from 1867, they recognized all customarily spoken languages at school, in official contexts and in public life, whereas the Transleithanian national law of 1868 gave clear priority to Hungarian in an 'indivisible and united

Hungarian nation', even if in some regions other languages such as Croatian or Romanian were allowed. Some of the regional languages and their territories served then as a base for newly emerging national units in the new century, as Haslinger asserts: 'Under the conditions of the Austrian political and constitutional system, cultural regionalism of linguistic communities became closely connected with national programmes as well, because in national discourse, some crown lands served as core regions for a future national statehood (Bohemia for Czechs, Galicia for Poles, Carniola for Slovenes or Transylvania for Romanians).'[19] The case of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy shows that regional movements can emerge under the roof of unitary structures as well as in more pluralistically organized societies. However, in long-term views, monolingual tendencies and ignorance towards regions seem generally to have converging and diverging effects at the same time, and some of the important European regional movements derive their strength from the reference to previous oppression and impossibility of regional development, sometimes transferring the monolingual pattern of the nation state to the new regional framework.

The basis for the definition of regional territories is frequently linguistic, although there are not always clear linguistic borders. Languages seem to stem from a certain territory, and territoriality is often associated with two correlates: clearly distinguishable limits and stability, as if language was anchored or rooted in the territory. This is, of course, fallacious, and it leads to debate. Obviously, when we speak about the language of a certain territory, we refer to the speakers and not to the 'land'. The territory itself does not speak, and referring to language territories is in fact using a metonymy.

Moving again back to history, the interwar period is characterized by two antagonist tendencies. The first one consists in establishing former regions as new political units, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, the Baltic countries and Ireland. Also in the post-revolutionary Soviet Union, the former tendency towards Russification is replaced by a pluralist acceptance of language diversity after the tenth congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1921. Russian, however, served as lingua franca and as a language for science and for the central government. The other tendency marks the Stalinist Soviet Union from 1938 onwards, when the universal knowledge of Russian (alongside with the introduction of the Cyrillic spelling system for regional languages) became a principal goal of Soviet language policy.[20]

Tendencies towards monolingualization can also be found in the Balkans and, within a completely different political context, in Spain, where the two dictatorships of Primo de Rivera (1923–1930) and Franco (1939–1975) contrast with the pro-regional Second Republic (1931–1936/1939) and the co-officialization of regional languages in democratic times. A similar contrast can be found in the case of minorities in Germany: whereas the Weimar Constitution promoted the protection of the mother tongue and between 1924 and 1939, the Organization of National Minorities in Germany (Verband der nationalen Minderheiten in Deutschland) defended the language rights of the Sorabic, Frisian, Danish, Polish and Lithuanian minorities, organizations of this kind and the official use of minority languages were prohibited later by the Nazis.[21]

Globalization and 'new regionalism' in Europe

After the Second World War and the political reshaping of the world with the end of the colonial age, economic networks began to overwrite political alliances and in the Western world. English became more and more dominant as an international lingua franca. Globalization began to emerge, and the metaphor of the 'global village' insinuated a global dialect as its correlate. The Jacobine dream of linguistic universalism was apparently about to be fulfilled, with universal English instead of universal French. However, if it is true that universalism and particularism are mutually conditioned, it was expectable that countermovements would emerge. Obviously since the last third of the twentieth century, this is what happened: cultural and regional factors reappeared and regionalist movements were reactivated or newly created throughout the world. The movements towards democratization and social changes in the 1960s might have played a further role. Furthermore, local factors such as certain political events must be added and are responsible for different moments of emergence of the 'new regionalisms' in different European regions from the 1970s onwards.

The relationship between the newly awakened emphasis on local identity and globalization was highlighted by scholars from different disciplines from the early 1970s onwards. Thus, the sociolinguist Joshua Fishman anticipated that globalization would be activating the need of particular identities,[22] and similar observations were made by sociologists, economists and historians.[23]

Linguistically, new regionalism has several facets, all having in common the focus on linguistic diversity of a certain territory as opposed to others. In some areas, new regionalism includes nationalist tendencies and aims at building up separate cultural and political entities, such as in Flanders and the Basque Country; in others, such as Bavaria or Sardinia, it rather defends a regional identity considered as compatible with a superposed national identity, even though also in the latter cases, some sectors of the regionalist movement defended or still defend political independence. It is important to insist on the constructional character of new (as well as of traditional) regionalism without therewith denying the existence of 'real' bases and differences. However, a continuum can be identified between the prototypical poles of a rather homogeneous region with its traditionally recognized own language and support for regionalist movements among a broad majority and newly constructed or awakened regional identities with few differential linguistic facts and low support among the population. In between, there are regions where the local variety is considered as different but its use is rather limited to informal oral communication or for ludic written uses, or where the local variety is considered to be a different language by some local activists, but this status is doubted by linguists and by parts of the population.

Clearly, little support for linguistic difference must not be confounded with the lack of regional identity. In some regions, the identity is built on other factors, such as geographic or economic, and language plays a secondary role. Close to the pole of a strong regional movement anchored in history is a case like Catalonia, where the regional language is the most important factor upon which the local identity is built and where regionalism

has meanwhile shifted to a broad nationalist independence movement.[24] At the other extreme, we find cases such as local languages and varieties which after having almost died out are being revitalized or where local linguistic identities with very little historical anchoring are constructed on a rather weak basement. The latter phenomenon must be explained by a discursive transversality from one situation to another: throughout Europe, we find situations where regional identity strongly built on language contributes to social, political or economic advantages, and neighbouring regions with lesser linguistic differences adopt the strategies from 'stronger' regions. This can be observed, for instance, in Aragón, adopting elements of the Catalan discourse; in Upper Brittany with the discourse on Gallo adopted partly from lower Brittanie's discourse on Breton;[25] or with Cornish and Welsh or with Ulster Scots and Irish.

Transversality includes the adoption of sociolinguistic terminology, which then may enter into legislation or public debate. An example is the distinction between corpus planning and status planning: corpus planning refers to the planning of orthography, lexicon and grammatical forms, while status planning refers to the planning of the functions a language will have in society. Catalan sociolinguistics adopted this difference in the 1960s partly and introduced a distinction between language *normalization* (a term originally also used for corpus planning) and language *normativization*, the latter referring to corpus planning whereas the former refers to status planning and the 'making normal' of a language. This is, of course, a political and not descriptive term, since it implies the necessity to elevate a language on the level of other languages (generally the level of the state languages in contact with the regional language), and it has been adopted by other communities in order to consider the emancipation of the local idiom as a kind of naturally foreseen destiny which restores normality to the language.

This transversality of discourse on language diversity also is mirrored in institutional organization and in legal initiatives. On an international level, the Catalan Law of Linguistic Normalization (first edition 1983) served as a model for several other initiatives of language legislation in Europe and beyond; its influence can be traced even to cases in America like the Mexican General Law of Linguistic Rights for the Indigenous Peoples from 2003. The European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages operated from 1982 onwards, organizing meetings and fostering communication among language activists within the European Union. It closed due to lack of economic support in 2010. In 1992, the Council of Europe adopted the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, prepared under the influence of representatives of the regions. In this charter, a number of fundamental linguistic rights for regional languages are postulated, such as the recognition and the protection of regional languages, their promotion on all levels of spoken and written usage as well as their institutional anchoring in administration, education and media. The charter has been criticized for its being limited to territorial languages and thus excluding languages of immigrant communities, while crucial European countries like France have never ratified it since they consider it unconstitutional. However, the charter is an important reference for what should be considered to be the minimum status regional languages should be allowed to attain. Together with UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights

(approved following a Catalan initiative in Barcelona in 1996), it serves as an important argumentative background for regional language emancipation.

If we want to consider the emergence and evolution of new linguistic regionalism in the second half of the twentieth century, a good example to look at is Wales. Since the nineteenth century, the number of Welsh speakers decreased. In 1960, a 'turning point in the history of the language'[26] can be fixed, when the flooding of the monolingual Welsh village Trewerin served as a starting point for a regionalist political movement in which the language was seen as a symbol for local resistance against governmental arbitrariness.

One of the most immediate and simple expressions of local emancipation can be seen in the phenomenon of writing autochthonous names on traffic signs and wiping out the denominations in the dominant language; this is a very widespread tendency and can be observed in very different regions. In recent years, the study of so-called linguistic landscapes[27] aims at systematizing this kind of linguistic visibility. In Wales (as in many other European areas), this visible protest has led to the officialization of bilingual street signs from the 1970s onwards. Several political initiatives (First Welsh Language Act 1967, Second Welsh Language Act 1993, Government of Wales Act 1998) led to more and more emancipation of the language. In 1991, the census data indicated that the number of speakers had grown for the first time in the century; and the 2001 census with 20.5 per cent of Welsh-speaking people showed a further increase. This, however, can also be due to changes in attitude and statistical data on language use must be treated cautiously. The growth is due to so-called new speakers or neo-speakers, a 'recurrent figure in urban linguistic activists' movement'.[28] In some regions such as the Spanish Basque Country, where they are known as *euskaldun berriak*, neo-speakers outnumber 'traditional' L1-speakers of Basque.[29] They are persons with the national dominant language as mother tongue, who decide to use the regional language 'regularly and as consistently as possible for daily communicative purposes'.[30]

Neo-speakers such as those in Wales can be found in different communities. In language revival movements, urban neo-speakers might be the leaders of regional language emancipation.[31] The fact that neo-speakers have shifted from one language to another has several inner-linguistic consequences: the new language of neo-speakers is – even if they grew up in a region where this language is commonly spoken – an L2, and they acquire it with all the consequences of an L2-acquisition process (interference from the L1, limited knowledge of forms, hypercorrections, etc.). The decision to shift to the regional language entails an enormous linguistic and social effort, which is reflected in attitudes of neo-speakers towards regional languages. Neo-speakers generally show a strong inclination towards purism and are frequently criticized by native speakers since they may have a strong accent and their linguistic behaviour might be strongly marked by the presence of the dominant language. In Wales and in other areas, such as the Basque Country, neo-speakers are probably decisive for the survival of the regional language, a language phonetically different from the autochthonous dialects and influenced by the dominant language at all levels of linguistic structuring.

The case of Wales also allows for illustrating new methods that were introduced in the last years in order to measure and to predict language shift (the individual loss

of a language in favour of another one) and language maintenance. Mathematicians, statistical physicists and sociolinguists have tried to construct models that enable the measurement of the future development of regional languages. In 2003, Daniel M. Abrams and Steven H. Strogatz presented a paper in *Nature* with a simple model for calculating language death[32] or language survival. Two of the situations they put into the model were Welsh in Monmouthshire (c, in the graph below) and Welsh in all of Wales (d, in the graph below). The authors 'demonstrated' how, in comparing both situations, it can be shown how the increase of a supposed parameter *status* (s) slows down the rate of language loss and helps to maintain the language. The model is claimed to be able to predict future evolutions.
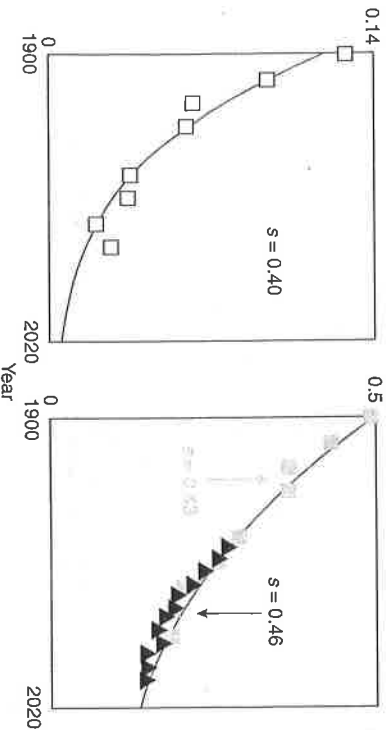
This has been criticized as simplistic and circular,[33] and in the last years models have increasingly improved and linguists and mathematicians have collaborated in order to refine the prediction techniques. However, it appears that the multifactorial phenomenon of language is not easily to be reducible to a few calculable numbers, and the prediction of future evolutions seems to be a rather uncertain task.

Migration and regions

The end of the Cold War and the opening of the Iron Curtain opened the way for massive inner-European migration, mainly from East to West, and reshaped the political landscape in several areas of the continent. Former republics of the Soviet Union became independent states and regional languages or dialects became official national languages there as in former Yugoslavia or former Czechoslovakia. Western German regions received massive inner-German migrants from the former German Democratic Republic and Russian migrants with German origin.[34] Already since the 1960s, migrants from southern Europe, North Africa and Turkey had moved to the richer states in central and northern Europe, as well as migrants from former colonies did to Britain, France, Belgium or the Netherlands.

On the one hand, this massive presence of speakers with different linguistic origins had an impact on dialect-levelling since the communicative culture in the receiving countries partly favoured switching to the standard language when talking to people from abroad. However, if we consider a vertical stratification in European regions, where the regional language tends to more likely be used in lower rather than in upper classes and migrants tend to enter lower levels of the social pyramid, migrants are frequently confronted with regional languages and dialects, adapting to the local varieties rather than adopting the standard in first generation contact. This means that migrants are not automatically factors of levelling or a 'danger' for the local languages. Situations such as the German-speaking part of Switzerland or Catalonia, where migrants often adopted the regional language, show that much depends on the prestige of the local language or variety and on educational policies above all in early childhood.

The traditional integration scheme of migrants is that the first generation acquires partial competence in the language of the receiving country, the second generation is bilingual and the third generation has the local language as the dominant one. In recent times, criticism against this traditional scheme of unidirectional acculturation and linguistic assimilation has been formulated and a more dialogic process of mutual approaching is preferred. However, as Mahendran argues, '[L]earning the language is totemic in integration debates' and the 'use of the dominant national language is viewed as pivotal'[35] for migrants. Between full linguistic integration and maintenance of the original language (two tendencies which by no way are mutually exclusive), numerous linguistic possibilities of merge and combination are possible, all of them with identitarian values or at least side effects.

Above all in the second generation, but according to the situation also in the third, code-switching is a frequent phenomenon within families and with peers. However, in some areas, where migrants were (and partly still are) concentrated in urban or suburban areas with high numbers of others of the same origin, code-switching between the contact languages may become a more general habit and hybrid mixed lects phonetically marked by the original language, like German-Turkish *Kiezdeutsch*, may emerge.[36] These hybrid mixtures can be associated with certain urban neighbourhoods and be 'regionalized'. There are also tendencies that the hybrid forms influence traditional speakers and that they can become part of humoristic imitation within and without the groups of migrants. Comedians are sometimes interesting indicators of language use and identity construction. Cases like the second-generation Bavarian Django Asül show how migrants break up the traditional scheme where dialect use serves as an indicator for local origin.[37]

Conclusion

Between their individual identity and their common, universal identity as part of mankind, humans create social units of different extension, degree of binding and stability. Language, in its local, regional and national forms, mirrors and shapes these units. The traditional unit of local linguistic identity in settlement societies is the dialect;

together with standardization, nation-building led to the creation of national languages. The last 150 years in Europe are marked by the strengthening of an intermediate entity, regional languages or regional forms of dialectal koinés. These entities may assume identity functions formerly associated with dialects, and they may be considered as attractive alternatives to the more aseptic and anonymous national standards. In principle, several language forms of different ranges may coexist in a more or less stable way, but European history shows that regional actors may link the construction of a regional linguistic identity to political emancipation, with acceptance or inhibition from the side of the larger national units. As we have seen, the interplay of the different levels should be considered in its systemic interaction and not be limited to isolated aspects. This allows for a better understanding of the processes, but it still remains impossible to make clear predictions about the following evolutions.

The twenty-first century came up with some unpredictable changes and with economic as well as ecological problems which had, in part, not been foreseeable. Climate changes affect the globe with variable regional impact; globalization and European integration, which seemed to be unidirectional and irreversible processes, are challenged from the left and from a newly emerging extreme right; populism reduces postmodern constructivism into an emotion-based post-factual view of the world and induces political disorder. It is hard to predict what the role of regional languages and language varieties will be within this new panorama, but regional identity in Europe counts on a historical background which serves as a fertile ground for newly emerging regionalism, and the dynamics of European societies will always create needs or interests for fostering the importance of regional units dialectically opposed to smaller and larger ones. In this general sense, regional linguistic differences will keep on offering one of the potential scenarios for establishing contrasting discourses in Europe's future. However, as we have seen, there are phases of dominance of regionalist movements, and if we look at some concrete developments and their strength and impact in recent years, it is quite possible that a new wave of regionalism, including linguistic aspects, will characterize the next decades.

Notes

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