PLURILINGUALISM, DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP IN EUROPE AND THE ROLE OF ENGLISH

Stephan BREIDBACH
University of Bremen

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

This text was commissioned by the Language Policy Division for the Conference on *Languages, diversity, citizenship: policies for plurilingualism in Europe* (13-15 November 2002). In the framework of a general discussion of diversification of language education policies, the need emerged to single out the "question" of the role of English teaching/learning in Europe for separate treatment. This problem has long been recognised as crucial for implementing any kind of diversified language teaching. At the Innsbruck Conference on "*Linguistic diversity for democratic citizenship in Europe*" (10-12 May 1999), the Language Policy Division was specifically asked to produce discussion papers on this particular aspect of language policy. This text, together with others in the same series, is a response to this demand from member States.

This debate should also be seen in relation to the "*Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe: from linguistic diversity to plurilingual education*". This *Guide* is both a descriptive and forward-looking document aimed at highlighting the complexity of the issues involved in language education, which are often addressed too simplistically. It endeavours to describe the methods and conceptual tools for analysing different language teaching situations and organising language education in accordance with Council of Europe principles. The present document also broaches this major issue, but given its subject-matter, it obviously cannot address it exhaustively.

The aim here is to review the issue of English in relation to plurilingualism, which many Council of Europe Recommendations have pinpointed as a principle and goal of language education policies. It is essential that plurilingualism be valued at the level of the individual and that their responsibility in this matter be assumed by all the education institutions concerned.

Jean-Claude Beacco and Michael Byram

A society which makes provision for participation in its goods of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (Dewey, 1916: 99, quoted in Benner, 2001: 62)

Introduction[1]

The intriguing challenge when considering the process of European Integration is that Europe, in its own understanding, is both culturally rich and diverse, and dependent on a certain degree of unity. In this respect, Europe has to find its balance between preservation and promotion of cultural diversity and the development of a common communicative sphere. As both elements are vital aspects of social inclusion, they are key-aspects for further development of democratic citizenship. European communicative integration is thus a key-concept within the context of European Integration and the development of a civil society in Europe. I perceive European communicative integration as a political concept which calls for structuring through language education policies. Policies which foster only one side of either cultural and linguistic diversity or linguistic unity, however effectively, cannot be called holistic and will of necessity fail to contribute to democratic citizenship.

The argument pursued in this paper is that people will have to be able to communicate, to create a common communicative sphere and maintain a discourse about the shape of a common polity called 'Europe'. Opportunity and ability to participate in public discourse on the questions of a future Europe are – among others – two fundamentals of 'democratic citizenship'. Hence, language education policies gain importance not only with reference to education in general, rather they are politically relevant on a larger scale. Competence in language(s) is a characteristic of democratic citizenship in Europe both as its prerequisite and its practice. In the words of *The Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*:

> "Policies for language education should therefore promote the learning of several languages for all individuals in the course of their lives, so that Europeans actually become plurilingual and intercultural citizens, able to interact with other Europeans in all aspects of their lives." (Council of Europe, 2003: 7)

European communicative integration, being founded on plurilingualism, is antonymous to linguistic seclusionism as it is to linguistic homogenisation. The former would lead to a status of 'isolation in diversity' with linguistic majorities

---

dominating linguistic minorities. The latter would be the foreseeable result of unstructured language education left to the invisible but heavily biased hand of the market. Its very probable outcome, in terms of foreign language teaching, would be a de facto *English only* situation. It is exactly because English can be allocated a clearly definable place in a desirable linguistic repertoire of European citizens, that resistance against a *monopoly* of English is necessary. So, promotion of plurilingualism should include considerations about the role of English against the backdrop of Europe as a polity in which citizenship means both a multitude of (linguistic) identities and the ability to enter public discourse.

> "Plurilingualism provides the necessary conditions for mobility within Europe for leisure and work purposes, but is above all crucial for social and political inclusion of all Europeans whatever their linguistic competences, and for the creation of a sense of European identity. Language education policies in Europe should therefore enable individuals to be plurilingual either by maintaining and developing their existing plurilingualism or by helping them to develop from quasi monolingualism (or bilingualism) into plurilingualism." (Council of Europe 2003: 9)

The general argument in this draws on three justifications for plurilingualism in particular (ibid: 9-10):

> "1. Language rights are part of human rights:
> Education policies should facilitate the use of all varieties of languages spoken by the citizens of Europe, and the recognition of other people's language rights by all; the resolution of social conflicts is in part dependent on recognition of language rights.
>
> 2. The exercise of democracy and social inclusion depends on language education policy:
> The capacity and opportunity to use one's full linguistic repertoire is crucial to participation in democratic and social processes and therefore to policies of social inclusion.
>
> 3. Individual plurilingualism is a significant influence on the evolution of an European identity:
> Since Europe is a multilingual area in its entirety and in any given part, the sense of belonging to Europe and the acceptance of an European identity is dependent on the ability to interact and communicate with other Europeans using the full range of one's linguistic repertoire."

While I use the first and third as implicit points of reference which are not being discussed in full detail, I wish to develop the second point looking at the possible structure of a common European communicative sphere and its dimensions of participation.

My aim in this paper is to reflect on the linguistic equipment or repertoire individuals will realistically require in order to be able to participate in the developing and shaping process of a European polity. I shall, therefore, look at a model of the structure of a European public communicative sphere and try to explore possible consequences for policies in foreign language teaching in general and the role of English in particular. My general frame of reference will be the concept of "Education for Democratic Citizenship" as it is being developed by the Council of Europe.

1. Concepts of Citizenship: focus on the individual within the polity

Citizenship is not a recent concept. Rather, it has recently gained renewed interest in areas such as political philosophy, 'New' political programmes, the imminent crisis of the institution of the nation-state and its particular version of the welfare state, and, finally, the discourse of European integration (Everson and Preuß, 1995: 32ff.). Despite its frequency of use, the term 'citizenship' does not designate a self-explanatory concept but calls to the fore a multitude of contexts and possible meanings. Everson and Preuß conclude "that the 'peoples of Europe' posses a great variety of understandings of the concept of citizenship" (ibid: 47) so that 'citizenship' cannot be treated as a "monolith" and not even as a clear-cut concept.

This may help to explain why, for example, both the European Union in the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht and the Council of Europe in the "Education for Democratic Citizenship Project" launched in 1997 adopt the term to mark a new phase for the political agenda of European integration.[2] At first glance, the European Union and the Council of Europe draw on different concepts of citizenship. Whereas in the European Union context 'European Citizenship' takes as a starting point citizenship as a legal institution which needs gradual substantiation (Everson and Preuß, 1995: 8ff.), the Council of Europe context treats the concept of citizenship – on the basis of the principle of participatory democracy – as an educational matter which refers to the development of individual capacities, competences and attitudes by the people in Europe (cf. Audigier, 1999: 13ff.).[3] Apparently, the concept referred to by the Council of Europe is based on a much broader understanding of the field of political and social inclusion which extends beyond the legal and the legislative.

[2] Remarkably, in neither of the founding documents of the Council of Europe or the European Economic Community (before it became the European Union), is the term 'citizenship' explicitly mentioned (cf. Audigier, 1999: 4; Preuß, 1998a: 11). But the concept of 'citizenship' may be sufficiently deeply rooted within Europe's intellectual and political history to make it a likely candidate to function as a 'political heuristic' with its apparently strong link with the discourse of liberalism. It hence places much emphasis on the individual as an active agent in society and thus on the processual aspect of societal life. 'Citizenship' thus functions as a 'gravitational centre' around which new modes of social integration for the people in Europe may develop.

[3] Some of these competences and attitudes are seen as supported or supportable through foreign language teaching (cf. Council of Europe, 1998).

These two concepts of 'citizenship' are, however, not mutually exclusive. Legal entitlements are necessarily hollow if people are only insufficiently able to claim and exercise their rights or remain excluded from social and cultural capital needed to access social and cultural provisions entailed in these rights. There is common ground in at least two important aspects: firstly that a relevant concept of citizenship addresses active individuals who participate in the shaping process of the polity, and secondly in the assumption that 'Europe' should become more integrated, which means that it is seen as a viable setting for a polity to be shaped.

Both aspects reflect a process of identity restructuring. The former reflects a transition of the status of the individual in her/his relationship to the collective, especially the nation-state. Here, "the basis and legitimation of membership" (Soysal, 1996: 23) has shifted:

> "In the new [post-national, S.B.] model, the membership of individuals is not solely based on the criteria of nationality; their membership and rights are legitimated by the global ideologies of human rights. Thus, universal personhood replaces nationhood; and universal human rights replace national rights. The justification for the state's obligation to foreign populations goes beyond the nation state itself. The rights and claims of individuals are legitimated by ideologies grounded in a transnational community, through international codes, conventions and laws on human rights, independent of their citizenship in a nation state. Hence, the individual transcends the citizen." (Ibid.)

The latter reveals that 'Europe' is not a term with a precise denotational content but that it rather serves as a frame of thought which still has to be filled, that is to be identified with. Hence, La Torre (1998: 87) does not consider "'Europe' without further qualifications (…) a useful category for political thought." With reference to identity formation, a sense of belonging is dependent on the opportunity to participate in the societal life of the polity in question. La Torre concludes that

> "once the question of identity is reformulated in terms of political identity, that is, in terms of membership to a polity, the main problem of a European identity will be that of a European citizenship. For it is citizenship which marks the political belonging, the membership, to a polity." (Ibid: 88.)

The question of how exactly language(s) and identity/identities interplay is still open to debate. Instead, it seems useful to refer to identity/identities in terms of membership to a polity. This is, as may have become clear, not just a matter of rights (legal, political, social, cultural) but also of capacities and attitudes of the individual to become active.

10

2. 'Education for Democratic Citizenship' and Plurilingualism

In the following, I wish to explore the implications of plurilingualism within the conceptual framework of 'democratic citizenship' as developed in the work of the Council of Europe. Summing up the qualitative implications of the adjective 'democratic' for the concept, Audiger (1999: 12) writes:

> "For the Council of Europe, this adjective emphasises the fact that it is a citizenship based on the principles and values of pluralism, the primacy of the law, respect of human dignity and cultural diversity as enrichment."

Language(s) play a major role in this context. Broadly speaking, a distinction can be made between a 'cultural rights' and a 'language teaching for mutual understanding' line of argument: cultural rights are "thought of as a new generation of human rights" (Audigier 1999: 12). Cultural rights gain importance as corner stones of individual and collective identities and culture(s), to which in turn languages are attached in a twofold way, as their form of expression, and as a means and medium of reproduction. Thus, the right to use, learn and teach one's language(s) is considered a 'cultural right' as one specification of human rights. In accordance with this, the second line of argument holds that "to learn a language is also to learn a culture, another way of categorising and qualifying the world, of expressing and thus constructing one's thoughts and emotions" (Audigier 1999: 18).

Taking multilingual Europe as the point of departure for a polity 'Europe' in the formation process in which all people in Europe need to be included, plurilingual competence appears as one of the prime objectives in education for democratic citizenship: in addition to their immediate relevance for cultural inclusion, language(s) are also a material prerequisite for political participation. From a conceptual point of view, plurilingualism has equally strong bonds with cultural and political identities. In the latter sense, plurilingualism refers to a capacity to participate (as a citizen) in politically relevant communication in multilingual environments, such as present day Europe.

A new aspect that is being introduced into the debate and explained in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* contends that the "exercise of democracy and social inclusion depends on language education policy: the capacity and opportunity to use one's full linguistic repertoire is crucial to participation in democratic and social processes and therefore to policies of social inclusion". (Council of Europe, 2003: 9)[4] In this, "the significance of plurilingual competence is twofold":

---

[4] Here, one should be aware of Flyoa Anthias' critical analysis of concepts and policies of multiculturalism and anti-racism:

> Both anti-racism and multiculturalism have undeveloped notions of the wider social vision that their politics and policies entail. (…) [I]n multiculturalisms of different types, the problematic is that of recognizing and facilitating cultural diversity and preserving difference. The broader conception of what a multicultural democracy entails, is rarely explored and the implicit assumption is that the underlying political, hegemonic culture can remain intact (Anthias, 1997: 256).

> "First, it allows participation in democratic processes not only in one's own country and language area but in concert with other Europeans in other languages and language areas.
>
> Secondly, the acquisition of plurilingual competence leads to a greater understanding of the plurilingual repertoires of other citizens and a respect for language rights, not least those of minorities and for national languages less widely spoken and taught." (ibid: 19)

The second point sums up the 'cultural rights' and 'language teaching for mutual understanding' lines of argument, whereas the first point widens the perspective of social inclusion in that it introduces the idea of another right to be added to the cultural right to use one's language, which is to become plurilingually competent in order to be able to participate in political decision-making processes. This draws attention to the public spheres where democratic processes take place and participation is required.

3. Participation and the structure of a common European communicative sphere[5]

3.1 Constellations of participation

As has briefly been mentioned above, the relationship of the individual and the nation state has been subject to an ongoing process of change "in which both supra-national and sub-national dimensions of citizenship gain importance *vis-à-vis* the national dimension" (van Berkel, 1997: 185). There are three main processes which seem to be responsible for this change: urbanisation, migration, and European integration.

According to UN and World Bank sources (cf. Korff, 2001: 54), in most (West-) European countries between 70% and 90% of the population live in urban regions and mega-cities. In addition, cities are the preferred destination for migrants searching for work and income. At the same time, the integration process offers citizenship to people irrespective of their nationality and linguistic background. As a consequence, democratic processes take place in communicative spheres which can no longer be solely described within the more or less confined spaces of national language communities (i.e. nation states). Europe, both on the supra-national, and the sub-national levels of regions and urban agglomerations, provides a consistently multilingual setting for democratic participation.

On these levels, various constellations of participation exist (see table 1): on the sub-national level, one can think of participation within regional and minority language communities, or within multilingual urban communities. Participation on the national level is rather clearly linked with national language, even if more

---

[5] For parts of sections 3 and 4, I draw on material published previously (Breidbach 2002).

than one language in the case of officially bi- or multilingual states may be involved. Finally, the supra-national level has again two constellations of participation: participation in bilateral settings of usually two national language communities (which may overlap to a certain degree with the constellation of a multilingual nation state), and participation in multilateral settings of more than two national language communities. This latter point implies that the participatory and hence communicative context also reaches beyond the traditional borders of Europe and has a distinctly global aspect.

Levels of participation	Constellations of participation
sub-national	Participation within regional minority-language communities
	Participation within multilingual regional or urban communities
national	Participation within national language communities
supra-national (not restricted to countries of Europe)	Participation in bilateral settings of national language communities
	Participation in multilateral settings of national language communities

Table 1

The European public sphere is likely to develop within the range of these five constellations for two reasons. Firstly, because solutions to local problems usually increase a society's complexity as a whole. With complexity increasing at lower levels, the upper levels become gradually also affected. One prominent example is the increasing significance of politics of identity. The entry of the cultural dimension into the political arena started as a bottom-up process from the sub-national level of participation and has at last begun to question the legal foundations of national membership. Accordingly, to some authors, the discourse of multiculturalism should be seen as a political agenda for representation (cf. Anthias, 1997; Preuß, 1998b). Anthias, for example, argues that a separatist view of culture(s) and the preservation of cultural diversity might turn out to be regressive as it denies representation and thus prevents equal participation:

> "Culture, however, can never be lost. As I argued earlier, this fear and its corollary, the need to preserve, confounds the meaning of culture as the existence of a patterned way of doing and knowing with the contents of the things we know and do. The existence of patterns to knowing and doing does not entail that the contents are fixed either in terms of the symbols and rituals themselves or their meanings over time and space. Multiculturalism in this sense, that is of cultural diversity, is a reality; what disadvantaged and excluded groups want, is greater social representation as a means to more equal participation. It is precisely because the denial of validity to cultural difference symbolises the

13

denial of rights that it is an arena for struggle, not because any culture has its own rights." (Anthias, 1997: 258)

Secondly, the development of the European public sphere within the five constellations listed above is likely, because major political, economic, social, cultural, ecological, technological, and military issues are increasingly structured as global problems, which means that their consequences are growing increasingly difficult to contain both geographically and socially. Global issues tend to affect people's lives in one way or another even in the most local settings.[6] In other words, global concerns (e.g. the ecological question) are structurally non-territorial, while the nation states still found their sovereignty on the territorial principle in a threefold way: legally, and - with exceptions - culturally and linguistically. One recent example of conflict along exactly these lines is the dispute between the Czech Republic and Austria about a new nuclear power plant in Temelin. On the global level, the painful process of ratification and implementation of the Kyoto-Protocol may serve as another example.

It may be a disturbing notion that, while both tendencies exert considerable pressure on a solely national level of participation, they nevertheless represent centrifugal movements of increasing particularity (on the sub-national level) and increasing integration (on the supra-national level). Still, in both cases, the result is an increasingly complex interconnection of all three levels of participation.

3.2   Public fori

This deepening interconnection of levels of participation seems to be sufficiently complex even within an assumed monolingual society. But reality is different: language communities intersect and can no longer be thought of as separate entities because they are tied together in a very practical sense (i.e. in the same cities and agglomerations), and they are bound together by global issues.

Beierwaltes (1998: 11) opposes the view that linguistic plurality might eventually turn out to be the limiting factor for European democracy. He argues "that a common language could well strengthen the communicative integration of a community but that such a degree of homogeneity would not be required as an absolute precondition for a European public space and thus for European democracy." His aim is to sketch a 'topography of a public space'. Using the term 'public space' in a pragmatic sense, Beierwaltes follows a concept of 'segmented levels of public discourse'[7]. In modernised societies, public space is highly fragmented even on the national level. In order to describe the fault lines

---

[6] The items mentioned refer to Klafki (1998: 237f.), who gives a slightly different list of eight factors as the driving forces of globalisation. Some of these issues (e.g. ecology, energy, development of weapons-technology, migration, etc.) are analysed and discussed in various papers in Opitz (2001).

[7] Which he favours over a "holistic" and more prescriptive concept according to which each individual ought to have the opportunity and ability to enter the discourse (Beierwaltes, 1998: 14).

of public segmentation, Beierwaltes borrows a model from Gerhards and Neidhardt. They develop a model of public fori on three levels (cf. ibid: 14-16):

a) The level of public encounters, which is very loosely structured and comprises coincidental communication with a wide spectrum of possible topics.

b) The level of public assemblies, which is topic-related and structurally more determined through participants and speakers.

c) The level of the public mass media, which requires an appropriate technological infrastructure including specialists (e.g. journalists).

However loosely interconnected these levels may be, they all play a vital role in structuring public participation and can therefore not be substituted for one another or dispensed with altogether. It may be intuitively plausible that in supra-national, that is in multilateral European and global constellations, the complexity of the situation is increased through the number of different (national) languages involved (cf. ibid: 26). But the same is also true for the sub-national constellations of public communication. New communicative needs arise on the level of public encounters and public assemblies because of increasing mobility within a unifying Europe, but also because of increasing internationalisation of local settings through migration (especially in cities). Increasing economic and political interdependence necessitates mass media communication in particular. In other words, all three levels of participation are inherently multilingual. Consequently, on all three levels, European citizens will need plurilingual competences.

Once the general principle of pluralism and diversity is accepted, the question arises how legitimacy can be generated in the light of and out of linguistic diversity. Decisions and actions which claim democratic legitimacy, since they are founded on knowledge and opinion, require communication, interaction and exchange. It seems quite clear that a common communicative sphere is required for the people in Europe to negotiate their perspectives on the future shape of a polity they can identify with – both culturally and politically. But, as was the case with 'citizenship', such a sphere cannot be conceived of as 'monolithic'.

But how can language education policies avoid Scylla and Charybdis of a market-driven tendency towards linguistic homogenisation on the one hand and communicative isolation within multilingual diversity on the other?

4. The role of languages and the use of English alongside other languages

4.1 Towards a typology of communicative needs

The following section tries to approach the delicate question of the role of English within a framework of plurilingualism. The idea is to combine the structural model of the European communicative sphere with the model of public

fori. The result is a complex matrix of communicative situations as explained below. At this point, such a typology cannot be more than a very tentative and unduly crude description of what can reasonably be surmised to be realistic communicative constellations within a European communicative sphere. The typology approaches the linguistic needs for the development of citizenship through participation in a multilingual, culturally diverse, and global setting. Readers are urged to treat the typology as descriptive model rather than a prescription for political action. It is meant to serve as a heuristic but will certainly need further discussion and, most of all, empirical verification.

Table 2a isolates the sub-national level of participation which comprises two very different constellations. On the one hand, there is participative communication within regional or minority language communities. Here, for all three types of public fori, it seems safe to assume that the respective regional or minority language will meet particular communicative needs. The case is entirely different for participation within multilingual regional or urban communities. Here, people with diverse linguistic backgrounds form a community. A *lingua franca* may be required even in the most loosely structured of the public fori, i.e. that of public encounters. Here, the national language would traditionally serve as *lingua franca*. On the level of public assembly, a national language can take the same function, which it usually does, for example, in schooling. But as cities in particular tend to have a dynamic flow of population, the choice of other languages as *lingua franca* seems to be increasingly common alongside the national language. In order to participate in public mass media, the national language plays a dominant role. But with linguistically diverse communities growing in numbers, they become relevant target groups for *lingua franca* media.

Level of participation	Constellations of participation	Public fori		
		public encounters	public assembly	public mass media
sub-national	Participation within regional or minority-language communities	- regional / minority language	- regional / minority language	- regional / minority language
	Participation within multilingual regional or urban communities	- *lingua franca* - national language	- *lingua franca* - national language	- *lingua franca* - national language

Table 2a

Table 2b describes the national level of participation. With the exception of officially bi- or multilingual countries, participation is linked with the national language. For this reason particularly is it justifiable and necessary that state controlled education comprises language education in the national language(s). In the case of bi- or multilingual countries, the pattern in table 2b is often to be found for each language within a given geographical space.

16

Level of participation	Constellation of participation	Public fori		
		public encounters	public assembly	public mass media
national	Participation within national language communities	- national language	- national language	- national language - *lingua franca*

Table 2b

Table 2c takes into view the supra-national level of participation. Again, two constellations can be differentiated. Firstly, participation in bilateral settings between national language communities: in bilateral public encounters, the respective national languages will presumably not have to be supplemented, especially in border regions. A *lingua franca* may, however, be required if individuals have competence in different languages. The same is valid for the forum of public assembly. Thinking of participation in mass media, the use of both national languages seems practicable and plausible. *Arte*, a French-German TV-station can serve as a prominent example. Participation in plurilateral settings, finally, seems indeed to call for *lingua franca* communication in all public fori. It may well be that in concrete situations in public encounters the choice of other languages than English as *lingua franca*, and even the choice of several languages within the same discourse, turns out to be possible. This would, however, not invalidate the stance that in the forum of public mass media, only the use of *lingua franca* communication on the basis of a rather small range of languages would be able to ensure equal participation.

Level of partici-pation	Constellations of participation	Public fori		
		public encounters	public assembly	public mass media
supra-national	Participation in bilateral settings between national language communities	- national language(s) of the neighbours, partner language - *lingua franca*	- national language(s) of the neighbours, partner language - *lingua franca*	- national language and partner language - *lingua franca*
	Participation in multilateral settings across national language communities	- (one or more) *linguae francae*	- (one or more) *linguae francae*	- (one or more) *linguae francae*

Table 2c

The typology is bound to be incomplete because it is an abstraction. Nevertheless, this matrix reveals that the European communicative sphere produces a multitude of different settings with a wealth of different communicative needs. It indicates that every European is situated in a multilingual environment which structures her/his opportunities for

communicative participation. Participation and hence citizenship in Europe is a highly complex construct.

4.2   Consequences for the teaching of English as a *lingua franca*

Under the conditions of such complexity of communicative participation, European communicative integration needs to take plurilingualism as its conceptual base. Otherwise, it would undermine or even curtail participation on at least the sub- and supra-national levels drastically. Hence, European communicative integration is as opposed to linguistic isolationism as it is to linguistic homogenisation. Both will lead to undesirable results with respect to the chances of democratic participation in political and cultural decision-making processes. Two forms of social exclusion must therefore be counteracted: exclusion through the depreciation of individuals' linguistically and culturally diverse identities, and exclusion through the lack of capacity for the individual to express him/herself in democratic processes. Language education policies for plurilingualism should include considerations about the role of English against the backdrop of Europe as a polity in which citizenship means both a multitude of (linguistic) identities and the capacity to enter public discourse on various levels of the communicative sphere.

The Council of Europe is aware that the dominance of English as the most widely taught foreign language is problematic for the promotion of linguistic diversity through foreign language teaching:

> "Linguistic diversification remains an objective of the language policies of European institutions. (…) For many reasons, a self-reinforcing upward spiral operates in favour of English as the first foreign language in almost all educational systems and in general international communication, not only in Europe but on a global scale. (…) However, one single vehicular language is not a panacea for international communication in a linguistically complex Europe." (Council of Europe, 1997: 52)

As a consequence, the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (Council of Europe, 2003: 19) expresses a warning that

> "the pursuit of diversity and plurilingualism however, requires a political will and action to counteract economic factors and popular misperceptions, which will otherwise lead to reduction of the number of languages known and linguistic homogenisation in general, with the plurilingualism of individuals only existing among social elites".

Without wishing to support language education policies which aim at the continuous implementation of English as the first or even the only foreign language taught in state-controlled education, I consider it necessary to point out that when looking at language education from a political perspective, the problem of social inclusion through linguistic diversity has two sides.

18

Clearly, there is a '*lingua franca* trap' (e.g. through dominance of English) which threatens social inclusion and political participation, as it curtails the exercise of political, economic, social, and cultural rights. As Janssen puts it, "a type of non-coordinated language drift" is at work in favour of English which is characterised by the phenomenon that "the competent use of the English language ensures the speaker's dominance in any type of communication between speakers from European countries" (Janssen, 1999: 46). One might add that this holds true also for speakers from non-European countries. Janssen concludes that English language proficiency should be an indispensable aim of foreign language education since any form of "broken or fragmented 'Euro-English'" (cf. Janssen 1999: 50-1) would give rise to language conflict. Thus, if the teaching of English were to be restricted, as some authors suggest, to selected parts of communicative competence, an "English-based system of 'minimal communication', or a restriction of English to only receptive abilities" (ibid.: 41), the expectable result would be a strengthening of a covert *linguicism*:

> "Furthermore, neither of these solutions sufficiently reflects the influence of social and cultural attitudes on learning a foreign (not simply, a second) language – in particular, the New Localism accompanied by the negative tendency of increasing linguistic and cultural distance. Neglecting these attitudes could provoke severe language conflicts and the establishment of new and more negative attitudes towards the English language and/or the implementation of English from outside or above, which in turn could then only be experienced as a kind of *linguistic imperialism***.** It should once again be emphasized that it is not the English language that will cause conflicts but the conversational and attitudinal *use* of it, particularly when applied without negotiation within a discourse, and, above all, the decisive step to restrict the teaching to deficient competences." (Janssen 1999: 51)

Seen in the light of the fact that the European communicative sphere is increasingly intersected through plurilateral constellations of participation, the point Janssen makes is that the teaching of English with the aim of high proficiency can and should be welcomed as long as the individual and collective language rights of the learners are being protected. The lack of plurilingualism, which includes deficient competence in English, might do as much harm as the devaluation of linguistic diversity in terms of democratic participation.

The implication for the teaching of English is, that "we are obliged to teach the communicative tools with which speakers may accommodate and negotiate linguistic decisions." (Ibid: 52; see also Vollmer, 2001). If the teaching of English as the most common "default" foreign language comprises such "extended communicative competence" (ibid: 52), it may even become more likely for other languages to enter the discourse:

> "Teaching English this way (…) is by no means linked to *linguicism*, but could support an unrestricted way of language choice on the levels of micro- and macro-situations. Speakers are enabled to maintain their

native (local) language and cultural identity, but at the same time become capable of using different languages without fear they might lose their own identity and language." (Ibid: 53)

The same view is put forth by Huber (1998: 200), who pleads for a dispassionate acceptance of English as a *lingua franca* for the most basic international communication which leads to the freedom to learn and use other languages for educationally specific reasons such as literary appreciation or intercultural exchange.

If plurilingual education is to counterbalance the gravitational force of English as a *lingua franca*, English itself may function as a direct mediator between participants in a discourse who would otherwise have to rely on translation or a third party. Furthermore, English has already become the very linguistic means to give speakers, especially of lesser-used languages, their voice within a European public discourse.

Against this backdrop, Carmichael's view seems plausible that the significance of English today is comparable to that of reading and writing in the age of industrialisation (Carmichael, 2000: 285).[8] Huber (1998: 199) regards English as a *lingua franca* as a part of *Allgemeinbildung* (general education). Janssen considers English as a possible gateway to negotiating the conditions under which issues of public concern are to be treated, both linguistically and politically. Raasch makes a telling point doubting that global problems could be communicated and solved otherwise than in English:

> "Could it be that we really have an urgent need for such a world-encompassing language because the problems and phenomena are equally world-encompassing? In comparison, could regional languages even cope with this necessarily world-wide exchange?" (Raasch 1999: 88)

From the point of view of education for citizenship, it would however be desirable for individuals to be able to transcend localisms and acknowledge global political, social, or cultural issues in their full dimension.

5.   Plurilingual education for democratic citizenship

Obviously, under circumstances of implicit power structures, which put the non-competent speaker of English at a considerable disadvantage, it is unlikely that global problems would be communicated or solved in a democratic manner. Anthias (1997: 258) supports this view stating that it is representation which is at

---

[8] Her conclusion that through absence of English in a person's linguistic repertoire s/he "may never be able to cultivate much more than regional identities and may be economically and professionally tied to their region" (Carmichael, 2000: 286) is not in any way inevitable as she seems to assume consistently monolingual speakers who speak either their regional/national language and possibly English but no other (foreign) language.

stake in debates about minority rights and the question of language rather than a realistic fear of loss of cultural identity. At this point, political and cultural rights converge in the focus of language education for democratic citizenship.

There can be no question that the freedom of choice of language is a fundamental cultural right. Furthermore, in multilingual settings, it seems just as urgent that people can participate in public communication without being subject to dominant language use. Therefore the right to use one's own language and communicative competence (of various degrees) in other language(s) must be seen as complementary elements for democratic citizenship. Negotiation of language choice and participation in public discourse on problems relevant to the polity require complex linguistic repertoires which individuals will have to develop and be able to rely on in their communicative practice. In this, education for democratic citizenship and foreign language teaching are not separate matters but rather one and the same issue.

The integration of language learning and education for democratic citizenship, and the development of a consciousness for the significance of plurilingualism for participation in democratic and other social processes, thus seem to be principal aims of language education.

When looking at language education from such political and educational perspectives, competences in three areas come into focus:

- the ability to understand how knowledge is structured through language in general (linguistic epistemology) and in specific languages in particular;
- the ability to understand the use of language in discourse whether scientific, political, ethical, cultural, or otherwise;
- the ability to transcend dominant language use and transform such praxes into processes of equal negotiation. This refers both to the choice of language(s) and to the question of how language is actually used to communicate the issues of a discourse.

It should be understood that these competences have a cognitive and ethical dimension just as much as a dimension of practical action (cf. Audigier 1999: 13ff).

Summary and conclusion

If the political and educational aims are geared towards communicative integration in Europe, both factors – linguistic unity and linguistic diversity – have to be taken into account. European communicative integration is in itself a function of the process of European integration in a more general sense. Communicative integration again centres on the development of a European public sphere where a discourse of deliberation of a future European polity can evolve. Its various constellations, sub-national, national, and supra-national,

become accessible through English on the one hand and through competence in other languages on the other.

However, the fact that English is the most widely-taught foreign language in the countries of Europe does not imply that the teaching of English is always embedded in a holistic concept of language education for democratic citizenship. European citizens' acceptance of policies for European integration probably depends to a large extent on their ability and willingness to participate in a European public debate. Here, proficiency in English as a possible and reliable interlingual mediator and the equality of people's linguistic identities will have to play equal parts in any language education policy.

The point made here is that in policies for language education, linguistic diversity and the teaching of English are not a matter of priorities. Any policy which treats plurilingualism as an 'either – or' decision runs the risk of creating social exclusion either through cultural or political exclusion. To put the same thought in a positive way: sustainable cultural and political inclusion, which can lead to opportunities of participation in multilingual Europe, requires a holistic language education policy inclusive of English *and* linguistic diversity.

References

Anthias, F. 1997, Anti-racism, Multiculturalism and Struggles for a Multicultural Democracy. In: M. Roche and R. van Berkel, Rik (eds.) pp. 247-259.

Audigier, F. 1999, Basic Concepts and core competencies for education for democratic citizenship. DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 23. Document CDCC / Delphes (99) 4. Online http://www.coe.int (Education)

Beierwaltes, A. 1998, *Sprachenvielfalt in der EU – Grenze einer Demokratisierung Europas?* Bonn: Centre for European Studies.

Benner, D. 2001, Bildung und Demokratie. In: J. Oelkers (ed.) *Zukunftsfragen der Bildung*. Zeitschrift für Pädagogik. 43. Beiheft. Weinheim, Basel: Beltz. 49-65.

Breidbach, S. 2002 (forthc.), European Communicative Integration: the function of foreign language teaching for the development of a European public sphere. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. Special edition. 15/3: 1-11.

Byram, M. (forthcoming) Pluralism, Identity, and a Guide for Language Education Policy. Conference papers 'Europäische Sprachenpolitik' Würzburg 6-8 June 2002.

Carmichael, C. 2000, Conclusions: Language and National Identity in Europe. In: S. Barbour and C. Carmichael (eds.) *Language and Nationalism in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 280-289.

Council of Europe 1997, *Language Learning for European citizenship. Final report (1989-96)*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Council of Europe. 1998, Recommendation No. CM R (98) 6.

Council of Europe. 2001, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe. 2003, *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education.* Executive version. www.coe.int/lang (Language Policies)

Dewey, J. 1966, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. First published 1916. New York, etc: The Free Press.

Everson, M. C. and Preuß, U. K. 1995, *Concepts, Foundations, and Limits of European Citizenship.* ZERP-Diskussionspapier 2/95. Bremen: Zentrum für Europäische Rechtspolitik an der Universität Bremen.

Gogolin, I., Krüger-Potratz, M. and Meyer, M. (eds.) 1998, *Pluralität und Bildung*. Opladen: Leske und Budrich.

Huber, L. 1998, Lingua Franca und Gemeinsprache. Gehört zur Allgemeinen Bildung eine gemeinsame Sprache? In: I. Gogolin, M. Krüger-Potratz, M. Meyer (eds.) pp. 193-211.

Janssen, H. 1999, Linguistic dominance or acculturation – problems of teaching English as a global language. In: C. Gnutzmann (ed.) *Teaching and Learning English as a Global Language, Native and Non-Native Perspectives.* Tübingen: Stauffenburg. pp. 41-55.

Klafki, W. 1998, Schlüsselprobleme der modernen Welt und die Aufgaben der Schule – Grundlinien einer neuen Allgemeinbildungskonzeption in internationaler/ interkultureller Perspektive. In: I. Gogolin, M. Krüger-Potratz, M. Meyer (eds.) pp. 235-249.

Korff, R. 2001, Das Jahrhundert der Städte. In: P. J. Opitz (ed.) pp. 53-64.

La Torre, M. 1998, European Identity and Citizenship – Between Law and Philosophy. In: U. K. Preuß and F. Requejo (eds.) pp. 87-104.

Opitz, P. J. (ed.) 2001, *Weltprobleme im 21. Jahrhundert.* München: Fink.

Preuß, U. K. 1998a, The Relevance of the Concept of Citizenship for the Political and Constitutional Development of the EU. In: U. K. Preuß and F. Requejo (eds.) pp. 11-27.

Preuß, U. K. 1998b, Die Belagerung des liberalen Verfassungsstaats durch die multikulturelle Gesellschaft. *Leviathan*. 1/98. pp. 60-76.

Preuß, U. K. and Requejo, F. (eds.) 1998, *European Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and the State*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Raasch, A. 1999, Breaking down borders – through languages. In: H.-J. Krumm (ed.) *The Languages of our Neighbours – our Languages.* Proceedings of the Symposium, Vienna 29. 10. – 31. 10. 1998. Vienna: Eviva. pp. 78-91.

Roche, M. and van Berkel, R. (eds.) 1997, *European Citizenship and Social Exclusion*. Aldershot *et. al.*: Ashgate.

Soysal, Y. N. 1996, Changing Citizenship in Europe. Remarks on postnational membership and the national state. In: D. Cesarani and M. Fulbrook (eds.) *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe.* London; New York: Routledge. 17-29.

Starkey, H. 2002, *Democratic Citizenship, Languages, Diversity and Human Rights*. Reference study for the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policy in Europe*. Council of Europe: Strasbourg. On-line www.coe.int/lang (Language Policies)

van Berkel, R. 1997, Urban Integration and Citizenship. Local Policies and the Promotion of Participation. In: M. Roche and R. van Berkel (eds.) pp. 185-197.

Vollmer, H. 2001, Englisch und Mehrsprachigkeit: Interkulturelles Lernen durch Englisch als lingua franca? In: D. Abendroth-Timmer and G. Bach (eds.) *Mehrsprachiges Europa*. Festschrift für Michael Wendt zum 60. Geburtstag. Tübingen: Narr, pp. 91-109.