

English in Europe Today

Sociocultural
and educational perspectives

Edited by
Annick De Houwer
and Antje Wilton

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Volume 8

English in Europe Today. Sociocultural and educational perspectives
Edited by Annick De Houwer and Antje Wilton

Dedication

We dedicate this volume to Karlfried Knapp, our valued colleague and friend, on the occasion of his official retirement from the University of Erfurt in 2011. Karlfried Knapp has devoted a considerable amount of his research and teaching activity to the English language, be it in its role as a *lingua franca* or as a language to be acquired through formal schooling. Karlfried Knapp's vested interest in applied linguistics internationally and in Europe in particular is well illustrated by his initiation of AILA-Europe, the European regional network within the International Association of Applied Linguistics. Karlfried was Secretary General of AILA from 2002 until 2008. One of his most recent major achievements is the co-editing of Mouton de Gruyter's series of Handbooks of Applied Linguistics.

Karlfried's long-standing connection with AILA makes it particularly appropriate that this volume is being published in the official AILA book series, the AILA Applied Linguistics Series.

The contributors to this volume all have either a personal and/or a professional connection with Karlfried and contributed their chapters in honor of his service to the field.

Annick De Houwer and Antje Wilton, Erfurt, July 2010

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The dynamics of English in a multilingual Europe

Antje Wilton and Annick De Houwer

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Throughout European history, multilingualism has coexisted with one or more *linguae francae*. Today's European *lingua franca* is English, and it, too, functions within a thoroughly multilingual context. This introduction to the volume *English in Europe Today* illuminates some of the sociocultural and educational contexts in which English and its manifestations in the European linguistic landscape play a shaping role. The contributions to the volume are set within these varied contexts. Together they bear witness to the challenging but enriching dynamics that are part and parcel of the use of English in multilingual Europe today.

Europe has been multilingual for at least 2.5 millennia (Green 1998). With changing patterns of migration, warfare and the wielding of power, language contact situations within Europe have been constantly changing, too. Conversely, patterns of linguistic change reflect different power structures and societal realities.

Typically, language contact situations leave their traces in the respective languages' lexicons. The direction of the import of loanwords signals which of the languages involved is the more influential (e.g., Field 2002:4). When language A imports relatively more words from language B than the other way round, language B is the more influential one. This imbalance reflects the fact that the group of people associated with the more influential language is usually seen as more powerful or economically and culturally superior (e.g., Thomason 2001). When power relations change, patterns of lexical borrowing do, too.

Some of the earliest records of language use in Europe show evidence of this dynamic. For instance, from about 500 BC to the first century AD, Germanic imported many loanwords from Celtic, but hardly the other way round. This was a time when Celtic civilization was politically and culturally much stronger than anything the Germanic tribes could offer (Green 1998: 145ff.). Similarly, the im-

port of Latin word stock into Germanic was far greater during the period of Roman rule in Europe than the other way around:

Although this linguistic traffic ran in two ways the dominance of the Romans for some centuries and the superiority of their civilization meant that the influence of Latin on Germanic was decisive and considerable, whilst that of Germanic on Latin was slight. (Green 1998: 183)

In contrast, by ca. 400 AD, when the Roman Empire was starting to decline as a partial result of the increased political power of the Germanic Franks, more and more Germanic words were imported into Latin (Green 1998: 193ff.).

Latin did, of course, continue to exert quite some influence on the other languages in Europe throughout the Middle Ages. In the Renaissance period the renewed interest in classical ideas expressed in Latin and Greek texts coincided with their incorporation into the different languages of Europe, including English (e.g., Baugh & Cable 1978). This raised issues relating to the import of lexical items from Latin (or Greek) into other languages. In Renaissance England, for instance, there was a vehement scholarly controversy between propagators and opponents of the deliberate incorporation of Latin or Latin-based terms into the English language. The controversy centered around the question whether words were being 'taken over by one language from another in answer to a definite need' (Baugh & Cable 1978: 84) or whether they were a danger to the purity and expressiveness of the receiving language, as expressed in this quote from 1561:

I am of this opinion that our own tung shold be written cleane and pure, unmixt and unmangeled with borowing of other tungen, wherin if we take not heed by tijm, ever borowing and never payeng, she shall be fain to keep her house as bankrupt. (Sir John Cheke in Hoby 1561/1967: 12)

In present-day Europe, similar controversies exist, but now with regard to imports from English into other European languages, also known as Anglicisms. This topic is, for instance, hotly debated in Germany, where it regularly features in the media (see for instance the news items on the website of the *Verein Deutsche Sprache* (German Language Association) at <http://www.vds-ev.de/>).

The issue of linguistic borrowing as a threat is taken up in the contribution by Jacomine Nortier (this volume), who illuminates the conflicting effects that English as language with high prestige has on public perception in the Netherlands. Amongst others, Nortier shows that there is a fear of Dutch losing out to English, and although this might be the case in some areas of life where English is steadily gaining ground, the author concludes that Dutch is by no means in danger. It is interesting to note, though, that a fear of loss of the native or national language is present in a country whose inhabitants are generally renowned for their excellent

command of English and in which, compared to other areas in Europe, English is present in many aspects of everyday life. To uninformed outsiders, this pervasive proficiency and use signal either a sure confidence about the security of the native language, or a lack of concern for it.

The fear that Dutch might be threatened by English is also shared by many Dutch speakers living in Flanders who are also generally quite proficient in English. This fear does not take into account that never before, Dutch has been used in so many different circumstances as today or has been learned as a second language by so many people as today. This is true of many other European languages as well. The main reasons lie in the far greater access to higher education in Europe since the end of World War II, the highly increased rates of immigration from outside Europe since the 1960's, and, more recently, the advent of new technologies such as the internet and mobile telephones which have greatly increased the amount of language that is used overall.

Nortier (this volume) calls Dutch a 'small' language in the context of the European Union. While there certainly are 'bigger' European languages in terms of the number of first and second language speakers, there are many languages with a much smaller population base than Dutch. If we look only at those European languages that are official languages in the context of the European Union, Dutch is bigger than 16 other current official EU languages (Table 1). Official EU languages are languages 'to be used by the European Economic Community' (see Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community, cf. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1958R0001:20070101:EN:PDF>).

Of course, Dutch is fairly 'small' compared to, for instance, French, Spanish and German in terms of the geographical area where it is used and in terms of its use by speakers living outside that geographical area. As Nortier's contribution shows, this 'smallness' is reflected at official EU meetings in Brussels. Quite clearly, English is the language that is often used there instead of Dutch.

Having to deal with 23 languages at the level of EU institutions represents a formidable language management problem (cf. also Nortier, this volume). The actual reality of European multilingualism is still much more complex. Within the borders of the European Union there are many more languages that are being used than just the 23 official EU languages. There are many additional, traditionally European languages such as Basque (cf. the contribution by Jasone Cenoz, this volume), Welsh and Sorbian. For detailed overviews of many of these languages in European countries both within and outside of current EU borders, see Goebel, Nelde, Stary & Wölck (1996); the more recent volume by Ó Riagáin (2006) addresses some of the educational issues involved.

Table 1. The estimated number of speakers of each of the 23 official EU languages (February 2010)

Official EU language	EU country/countries where the official language is a national or official language	Estimated number of speakers in millions*
Maltese	Malta	0.3
Irish	Ireland	0.5
Estonian	Estonia	1.3
Slovenian	Slovenia	2.0
Latvian	Latvia	2.3
Lithuanian	Lithuania	3.3
Finnish	Finland	5.0
Slovak	Slovakia	5.4
Danish	Denmark	5.5
Bulgarian	Bulgaria	7.6
Swedish	Sweden, Finland	9.5
Hungarian	Hungary	10.0
Czech	Czech Republic	10.5
Portuguese	Portugal	10.6
Greek	Greece, Cyprus	12.0
Romanian	Romania	21.5
Dutch	the Netherlands, Belgium	22.9
Polish	Poland	38.1
Spanish	Spain	45.8
Italian	Italy	60.0
English	United Kingdom, Ireland, Malta	65.8
French	France, Luxemburg, Belgium	68.7
German	Germany, Austria, Luxemburg, Belgium	90.6

* Here assumed to coincide with the entire population of a country as listed on the official EU website http://europa.eu/abc/european_countries/eu_members/ in February 2010 or, in the case of more than one official EU language per country, based on rough estimates of the portions of the population purportedly mainly speaking one or the other language; problematic for estimates here is the fact that many people use two languages on a daily basis and, conversely, that people may claim to know a language but hardly ever actually use it; these estimates also ignore the fact that many inhabitants of the EU do not necessarily use any of the official EU languages on a daily basis.

EU-internal migration such as that of Italian workers to Denmark, Polish workers to the United Kingdom or German and British pensioners to Spain have greatly added to the linguistic diversity one can find in any region in the EU. Then there is of course the immigration into the EU from both other European and non-European people, such as that by Bosnians to Belgium or Algerians to France. All these migration patterns give rise to changed linguistic situations (e.g., Extra & Verhoeven 1993; Wilton 2009). For studies documenting some of the

linguistic diversity in the EU today, see De Houwer (2003), Deprez (1995) and Extra & Yagmur (2004). European countries that do not belong to the EU such as Norway, Switzerland and Turkey have also seen an increase and diversification of the languages spoken in their territories (cf. respectively, Lanza & Svendsen 2007; Dürmüller 1997 and Karahan 2005). Never before has Europe been as multilingual as it is today (cf. also Extra & Gorter 2008).

In European language history, the changing patterns of linguistic diversity and political power have given rise to a number of languages gaining a wider than regional currency. The establishment of Latin as a *lingua franca* in most parts of the Roman Empire was promoted by a number of factors such as the dominance of Roman political, economical, technological and military power, cultural superiority and the development of a literary tradition. Latin shared the role of a European *lingua franca* with Greek, which was the main language of wider communication in the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.

Latin continued to be used as a *lingua franca* throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period. As such, it served different speech communities and various domains of discourse (Haye 2005; Maass & Volmer 2005). With the rise of the so-called vernacular languages as literary languages in Europe (Fishman 2010) and the establishment of national languages in early modern European history (Gardt 2000) other languages than Latin were increasingly used as *linguae francae* in certain areas of public and private life. Obvious examples are the use of French as the language of diplomacy and German as a supra-regional *lingua franca* as well as an international language of learning and modern science (Carli & Ammon 2008). Especially with the advent of the Soviet state, Russian became a major *lingua franca* in Eastern Europe (Pavlenko 2006).

So far, none of the *linguae francae* that were dominant in large areas of Europe at any one time, be they Latin, Greek, French, German or Russian, have managed to threaten European multilingualism in any serious way. In fact, the use of Latin was at the root of the development of multiple languages that we now know as Italian, Spanish, Catalan, French, Rumanian and Portuguese (Adams 2007; Wright 2004). Although the Roman Empire and the concomitant use of Latin reached far into the areas of Europe where Greek was being used as a *lingua franca* alongside Latin, Greek itself was firmly established both in Roman education and in the administration of the Eastern provinces (Adams 2003b: 186). What is more, Latin-Greek bilingualism was at the core of what constituted intellectual life far into the Middle Ages (Adams 2003a; Maass & Volmer 2005). Educated people throughout Europe were at least bilingual in Latin or Greek plus an additional language (Karahana 2005; Kremnitz 1990).

Similarly, English is currently a *lingua franca* that educated people throughout Europe are expected to know, in addition to any other European language

(e.g., House 2008). Others would agree that “the use of an international language of communication, as for example English as a *lingua franca*, is [...] a precondition for pan-European communication and cooperation” (Karlfried Knapp, quoted in Cali; Stegu & Vetter 2008: 132). For many, however, the continuing spread of English geographically, functionally, and in terms of its permeation of society is seen as a hindrance to active multilingualism and as a threat to linguistic diversity (Ehlich 2009). This point is taken up in the contribution by Barbara Seidlhofer (this volume). Seidlhofer argues for a reconceptualization of English in order to solve the dilemma of linguistic diversity on the one hand, and the creation of a sense of communal integration on the other. English needs to be seen as an enrichment of the linguistic repertoire of Europe, not a threat to its diversity.

Ambivalent attitudes to high prestige languages have been common throughout European history. Roman attitudes to Greek, for instance, were also ambivalent: on the one hand, Greek was the only language that the Romans of Antiquity considered worth learning (Quintilian, I, 1, XII–XIV), but on the other hand, there were times when Romans regarded a too extensive use of Greek, in particular on public occasions, with suspicion (Adams 2003a: 11). As shown in the contribution by Kurt Kohn (this volume), similarly ambivalent attitudes towards English in Europe today are reflected in the tension between upholding ‘standard English’ as a goal for English language teaching and the reality of so-called non-native speaker use of English as a *lingua franca*. Kohn explores the question of who it is that really ‘owns’ English, and proposes a social constructionist approach to the use of English in *lingua franca* situations that offers a welcome counterweight to the increasingly outdated idea of linguistic imperialism (as also discussed in House 2008).

The social constructionist approach to the type of English that is or should be targeted in English language learning in Europe as proposed in this volume by Kohn (and, to a lesser degree, by Seidlhofer) stands in contrast to the unquestioned adoption of the American or British English native speaker standard in many curricula in Europe (see, e.g., the teaching curriculum for English as a first language in some German grammar schools, Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg 2004: 111). The co-existence of quite opposing views of what variety of English is appropriate as a target for language use shows the continuing ambivalence towards English in Europe.

Whatever variety of English is used – one has to learn it. In Great Britain and Ireland, many people learn a variety of English as a first language at home when they are children (L1; however, as Graddol (2006) noted, this number has been declining; following Caruana (2007) there are most likely a fair number of children who acquire English as an L1 in Malta as well). In the rest of Europe,

children of expatriate English-speaking parents will generally also grow up with English as an L1 in the home.

In order to cater for the education of children of expatriate English-speaking parents, there are many private, English-speaking schools throughout Europe, from Belgium to Turkey, and from Norway to Spain. Children of non-English-speaking parents are generally welcome in these schools, too (as long as the high tuition fees are paid!). Susan Gass and Daniel Reed (this volume) discuss English test development in one such school in Greece. We come back to their contribution later in this chapter.

Let us take a look at international private schools in the Brussels area in Belgium. Brussels has many international institutions and companies. The international expatriate community is accordingly large (as is also the case in other major European cities such as Frankfurt and Paris). The Brussels area boasts five major international, English-medium schools and a string of smaller private schools that offer instruction through English or through English and French (e.g., see listings on <http://www.expatica.com> and in *The Bulletin*, an English-medium Belgian weekly magazine aimed primarily at an upwardly mobile international readership). In contrast, there is only a single international school in Brussels that offers full German-medium instruction, and none that offer full Italian- or Spanish-medium instruction, for instance.

However, German, Italian and Spanish, in addition to all the other official EU languages, are on offer as a medium of instruction within the international European School system (see, e.g., <http://www.eeb1.org>). The European Schools, which are primarily aimed at children of employees who work for the European Union institutions, are very multilingual, and their stated aim is to contribute towards children's development as multilingual individuals (Baetens Beardsmore 1993). Interestingly, the European Schools' logo is in Latin (*Schola Europaea*). English has no special status in the European School curriculum: as their first foreign language, pupils have the free choice amongst English, French, German or Spanish (Latin is also on offer, but is part of a package of choice with either Music or Art). At present, there are 14 European Schools in seven European countries that cater for about 21,000 pupils per year (see the official website of the European Schools, <http://www.eursec.eu/>).

The majority of children in Europe do not attend international schools, though. Rather, they attend local schools that usually have as their medium of instruction the language of the region they are located in, or, in some officially bilingual communities, two languages. European countries differ from each other in the precise policies they adopt for the teaching of second, third or fourth languages. The choice of languages on offer varies, as do the ages or school grades at which they are offered. We return to a discussion of these below, after picking up