# (Re)defining linguistic diversity: What is being protected in European language policy?

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## Abstract

Linguistic diversity is complicated. It involves two main elements: a headcount of "languages", plus variation and variability within and between them. In this article we show how language policy in Europe claims to protect diversity but falls short on these two measures. Our legal analysis examines the institutional politics of the European Union, details of accession, and institutionalisation of multilingualism. We describe the manifestation of a multilevel language hierarchy: working languages are topmost, then official languages, then non-official languages. This largely privileges national languages, principally English. Meanwhile allochthonous ('immigrant') languages are discounted, despite outnumbering autochthonous ('indigenous') languages. Our legal analysis therefore suggests an early stumble for linguistic diversity: even limited to a headcount of "languages", most are neglected. Next, our sociolinguistic analysis examines the Council of Europe's approach to protecting minority languages. We show how diversity can decline even among protected languages, using two case studies: Cornish, a young revival; and Welsh, an older, more established revival. The Cornish revival could only proceed after agreement on singular standardisation. Meanwhile the internal diversity of Welsh has declined significantly, fuelled by the normative reproduction of its standard form in education, and by sharpened social pressures against local dialects. Moreover, by comparing the EU and the Council of Europe, we aim for an overarching argument about "European language policy". We conclude that linguistic diversity is neglected, through exclusion of most of the languages spoken in Europe, and pressures on language-internal diversity within protected languages. Linguistic diversity is something richer and more complex than the limited goals of existing policies; it transcends language boundaries, and may be damaged by planned intervention.

**Keywords:** linguistic diversity, European Union, Council of Europe, indigenous and immigrant languages, Welsh, Cornish

## 1  Introduction

> For last year's words belong to last year's language
> And next year's words await another voice. – T. S. Eliot

There are lots of languages in the world. Languages also have different dialects. Languages and dialects both change over time. They are difficult to pin down. They are messy, and promiscuous. They sprawl, mix together, split apart, morph into new shapes. People with different languages or dialects at their disposal are forever combining pieces of them in conversation, creatively and dynamically. This is true of lesser used languages just as it is of more widely used languages. To understand this enigmatic worldwide complexity, in all its ceaseless, cacophonous, joyous tumult, is to understand linguistic diversity.

In this paper, we scrutinise policies which set out to "protect linguistic diversity", but which fundamentally misunderstand just what an enormous job that would really be. Using legal and sociolinguistic insights, we show how language policy in Europe creates structural inequalities between languages, and exacerbates inequalities within them, with the effect of driving down diversity in unseen ways.

Our legal analysis scrutinises the European Union: the legislative framework that guides its inner workings, and the policies it has published with regard to language learning across Europe. We examine the politics of the EU, details of accession, and the institutionalisation of multilingualism. We show how the workings of the EU create a multi-level language hierarchy: working languages are topmost, followed by official languages, while non-official languages have transitional recognition. This hierarchy largely privileges national languages, principally English. Meanwhile *allochthonous* ('immigrant') (FUEN n.d.: 14) languages are discounted, despite outnumbering *autochthonous* ('long-established, indigenous') (FUEN n.d.: 14) languages around four to one (cf. Sayers 2015 for a critique of the 'immigrant'/'indigenous' distinction). Our legal analysis demonstrates an early stumble for linguistic diversity: even constrained to a headcount of distinct "languages", most are neglected.

Next, our sociolinguistic analysis examines the Council of Europe, and its method of promoting minority languages. We show how this ultimately puts pressure on diversity within protected languages, exacerbating homogenisation of their spoken forms. We consider two case studies: Cornish, a somewhat nascent revival; and Welsh, an older and

more established revival. Although limited to the UK, nevertheless these two give a useful breadth of perspective given their very different stages of evolution. Holding up these case studies to our definition of linguistic diversity serves to extend our overarching critique. And, as a side note, since these case studies relate to the Council of Europe, not the EU, they will remain relevant regardless of future UK-EU relations.

As Blommaert & Verschueren (1998: 205) point out, "within minorities there are always minorities" (cf. Blommaert 2001). Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 60–61) further argue that "movements to save minority languages ironically are often structured around the same received notions of language that have led to their oppression and/or suppression". We conclude that linguistic diversity in practice is putatively celebrated but palpably neglected in European language policy. This occurs through hierarchical privileging of official languages, exclusion of most of the languages actually spoken in Europe, and neglect of language-internal diversity within the relatively few languages under protection.

## 2    (Re)defining linguistic diversity

What is linguistic diversity anyway? Researchers of language policy and minority languages mention it frequently, but actually define it only vaguely. Nettle's 1999 volume *Linguistic Diversity* is a case in point, defining linguistic diversity as "the total number of languages" (Nettle 1999: 3). Nettle then discusses how languages borrow from each other and that their boundaries are uncertain; but this is part of a philological procedure to establish etymological relationships between languages, to trace their emergence as distinct, separable entities. Nettle (1999: 10) then lists three types of linguistic diversity: *language diversity* (total number of mutually unintelligible languages); *phylogenetic diversity* (different lineages of languages, i.e. number of branches on language trees); and *structural diversity* (range of permutations in linguistic structure, e.g. word order). Though these categories may be related, they are nevertheless posited as discrete. Indeed, his overarching aim is to explain "[t]he way in which the languages of the world have diverged" (Nettle 1999: 12). A co-authored follow-up to the volume (Nettle & Romaine 2000), which regularly mentions linguistic diversity, is still quite candid about this reductionism:

> [I]t is difficult to say precisely how many languages there are in the world. In addition to languages, there are also varieties or dialects of languages, many of which are also at risk. We confine ourselves here, however, to the topic of language endangerment. (Nettle & Romaine 2000: 27)

Despite this caveat, their frequent use of the term "linguistic diversity", without qualification, suggests that *all* diversity is under discussion.

But our critique here is not entirely new. Mobilising poststructuralist theory, Wright (2007a) distinguishes "language-as-practice" from "language-as-system". She flags up a "constant tension […] between the acceptance of the heterogeneity of practice and the necessity of fixing a set of forms that will remain invariant across all domains" (Wright 2007a: 221) – to the detriment of "creativity and evaluation of meaning" (Wright 2007a: 208):

> The trade-off seems clear. Where a language becomes a language of power of any kind (the language used in […] democratic institutions and in bureaucracies and the language spread through the state-run education system), the cost is acceptance of that language as system – a codified, stable written standard that may not entirely reflect the practice of those designated as its speakers. (Wright 2007b: 96)

We build on Wright's account, offering a sociolinguistically informed definition of linguistic diversity, and using this to scrutinise the claims of European language policy.

We begin with Marcellesi (2003; cited in Jaffe 2007: 71)[1] who makes a similar distinction to Wright, between *variation* and *variability* in language. The former is the total of the existing differences in all language – the differences we notice in language around us, at the present moment. For example, when we think of "different accents" that we remember hearing, that is variation. Variability, meanwhile, is harder to grasp. It is the capacity for language to change in new and unforeseen ways. Variability is the unknown and the unknowable. What differences will there be in language in five years, or ten years, or a hundred years? This is the enigma of variability.

Put another way, variation is three-dimensional while variability is four-dimensional. This in turn gives us a working definition of linguistic diversity: all the existing *synchronic* differences in language (at one point

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[1] Marcellesi does not actually use the terms "variation" and "variability"; rather, Jaffe derives this distinction from his work (pers. comm.), hence our citing both of them here.

in time) plus all the ongoing *diachronic* changes (across time), including future changes which we cannot know.

"Languages" are contested categories, whose boundaries are often challenged in sociolinguistic research (e.g. Blommaert 2005; Dufva et al. 2011). Whatever their denotation, languages are superordinate to "dialects", so dialects are more useful in understanding diversity in all its fullness. But ultimately, languages and dialects are both just essentialised ontological crutches – flags in the sand, delimiting imaginary frontiers. Indeed, Erker (2017) suggests replacing "dialect" with "dialectal" for this reason. But in variationist sociolinguistics – the study of language variation and change – there is a long tradition of mindful cognitive dissonance conceding this ontological fragility but maintaining dialects as necessary heuristics. Dialects hold our hand as we grapple with the bewildering blur of our myriad language differences. Trudgill (1999: 7) is refreshingly candid here: "We realise that dialects form a continuum, but for the sake of clarity and brevity, we divide this continuum up into areas at points where it is least continuum-like". So, there is an understanding of fluidity within and across these imaginary boundaries. Variationism is also particularly well equipped to depict *variability* – the creative capacity for language to diverge in new and unpredictable ways. With all this in mind, tracking dialects can be a more useful gauge of linguistic diversity than just counting languages.

Still, despite being equipped to define linguistic diversity, variationist sociolinguists seldom actually use that term. "Because sociolinguists' treatment of language focuses on its heterogeneity, they seek a unit of analysis at a level of social aggregation at which it can be said that the heterogeneity is organised" (Eckert 2000: 30). Understanding this aggregative focus requires a brief scholarly history. A prime mover in the origin of sociolinguistics was an urge to counter prescriptive notions of "languages" as existing in some perfect form, and to argue that non-standard vernacular varieties are not aberrations or inchoate gibberish but structured and orderly forms, with their own rules of grammar and phonology (see e.g. Murray 2006: 2432–2433). Ironically then, as variationism developed as a field, it tended to reify some of the very ontological structures it became best equipped to challenge: "Over the past few decades, sociolinguistic research has concentrated on the *structured heterogeneity* inherent in all speech" (Smith et al 2007: 63, emphasis added).

Studies of variation and change have also said little about minority languages, the prime subject of language policy. Stanford & Preston (2003: 3) provide a rare collection in this vein – as they note, "such languages have received comparatively little attention". But their volume overall is explicitly limited to analysing variation within these languages from a technical linguistic point of view, not relating this to language policy. Kasstan (2017) highlights the same lacuna, and provides highly useful theoretical insights on how minority language contexts can inform variationist paradigms, though again without aiming to make explicit arguments about policy as such. With all this in mind, there remains scope for our current discussion.

Perhaps most useful to our task are the variationist concepts of *divergence* and *convergence*. The former describes dialects splitting apart into new varieties, usually because their speakers become physically separated – for example in diasporic migrations or coercive relocations. Convergence, meanwhile, arises when "two or more varieties become more alike", involving "the loss of geographically and demographically restricted, or 'marked', [linguistic] variants" (Torgersen & Kerswill 2004: 24). All this further disturbs the idea of "languages" as a particularly useful measure of diversity. There is so much diversity echoing around inside languages, variationism evidently offers a fuller understanding.

Putting all this together, linguistic diversity overall can be represented by all the dialects of all the languages in the world, plus the potential for dialects to change in new ways. The total number of languages does not encapsulate this; but nor does the total number of dialects. Ongoing change and new differences are essential too (cf. Mac Giolla Chríost 2007: 104). If dialects are diverging, diversity is going up. If dialects are converging, diversity is going down. This will be our benchmark. First though, we begin with the simpler measure of separate languages, to see if European language policy encourages diversity even on that limited basis.

## 3   Hierarchy and lingua franca in the European language regime

This section examines the policies of the EU, including the European Parliament and European Commission, and the influence of these policies on linguistic diversity in Europe.

## 3.1   The EU as a multilingual political community

European law has a significant impact on the rights and obligations of all EU citizens (Toggenburg 2005: §2.1). The freedom of EU citizens to access European law, and to contact EU institutions in their native language, are therefore decisively important for EU decision-making as well as legal certainty (Marí & Strubell 2002). It is self-evidently important that citizens identify with the law enacted on their behalf. Meanwhile, legal certainty guarantees that the subjects of supranational power have veritable access to, and understand, the law binding upon them.

Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) stipulates respect for fundamental rights – including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Article 3 extends to protection and promotion of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the EU. Member States are also signatories to documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights (Henrard 2004) as well as the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which affect EU language policy and legislation.

## 3.2   The development and goals of EU language policy: The Action Plan and the Framework Strategy

While Member States are not officially required to have a language policy as such, nevertheless they are effectively compelled to determine one, so as to efficiently manage European political, social and economic processes (van Els 2003: 45). Multilingualism projects gained impetus around the turn of the millennium. As a result of the resolution of the European Parliament (2003) regarding regional and lesser-used languages, the Commission issued an Action Plan (EC 2003; see also Nic Shuibhne 2008: 127) entitled *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity (2004–2006).*

Although the Action Plan asserts that "linguistic diversity is one of the European Union's defining features", and that "[r]espect for the diversity of the Union's languages is a founding principle of the European Union" (EC 2003: 12), its details are notably circumscribed. It focuses on formal language learning (EC 2003: 7–9) with a view to acquiring "the skills to communicate with one another effectively and to understand one another better" (EC 2003: 3). Furthermore, it declares that "regional and minority language communities do not seek support for the teaching of their languages as foreign languages" (EC 2003: 12). Here then we have the first

clear constraint: promoting the learning of other languages but restricted to official languages of Member States. Furthermore, education in regional and minority languages is only supported for the speakers of such languages, regardless of whether those languages are in decline and the pool of speakers is shrinking.

In 2005, the Commission issued its first communication dealing expressly with languages and multilingualism as a policy (EC 2005a). The *Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* states three goals: i) promoting language learning among EU citizens to contribute to maintaining linguistic diversity; ii) promoting a competitive, multilingual economy; iii) securing access to EU legislation and information for EU citizens in their native languages. EU language policy therefore encompasses protection and promotion of cultural identity, competitiveness and the respect for fundamental rights. The Strategy recalls the 2002 Barcelona goals of the European Council urging every EU citizen to learn at least two foreign languages (EC 2002: 19), financed through EU funds (EC 2005b).

It is important to recognise that the protection of linguistic diversity and the promotion of multilingualism are only compatible at first sight. Multilingualism policies, underlain by probability-sensitive language learning, tacitly favour "popular" or "big" European languages. This increases the imminence of language loss overall (van Parijs 2008: 21). In particular, while EU-sponsored official languages gain status and significance, regional and minority languages become less appealing and speakers may be indirectly induced to language shift.

In assessing the Framework Strategy, we may conclude that although linguistic diversity is putatively prioritised, similarly to the case of the Action Plan described above, the Commission sees language learning as the main workhorse of this endeavour. But this strategy, to protect linguistic diversity by promoting language learning, is based on a slippery premise, and may ultimately contribute to reducing linguistic diversity.

Naturally, language choice is not a zero-sum game. The nascent literature on *translanguaging* (e.g. García & Lin 2017) urges focus on the way multilingual speakers blur languages together dynamically in normal interaction, and advises that education should be modelled on this. But our point is more fundamental: that European language learning was putatively premised on exposing citizens to languages they otherwise would not encounter – yet the actual scope for that exposure is highly constrained.

All this chimes with Kraus (2008: 10) who concludes that, although the EU seems to glorify diversity on an abstract level, the concrete

measures of the institutions are vague and indeterminate. Similarly, analysing the term *linguistic diversity* in European political discourse, Strubell (2007: 159) notes:

> [I]t would seem reasonable to argue that 'safeguard' and 'preserve' refer to the maintenance of an existing state of affairs that may be under threat […]. Clear support for this view can be gleaned from the many Calls for proposals published up until 2000 by the European Commission to provide measures to *promote and safeguard regional or minority languages*. The object is much less abstract, and therefore much clearer: it is not 'diversity' […] being addressed, but rather minority languages and cultures. (Strubell 2007: 159, emphasis in original)

## 3.3 Regulation 1/58/EEC on language use in the institutions

The legislative act governing language use in EU institutions effectively reinforces secondary status for regional and minority languages. The central role of the language rules of European integration is highlighted by their prominent place in European Economic Community legislation, as early as the EEC Council's "Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community" (EEC Council 1958). That Regulation has been amended several times during accession of new Member States, but has remained the basis of the language regime of the institutions for sixty years.

The preamble of the Regulation reads: "Whereas each of the four languages in which the Treaty is drafted is recognised as an official language in one or more of the Member States of the Community […]". Although this paragraph may only serve as a tool of interpretation, it went on to decisively influence the preambles of further legislative acts of the Community, thereby determining the scope of languages eligible for funding (Marí & Strubell 2002: 4; cf. Ó Riagáin 2002: 3–4). Furthermore, the preamble is even deemed the basis for affording official status to a Member State language at the EU level (Marí & Strubell 2002: 3). Marí & Strubell note that the above-mentioned passage has been interpreted unduly restrictively, since it does not foresee that only those languages of the Member States which are official in the *entire* territory of a Member State may be afforded official status. Milian-Massana (2008: 96) points out that the very wording of the passage implies that regional official languages may also be eligible, by the wording "an official language in", not "an official language of" (emphasis in original).

The restrictive interpretation of the preamble is underlined by the new Article 55 paragraph 2 TEU which came into force following the Lisbon amendment of 2007: accordingly, the "treaty may also be translated into any other languages as determined by Member States among those which […] enjoy official status in all or part of their territory." As such, the restrictive conditions (cf. Marí & Strubell 2002: 5) for affording official status to Member State languages become the rule employed to constrain the scope of languages eligible for this special status (cf. Király 2007: 36).

On their accession, Member States determine in their Act of Accession the languages they wish to use as official languages in the EU (Láncos 2009: 123; cf. Fidrmuc 2011). This rule does not expressly prohibit the Member State determining more than one official language – moreover, the status of a Member State language may be modified even after accession. According to Article 8 of the Regulation: "If a Member State has more than one official language, the language to be used shall, at the request of such State, be governed by the general rules of its law." So, the Regulation expressly foresees the possibility of elevating regional and minority languages to EU official languages. But the list of existing EU official languages demonstrates that Member States have a restrictive interpretation of the Regulation, and do not add further official languages other than those dominant in their respective territories. The secondary status of minority languages is therefore reproduced and reinforced at the EU level. Overall then, as minority languages are shunted into secondary status at both Member State level and in the EU, the practice of EU institutions leads to a multi-level language regime (Láncos 2012: 100).

## 3.4   The multilevel language regime

Based on Regulation 1/58/EEC on language use, and on the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice, as well as the practice of the institutions, bodies and agencies of the EU, we see the emergence of a hierarchy of the languages spoken across the EU (cf. Marí & Strubell 2002: 4). As a result, different languages may be used in different spheres of official communication within the EU, while EU funding varies for the protection and promotion of languages. Some remedial work here is done by Articles 21–22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights ("Non-discrimination" and "Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity"); but even within the status of official languages there is differentiation between working languages and other official languages. Due to legal, logistical or technical reasons (cf.

Marí & Strubell 2002: 11), the institutions, bodies and agencies of the EU give preference to certain languages (deemed working languages) over other official languages (Lanstyák 2004: 47), while regional and minority languages are largely neglected.

### 3.4.1 The hierarchy of the official languages

Article 55 paragraph 1 TEU begins: "This Treaty, drawn up in a single original in the Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish languages, the texts in each of these languages being equally authentic […]". Neither the Treaty nor the Regulation distinguishes Treaty languages from official languages. Certain scholars have concluded that the "principle of the equality of languages" forms part of the European constitutional order (de Witte 2004: 221). This seemed substantiated by the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice, according to which, when interpreting European law, all authentic language versions of the Treaties must be taken into account (Mayer 2006). However, in the *Kik* judgement (Case C-361/01 P *Kik* v *OHIM* [2003] ECR I-8283), the Court expressly denied the existence of a principle of equality of languages, confirming the use of working languages in EU institutions (Nic Shuibne 2004). Namely, according to Article 6 of the Regulation on language use in the institutions, the institutions may determine *working languages*. This reinforces the assumption that differentiating between the official languages is legitimate. As such, Article 6 of the Regulation may serve as the basis for restricting the scope of official languages for institutions in internal and inter-institutional communication (Arzoz 2008: 178; de Witte 2008: 179). In practice, the Commission instituted English, French and German as working languages. In a recent judgement, however, the General Court found that the recruitment practice of the European Personnel Selection Office – which foresaw the mandatory command of either English, French or German – amounted to a discrimination based on language (T-124/13 and T-191/13 joined cases). This is because, in fact, no institution had made use of the opportunity contained in Article 6 of determining working languages in their rules of procedure; as such, the EU has no de jure working languages that would justify the existing hierarchy between the official languages of the EU.

### 3.4.2  Non-official languages spoken in the EU

The official languages of the EU are all official and majority languages of Member States, with the exception of Irish (co-official and minority). In general, therefore, it seems as though minority languages of the EU are non-official; but look more closely and there are nuances. According to Felföldi (2011: 3), minority languages may be classified as follows:

i)      officially recognized language which is not an official language of the EU (e.g. Letzeburgesch);
ii)     minority language spoken in only one Member State or a region thereof (e.g. Sorbian in Germany);
iii)    minority languages spoken in various Member States (e.g. Catalan);
iv)    minority languages with a kin-state (e.g. Hungarian); and
v)     deterritorialized languages (e.g. Romani, Yiddish).

As regards the fourth of these categories, although for example Hungarian is a minority language in certain Member States, it is also an official language of the EU and the majority language in Hungary.[2] Other minority languages have a kin-state, such as Turkish and Russian; however, Turkey and Russia are not Member States. We may conclude that the non-official languages of the EU constitute a complex, nebulous category, which comprises autochtonous ('long-established, indigenous') minority languages, regional and deterritorialised languages, and allochthonous ('immigrant') languages (FUEN n.d.: 14). The EU has a varied approach towards these: some may achieve a sort of semi-official status; others may be eligible for funding; while the rest are neglected, most especially allochthonous languages (see Skutnabb-Kangas 2002: 10).

### 3.4.3  Privileged non-official languages

The first category of non-official languages is "privileged non-official languages", comprising all non-official languages of the EU which are co-official or regional official languages in a Member State (Lanstyák 2004).[3] Following the Lisbon amendment, Article 55 paragraph 2 TEU, the "treaty may also be translated into any other languages as determined by Member

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[2] See Opinion of AG Maduro in *Spain v Eurojust* (16.12.2004), paras 48–49.
[3] This situation was changed by the new guarantees introduced under Articles 21–22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

States among those which […] enjoy official status in all or part of their territory." Based on the Administrative Agreement concluded between the Spanish government and the EU institutions (Marí & Strubell 2002: 11), certain acts adopted in ordinary legislative procedure shall be translated to Catalan, Galician, and Basque. Speeches may be held in these languages in certain institutions; and to facilitate communication between speakers of these languages and EU institutions, Spain shall appoint intermediary bodies. Paragraph 11 of the Agreement states that all costs incurred as a result of the "semi-official status" of these languages shall be borne by Spain. Meanwhile Paragraph 1(c) exempts the Council from liability for the precision of translations.

Importantly, only Member States may afford "semi-official status"; that is, the EU-level recognition is dependent on Member State action, and entails Member State expense. Meanwhile the eligible language groups are also restricted to autochthonous languages. Allochthonous languages are excluded altogether. As regards the concrete administrative agreement already in force, this is only applicable to Spanish citizens, not for example French citizens with Basque as their mother tongue (Lanstyák 2004: 47). Translations made in these languages are not deemed authentic; the EU has no relationship to these languages, and all related costs are borne by Spain (de Witte 2004: 221).

Milian-Massana (2008: 203) points out that this form of recognition may therefore not be deemed a novel institutional status (cf. Mayer 2006: 372); however, it may enable future delimitation of such autochthonous languages from other non-official languages and institutional recognition of the same on the EU level (Milian-Massana 2008: 219). There is also increasing pressure on the EU to recognise such languages at the EU level, since they are spoken by more than 10 percent of EU citizens (Bradean-Ebinger 2011: 4).

### 3.4.4  Other, lesser used languages

The category of other, lesser used languages includes those not deemed official by either the EU or Members States. The protection afforded to these languages varies greatly. There are three categories of such languages: protected by law; not recognized by law; and prohibited (Lanstyák 2004). The first of these are afforded some level of protection, potentially supported institutionally or through education (de Witte 2008: 179; Lanstyák 2004: 51). Languages not recognized by law have no status,

but are at least passively tolerated. Prohibited languages are sanctioned in order to discriminate against or assimilate their speakers (Felföldi 2011: 3). Bradean-Ebinger (2011: 4) cites the Vlach and Macedonian language communities in Greece.

### 3.4.5  Allochthonous "immigrant" languages

In the second half of the 20th century, the Member States of the European Community became progressively more focal destinations for in-migration (Bradean-Ebinger 2011: 4). As noted above, immigrants whose languages are not considered *autochthonous* European languages are disadvantaged; their languages are not recognized either at EU or Member State level (Fidrmuc et al 2006: 9; Skutnabb-Kangas 2002: 10). This is no small matter; on 1 January 2015 (the most recent data available) the proportion of non-EU immigrants in Member States averaged 7.5 percent – in five states it exceeded 11 percent (Eurostat 2015). And the meaning of "indigenous" is highly contestable; languages such as Hindi and Arabic have been widely spoken in Europe for several generations, yet their "immigrant", "allochthonous" status appears to have been elliptically granted in perpetuity (see Sayers 2015). Extra & Verhoeven (1993: 10–11) note that while most Western European states supported immigrant language use in the media and education in the 1980s, by the 1990s many Member States introduced assimilationist policies, believing this to be in immigrants' best interests.

The emerging immigration policy of the EU seems to fall in line with this trend. The Third EU Ministerial Conference on Integration in 2008 led to the so-called Vichy Declaration (Carrera 2014: 174), which urged comprehensive integration strategies including language programmes and courses on the history, institutions and values of the EU (EC 2008). This means, firstly, that the cultural and linguistic heritage of immigrants are neglected in the interests of integration; and secondly, that immigrants who become EU citizens but speak a non-official language are disadvantaged relative to other EU citizens in Union level political participation. Finally, allochthonous languages are only supported from EU funds to aid the competitiveness of the European market – that is, widely spoken non-European languages whose kin-states are important commercial partners (Milian-Massana 2008: 218–219).

## 3.5 A language regime based on restricted multilingualism

The language regime of the EU engenders a hierarchy of languages similar to an inverted pyramid, topped by the (non-stipulated) "working languages" used in internal communication of the institutions. Below these few select languages are the other official languages of the EU used by institutions in communication with EU citizens and Member States, and into which certain documents are also translated.

While privileged non-official languages may acquire a semi-official status at the EU level, this status is highly contingent on political and fiscal fair winds in the Member State(s) in which they are spoken. Privileged languages and lesser used languages are potentially eligible for EU funding and are protected through the horizontal principle enshrined in Article 3 paragraph 3 TEU. Lesser used languages and allochthonous languages are excluded from external communication of the EU, and funding for them is scarce.

Since only a fraction of the languages spoken in the territory of the EU is represented in the internal and external communication of the institutions, bodies and agencies of the EU, we may conclude that the multi-level regime of the EU is based on "restricted multilingualism" (Bradean-Ebinger 2011: 4; see also Derlén 2011: 156–157 on "limited multilingualism").

From this institutional legal critique, we now move on to a sociolinguistic investigation of the European approach to protecting and promoting minority languages, and how linguistic diversity fares here.

## 4 Declining linguistic diversity within protected languages

The previous section set out how the institutional machinery of the European Union serves to limit the recognition and learning of minority languages, therefore placing unrecognised constraints on linguistic diversity. This was principally a legal analysis, taking languages as separate entities and considering how these are – or are not – effectively and equally facilitated. The current section moves down into diversity within minority languages being protected in Europe, using sociolinguistic insights. This moves us away from the European Union and towards the Council of Europe, proprietor of the European Charter for the Protection of Regional or Minority Languages. By relating the EU and the Council of

Europe in this way, we offer a picture of an overarching "European language policy".

In a wide-ranging critique, Perley (2012) takes aim at linguists who record and analyse dying languages without also attempting to revitalise their use. He lambasts the "disembodiment of language from speakers" (Perley 2012: 134), "a ghoulish process where linguists go out to find the last speakers of dying languages and record their last words. That is not saving the language. It is mortuary linguistics" (Perley 2012: 140). Perley endorses community-led efforts to teach and thereby revive declining languages. But if we heed Perley's counsel and revive minority languages, does that also support linguistic diversity? The answer feels obvious; but that feeling should always send a question mark shivering up the scholarly spine. Let's take a closer look.

Published in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe, and eight years in the making, the European Charter sets out for both revival and diversity. It goes beyond passive tolerance of prior international law, as "the only international legal instrument whose primary aim is the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages" (Grin 2003: 67). It posits "linguistic diversity" as an explicit priority:

> Linguistic diversity is one of the most precious elements of the European cultural heritage. The cultural identity of Europe cannot be constructed on the basis of linguistic standardisation. On the contrary, the protection and strengthening of its traditional regional and minority languages represents a contribution to the building of Europe, which […] can be founded only on pluralist principles. (CoE 1992a: §26)

Recalling Perley's critique above, the Charter does at least require more than just documentation. But Perley may take issue with another aspect of the Charter. In prioritising languages, "the Charter does not establish any individual or collective rights for the speakers of regional or minority languages. In this, the Charter is in some ways a step backward from the Framework Convention [for the Protection of National Minorities]" (Dunbar 2000: 49; cf. CoE 1992a: §11). So Perley's prescription is problematic. Attempts to revive languages can still explicitly involve their "disembodiment" from their speakers. The Charter priorities languages themselves, not people. Of most relevance to our discussion is the plan to identify and protect particular languages, on the premise that this encourages linguistic diversity.

In our introduction, we quoted Wright's (2007a) distinction between "language-as-practice" and "language-as-system". The Charter seems geared towards the latter, given its focus on languages as discrete, defensible entities. How, for example, could "the number and percentage of oral interactions […] between civil servants and the public […] in the regional or minority language" (Grin 2003: 108) be recorded? Such checks, based on categorising interactions according to language, make sense for taking the pulse of languages as discrete systems, but less straightforwardly for intra-linguistic variation and variability.

Moreover, the Charter is worded in a purposively and diplomatically versatile way, to attend to "the specific conditions and historical traditions in the different regions of the European States" (CoE 1992b: Preamble). This acknowledges differences between linguistic minorities (Grin 2003: 76), but not within them. The actual requirements of the Charter are all binary, to provide services in "the regional or minority language" and "the dominant language" (Art.VI.15.1). There is an underlying presumption that these languages can be readily applied in a measurable manner, to achieve quotas of use.

Having said that, nowhere in the Charter is there any explicit call for standardisation. The Charter simply notes that there are these "languages", and that they should be protected. Their existence is presupposed, in the technical sense of a non-cancellable proposition (Levinson 1983: 207). Decisions over what constitutes "the regional or minority language" are left to the unspecified "authorities" in Member States. As we will see, it is in the subsequent planning process – downstream from the initial policy – that pressure upon diversity materialises.

Part III of the Charter contains six Articles "to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life": "Education", "Judicial authorities", "Administrative authorities and public services", "Media", "Cultural activities and facilities", "Economic and social life" and "Transfrontier exchanges". Of these, the judicial, administrative, economic and transfrontier requirements are mostly reactive, limited to providing translations on request. The media provisions are hedged to apply only where "the public authorities […] play a role […], and respecting the […] autonomy of the media" (CoE 1992b: XI.1). The cultural provisions meanwhile are somewhat highbrow, "especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries" (CoE 1992b: XII.1). But

these are all rather minor cogs in the machine. The main muscle of the Charter is the first Article of Part III, Education, specifically to make primary and secondary education available in regional or minority languages.

To reprise the distinction between a headcount of "languages" and overall diversity, recall Strubell's (2007: 159) remarks quoted earlier about "the maintenance of an existing state of affairs that may be under threat". One can read different rationales into support that is constrained to languages as discrete countable systems. Jaffe takes a wry stance, hinting at a staunchly rationalist, perhaps neoliberal underpinning (cf. Petrovic 2005):

> [G]iven the long tentacles of the dominant ideologies of language and identity, the celebration of multiplicity, hybridity and ambivalence is not a powerful discursive position. You do not get money, or books, or official recognition by claiming ambiguous relationships with several identities, and shifting and contingent forms of identification with multiple linguistic codes. (Jaffe 2004: 278)

We offer a more mundane explanation, focusing on the spread of "New Public Management" as a form of public governance across the world from the 1980s into the twenty-first century (Broadbent & Laughlin 2002: 102; Schedler & Proeller 2002: 163). NPM endorses interventionist state action like minority language promotion, but requires strictly quantifiable measures of performance: a government framework designed to substantially alter social behaviour, but with close attention to productivity.

But both these explanations – neoliberal conniving or bureaucratic box-ticking – favour an understanding of languages as distinct, countable entities, aligned with groupings of citizens within the purview of the governing body, in this case the Council of Europe. The above review is a brief window into how "diversity is rhetorically turned into a problem that needs to be 'managed'" (Muehlmann 2007: 16).

Fulfilment of Charter commitments is monitored by an appointed Committee of Experts (CoE n.d.); but it is the States themselves that actually create and execute the necessary language policies. The question for us is how the prioritisation of diversity filters down into modern language revivals, and whether Charter-based measures can really encourage such a thing. This is the uniting theme of our two case studies below. For Welsh, our focus is the current sociolinguistic profile of the language, and how its diversity is faring in the context of this relatively mature revival. For Cornish, a more germinal revival, we look at recent efforts to promote the language, and emergent pressures to agree on a

single standard form for use in education – the principal field of activity, per the Charter.

For Welsh, we are reviewing dialectological data – recalling our earlier discussion about the value of dialects for gauging diversity. Cornish, however, died out in the eighteenth century and has been manually reconstructed for its revival (Sayers & Renkó-Michelsén 2015) so it has no "dialects" in any conventional sociolinguistic sense. For Cornish we therefore focus on policy data, asking whether the conditions are being established for diversity to grow in future.

## 4.1  Welsh

Welsh-medium education began as a private endeavour in the 1930s, only receiving state-funding in 1951 (May 2000: 125), considerably ramped up after the Education Reform Act 1988 (Dunbar 2000: 57). The Census of 1991 showed self-reporting of Welsh at an all-time low of 18.7%, with significant geographical variation. The 2001 and 2011 Censuses suggested that this decline had been at least stemmed (Higgs et al. 2004; Statistics for Wales 2012), a change routinely attributed to Welsh-medium education (Aitchison & Carter 2000: 141; Farrell et al. 1997; ONS 2004; Williams 2008: 254). The 2011 Census suggested either a slight drop or a plateauing from 1991, depending on the significance of a change to the relevant Census question (ONS 2012: §10), but this challenging result has not spurred a radical rethink of policy. In the first post-2011 Welsh Government language policy document, *Cymraeg 2050* (Welsh Government 2017), education remains the bulwark. And education is increasingly the primary point of exposure to Welsh for a largely non-Welsh-speaking population. According to the Welsh Language Commissioner: "Four out of five 5–15 year olds now mainly learn to speak Welsh at school" (Huws 2016a; for further data see Huws 2016b).

In 2001, the UK Government ratified the European Charter in respect of Welsh (McLeod 2008). They also decided that "the existing range of measures in place to support Welsh meant that the requirements of the Charter were already more than being met in Wales" (Dunbar 2000: 65). This is important. If the requirements of the Charter were already being met, then we can extend our remarks about Charter provision further back in time. To that end, we review Welsh variationist sociolinguistic data from the 1980s, as well as more recent evidence.

The success of the Welsh language revival is normally defined using Census figures and other surveys: "Demography – the numbers and distribution of people reporting themselves to have ability in Welsh, based on census data – is the usual focus of debate on the current 'health' of the language" (Coupland et al. 2005: 2). If education is the main reason for stemming the decline of Welsh use, then the *kind* of Welsh being used is more likely to be influenced by education. This is thrown into sharper relief by "the continuing shrinkage of the "heartland" zones for intergenerational Welsh language transmission" (Coupland et al. 2006: 353), further foregrounding education as the main life support for the language.

The significance for us of the Welsh revival is partly its relative maturity, partly its palpable influence on other language revivals around Europe, "a rare and celebrated exception to […] minority languages suffering language shift and decline" (Coupland 2011: 79–80) – "regarded with envy" (Huws 2006: 147; cf. May 2003: 218; Sallabank 2005: 59; McLeod 2008). Indeed, there is evidence of influence well beyond Europe, for example a task force from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami in Canada making a five-day tour of Wales in December 2016 for guidance on standardising their writing system (FEL Canada 2017: 9). Analysing the Welsh case therefore allows a degree of generalisation to European language policy, and to an extent further afield.

We review below two variationist reports of spoken Welsh. And, as discussed earlier, we are looking at dialects as heuristics, indicators of diversity, not diversity itself.

We begin with Thomas (1987: 99), who explains that the "spoken standard" for Welsh education is in fact a relatively modern phenomenon, "the result of language-planning policy during the 1960s and 1970s". "The model thus devised is […] a dialectal hybrid […]. It is a purely prescriptive model which relates to no reality outside the classroom" (Thomas 1987: 104). Thomas aims to gauge the influence of this supralocal standard on local dialects. He brings variationist insights to the task, analysing change in spoken Welsh across age cohorts. He compares those who learnt Welsh at home and at school – respectively "primary" and "secondary" bilinguals. He conducts his fieldwork in "Aberdaron [extreme Northwest Wales], in an area of high-density Welsh incidence, and Merthyr [South Wales], in one of low-density incidence" (Thomas 1987: 108).

Thomas (1987: 110) analyses three variables indicative of local dialect resilience: the initial consonant mutation system; the pronunciation of final-syllable orthographic diphthongs; and occurrence of the possessive

pronoun. Consonant mutation, for example, is a typical irregular feature, requiring "a great deal of unstructured knowledge […] which cannot be quickly assimilated" (Thomas 1987: 110). Learning the nuances of this feature takes long-term exposure in spontaneous conversation, above and beyond the structured acquisition of classroom skills. On the basis that younger speakers tend to be exposed to more standard Welsh, Thomas compares three age groups in both locations: 5–19, 20–49, and 50+. His quantitative data for both locations combined are summarised in Figure 1.
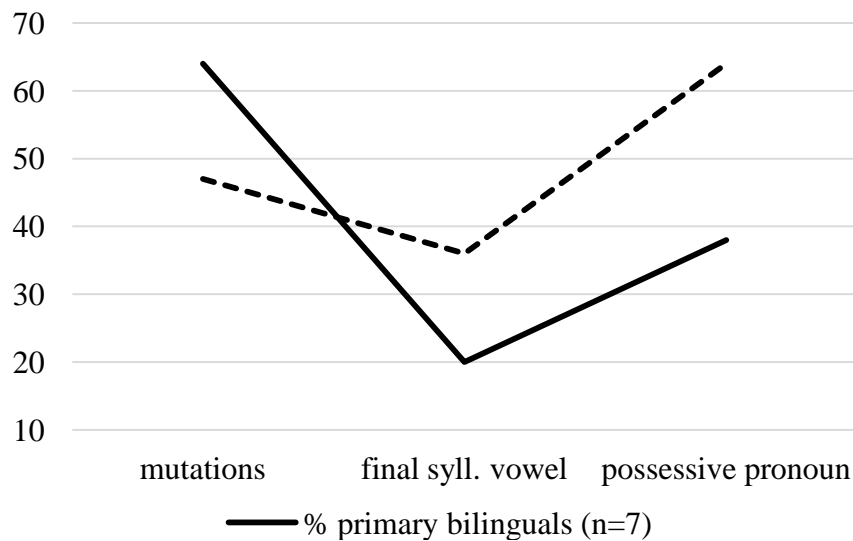


**Figure 1**. Adapted summary of data from A. R. Thomas (1987: 110)

Thomas (1987: 110) concludes that primary bilinguals showed "a conflict between dialectal and standard usage", while for secondary bilinguals "a major determinant of usage is the […] perceived standard". Primary bilinguals showed greater evidence of dialectal features, secondary bilinguals were affected by scholastic acquisition of Welsh, yet both were apparently influenced increasingly by the standard. These findings represent disparate pressures on diversity within Welsh: some pre-existing, some apparently introduced or sharpened by Welsh-medium education. However, Thomas (1987: 108) stresses the limited size of his sample, and that his results represent only "trends in usage, and the kind of data which it would be useful to investigate in a fuller enquiry". To that task rises Jones (1994; 1998).

With a broadly similar research design, Jones (1998: 45) compares two communities: low Welsh-density Rhymney in South Wales, with 6.7% of residents aged 3+ Welsh-speaking; and high Welsh-density Rhosllannerchrugog, in Northeast Wales, with 38.1% (Jones 1998: 158). In

Rhymney, she notes that Welsh is primarily acquired at school, so she only records secondary bilinguals. In Rhosllannerchrugog, owing to higher levels of home use, she also records primary bilinguals. The comparisons are especially instructive for our discussion.

Signs of declining diversity are detected in a range of features, for example soft mutations; that is, the replacement of voiceless with voiced consonants in certain environments, as in [k], [p] and [t] becoming [g], [b] and [d]. "[W]hile still used in a historically appropriate way by two-thirds or more of the adult informants", it "was far more unstable amongst the younger generation who, in most cases, omitted it altogether" (Jones 1998: 59). Similarly: "Adjective lenition after a feminine noun was not well preserved", and "the 'tip' had obviously occurred with the younger generation" (Jones 1998: 66). Of education, Jones (1998: 71) notes: "The high instance of soft mutation made in feminine nouns after the numeral *un* ('one') and the relatively high maintenance of gender-marked numerals also suggests that these are grammar points which may have been emphasized in the classroom".

Examining other variables, Jones (1998: 72–74) notes simplification in the distribution of possessive pronouns in all age groups, with the oldest speakers simplifying these dialectal distinctions the least. Jones (1998: 81) is careful to caution that similar loss of dialect features is found in most other "healthy" languages. What is unique to the Welsh case is "the quantity of changes" and "the accelerated rate at which they are taking place" (Jones 1998: 81).

Dialect loss turned to dialect disappearance in other cases, for example post-tonic devoicing (provection), "eliminated from the speech of the younger generation" (Jones 1998: 93). Similarly, Jones (1998: 95) found the local dialect feature third-person singular preterite ending *-ws* "has almost totally disappeared […] completely replaced by Standard *-odd* in the speech of all but the oldest informants". There was overall "a large degree of standardization of the speech of the under forties, this drops dramatically in the speech of informants aged between 40 and 74, while informants aged 75 and over show no evidence of standardization" (Jones 1998: 101). Overall, certain local features of the Rhymney dialect "had to all intents and purposes been eliminated from the speech of the schoolchildren" (Jones 1998: 109).

In the second community, Rhosllannerchrugog, similar trends obtain in secondary bilinguals. Perhaps the most interesting comparisons for our discussion are between, on the one hand, secondary bilinguals in Welsh-

medium education and primary bilinguals in English-medium education. The latter speak Welsh at home but are not taught it in school, and so are not exposed to normative pressures from the supralocal prescribed standard. Dialect loss in Rhosllannerchrugog was apparent, as in Rhymney. What stands out is that secondary bilinguals in Welsh-medium education used significantly fewer dialectal forms than primary bilinguals in English-medium education. The Rhosllannerchrugog feature of inserting an epenthetic vowel in certain word-final clusters appeared on the wane, but English-medium educated Welsh speakers "were retaining this dialect feature to a greater extent" (Jones 1998: 189).

In most cases, declining diversity was more advanced in Rhosllannerchrugog. The English-medium educated Welsh speakers showed greater declines in their use of Welsh overall, but significantly less assimilation to Standard Welsh (and never showing greater dialect loss):

> The speech of these children, who learn Welsh at home and do not receive Welsh-medium education, is still heavily coloured by local features. This is irrefutable evidence of the influence of Welsh-medium education on the local dialect in Rhosllannerchrugog. Most significant of all was the fact that a correlation was found between the results obtained in Rhosllannerchrugog – a relatively strong Welsh-speaking community – and those obtained in Rhymney – a relatively Anglicized community. […] [T]he Standard is gaining substantial ground in the speech of these informants with each successive age group. (Jones 1998: 204)

There is also the matter of peer pressure among young people, reported in Rhosllannerchrugog as creating "stigma" in local dialect features, which "provoked […] a conscious attempt to conform to a more standardised variety" (Jones 1998: 196). These younger respondents saw local dialects as irrelevant, even divisive (Jones 1998: 227). (See also Robert 2009: 95, on secondary bilinguals "drowning out" primary bilinguals in Welsh schools.)

The main dialectological analyses in Rhymney and Rhosllannerchrugog were followed up by matched guise perceptual tests, in which young people struggled to recognise their own local Welsh dialect. These findings can be instructively compared to a separate study conducted more recently, investigating 15-year-olds' recognition of dialects of English in the same areas (Garrett et al. 2003: 200). The two studies can be compared as follows:

> Rhymney: 21% recognition of local dialects of Welsh (Jones 1998: 117), set against 27.6% recognition of local dialects of English (Garrett et al. 2003: 200);

Rhosllannerchrugog, 32% recognition of local dialects of Welsh (Jones 1998: 209–210), set against 48.3% recognition of local dialects of English (Garrett et al. 2003: 200).

In Rhosllannerchrugog, Jones (1998: 209–210) notes that "many of the [Welsh local dialect] words were so unfamiliar […] that they identified them as coming from the opposite end of the country". It should also be noted that the Garrett et al. (2003) study actually made accurate recognition of local dialect features less likely for English than Jones did for Welsh, in three ways. First, Garrett et al. asked open questions, while Jones gave multiple-choice selections. Second, Garrett et al. required greater precision, by splitting Wales into six zones (to Jones' four). Third, Garrett et al. conducted their study several years later, so if these trends are ongoing, then the later the study, the less chance of accurate recognition.

Overall then, both production and recognition of local dialects of Welsh are declining in these two quite different areas of Wales. Jones (1998: 101) concludes that "there has been a 62 per cent increase in dialect loss over the past sixty years". She attributes this to the predominant exposure of secondary bilinguals to "Standard Oral Welsh" in the classroom, "a nationwide, non-localized variety of the national language" (Jones 1998: 116). "Their Welsh is becoming a non-locatable amalgam of elements drawn from all over Wales" (Jones 1998: 117).

Though cautious not to over-generalise, Jones (1998: 229) mentions that her chosen research sites are "typical of their kind". She further ventures that "in Rhymney and Rhosllannerchrugog […] we are witnessing an instance of language suicide [in] which […] the dialects of Wales are becoming progressively divested of some of their phonetic regional features and idiosyncratic lexical items" (Jones 1994: 256). Figures 2 and 3 represent the combined data for dialect loss in both locations, showing a general decline in structural distinctions.

Whether or not Jones' (1998: 208) future vision of "a variety of Welsh […] devoid of all regional features" is realised, the point remains that modern spoken Welsh appears to be declining in diversity. Reprising our benchmark of linguistic diversity, dialects appear to be converging; variation and variability are decreasing. As Jones (1998: 137) concludes: "while the status of the Welsh language as a whole may be improving, the fate of its dialects is more pessimistic".

The fate of dialects in language revitalisation is a live topic of debate in relation to linguistic justice: distinguishing *inter-linguistic* and *intra-linguistic justice* (De Schutter 2017); and noting that a raised profile for

languages may exacerbate or even create injustices among speakers of their dialects (Blommaert 2001). We are making a parallel critique here: to repeat a point made earlier, even if dialects were somehow recognised, even protected, this would just nudge the reductionism down a level, on to dialects as a smaller unit of language. Teaching a standard language does not automatically cause mass linguistic conformity, nor does it crush innovation. However, it does seem to introduce or exacerbate pressures that reduce variation, and inhibit variability.
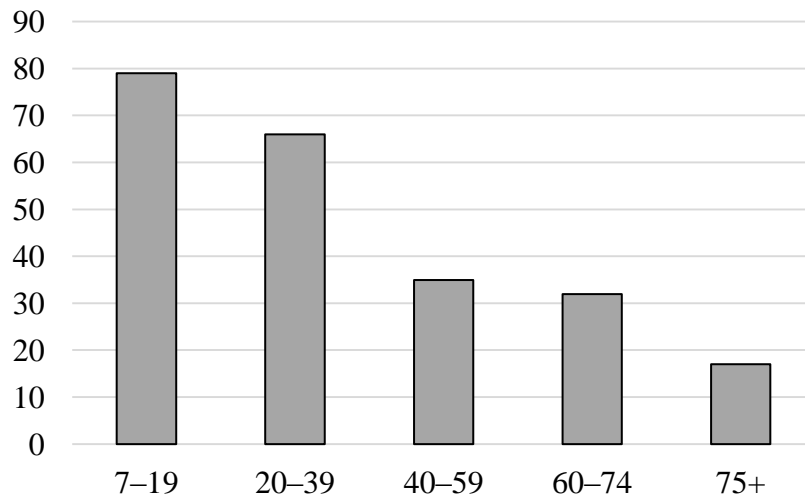


Figure 2. % cross-variable, inter-group comparison of dialect loss in Rhymney, by age (Jones, 1998: 101) [*n* figures not in original]
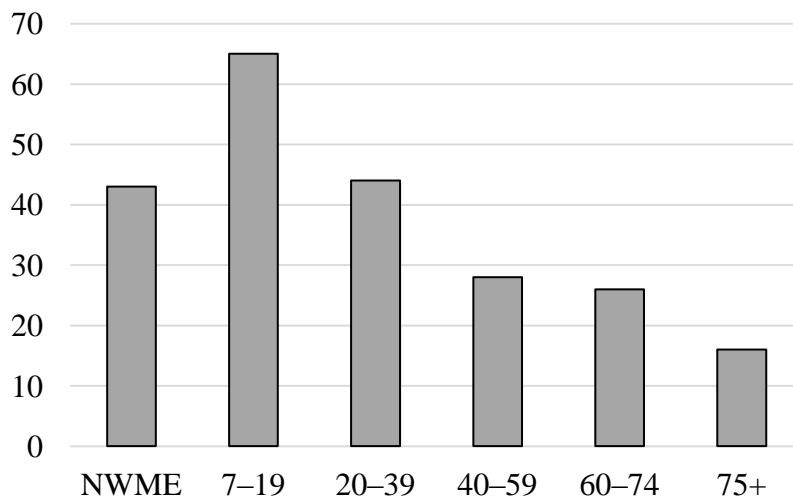


Figure 3. % cross-variable, inter-group comparison of dialect loss in Rhosllannerchrugog, by age (Jones 1998: 204) ['NWME' – no Welsh-medium education; *n* figures not in original]

Lastly, it may appear that attention is being unduly centred on the present situation, seeing issues such as the tension between standard and dialect as only an effect of recent policy. The situation is patently far more complex, with longstanding awareness among Welsh speakers of tensions between the standard language and natural, informal varieties (see e.g. Robert 2009). Our argument is not that these pressures on diversity are entirely new, but that they have only been magnified by contemporary language policy.

## 4.2  Cornish

We have seen dialects of Welsh weakening and converging amid a putatively successful revival effort, proceeding in alignment with the European Charter. Welsh is a well-resourced and long-standing revival, with a substantial body of speakers. But how does linguistic diversity fare at a different extreme, where the language died long ago, has lost its intergenerational link to native speakers, and has been painstakingly reconstructed for modern use? In this section, we discuss diversity in the Cornish language movement, illustrated by a mix of primary interview data with language activists, documentary data, and other published research.

The Cornish language died slowly from the 16th to the early 19th century (Treenoodle 1846: 1–4; Jago 1882: 13; Jenner 1904: 11–23). Successive mining booms in Cornwall over these centuries served to churn the Cornish population, and spur massive in-migration (Pounds 1943: 45), gradually diluting Cornish with English. There were efforts to catalogue the language in its twilight years, though fragmented and largely amateur; and many of these piecemeal records were subsequently lost (see e.g. Pryce 1790: iv). Nowadays, the surviving historical record of written Cornish is estimated at a meagre 176,000 words total (George & Broderick 2009: 754). From this punishingly scant corpus, revivalists with varying levels of linguistic training have attempted to reconstruct a full language. This has involved filling gaps in grammar and lexicon by extrapolation, as well as by borrowing and adapting from surviving related languages – principally Breton and Welsh (see Sayers & Renkó-Michelsén 2015).

Crucially this was never an orchestrated or centrally planned effort, but was conducted independently by different people, to different extents, at different times over the centuries. Given the scarcity of the corpus, and the variety of approaches to reconstruction, there are now different "versions" of reconstructed Cornish. So, although Cornish has no dialects

as such, nevertheless there is a form of diversity. Can these versions all be promoted within Charter-based revival activity? And in relation to variability, is the contemporary revival setting up the conditions for new forms of diversity to flourish, including spoken vernaculars as the reconstructed language re-enters daily use?

In our earlier research (e.g. Sayers 2012; Sayers & Renkó-Michelsén 2015), and in the work of others, we have found pressures on diversity in reconstructed Cornish linked to the funding and evaluation frameworks emanating from the Charter. Prior to 2001, Cornish was promoted by separate voluntary groups, each favouring a different one of the reconstructed versions noted above – with little mutual dialogue. There were occasional small grants from local government and other funders (Sayers 2012: 101), but otherwise no large-scale funding. Each version had its supporters, and the language revival proceeded along these parallel avenues, representing a nascent form of diversity.

The UK Government recognised Cornish under Part II of the Charter in 2001 (weaker than Part III, but still foregrounding education). Three years later, the *Strategy for the Cornish Language* was published, including a priority for "a single written form of Cornish for use in official documentation and formal education" (CCC 2004: 18). What would this mean for the existing versions of the language?

Between 2006 and 2009, a combined local, national and European funding package of £600,000 was awarded to decide how Cornish would be officially promoted. This figure dwarfed any funding previously afforded the language; and the central goal of this lengthy consultation was a singular standard form for official promotion.

But debates about standardisation between activists and officials were longer running. As one of our interviewees, a leading activist, put it in 2005: "Government use it as an excuse. Why hasn't Cornish been put in schools already? Well there are four different spelling systems, which one should we use? You'll have to choose one for official purposes. This is the answer that's been given."

As the 2004 *Strategy* foreshadowed, the 2006–2009 consultation was premised on the need for a singular standard. In large part, then, the consultation was an exercise in diplomacy between what had essentially become opposing factions. One eventual possibility was to select one of the existing versions for official use. Shortly before the consultation began, the above-quoted activist commented: "You'll never get an agreement on one type of Cornish, not within the next ten years anyway. That's pie in the sky,

because there are die hards." The same activist continued, "the last thing we want […] is an amalgamation of the current systems to provide yet another form of Cornish. […] It wouldn't have authenticity." This same indifference was echoed by other activists, a view perhaps coloured by their own investment in each version.

But as the consultation progressed, it eventually became clear that agreement on an existing version would be less expeditious than, after all, amalgamating existing versions into a new version. Two professional linguists from outside the UK were employed to synthesise what became known as the Standard Written form, SWF (commonly pronounced 'swoof'). Their report (Bock & Bruch 2008) outlined a new version which accommodated some variation in spellings (a diplomatic nod to existing versions), but ultimately crystallised Cornish into a standard vehicle for official adoption.

Adoption of SWF enabled longer-term funding from central government, to fulfil the requirements of the Charter – principally production and distribution of teaching resources. By 2016, twenty schools across Cornwall were involving Cornish to different extents in an extracurricular capacity. Official adoption and centralisation of resources enabled three learning packages, circulated to all primary schools in Cornwall, as well as taster sessions and other contributions. Cornish did not enter the national curriculum but its presence grew across Cornwall. The official revival placed no explicit constraints on the use of other versions of Cornish, but only leant specific support to SWF. So, from a base of limited diversity in this nascent revival, Charter recognition raised its profile and its budget, but drove new constraints on diversity.

The present moment is actually a strange time to be writing about Cornish. In April 2016, the UK Government ceased its annual funding. This was couched in terms of a wider devolution of central government responsibility to local authorities; but was later revealed by a former Cabinet member as simply the end of a rather cynical political deal to secure fiscal savings elsewhere (Sayers 2017). There remains a Cornish Language Office funded by Cornwall County Council, which administers small grants for one-off projects, but with much more limited scope. Road signs are still produced bilingually, though just when signs need replacing, so this incurs no extra cost. The prior central government funding for Cornish had come from the Department for Communities and Local Government; but in the government's spring budget of 2017, DCLG saw a cut of 24%. This department is otherwise predominantly responsible for

housing supply and public services. Given that Cornwall is also the poorest region of England (ONS 2011), and its economy continues to decline (Cornwall Council 2013), calls for reinstatement of this funding may fall on deaf ears.

Certain projects are funded through other means, for example a nine-day Cornish language festival in February/March 2017 funded by the National Lottery "Celebrate" fund. The Akademi Kernewek (www.akademikernewek.org.uk) – set up during the period of central government funding to develop dictionaries, terminology, etc. – is still active, though in a largely voluntary capacity. Various other pre-existing voluntary bodies continue to operate. Meanwhile the raised profile of Cornish, along with the relative accessibility of SWF, has enabled more self-sustaining activities, not least use of Cornish by some companies, for example certain bus announcements, signage in pubs, hotels and shops, and widespread use in email signatures.

But overall the light has dimmed, and the goal of substantially increasing everyday spoken use of Cornish is somewhat adrift. In a recent language action plan (Cornwall Council 2016), 10 out of 23 goals are listed as red (stalled), pending further lobbying of central government to reverse its funding withdrawal. Given the 24% cut to DCLG noted above, this is a period of existential uncertainty for the revival.

But to return to our overarching theme, the large-scale funding which did occur was only made possible by agreement on, and propagation of, SWF. The lack of a single agreed standard was the major logjam, and despite indifference towards an amalgamated standard, SWF nevertheless enabled a level of visibility and recognition previously confined to fantasy for Cornish activists.

So, what of linguistic diversity in reconstructed Cornish? Even if the language movement regains momentum in future, SWF remains the bedrock. Without that lies the unappealing prospect of reignited factional dispute, and dilution or diversion of institutional support. Eyes are focused on securing sustainable state funding for continued rollout of SWF, through education. This of course recalls all the factors outlined in the Welsh case, with normative pressures from above and social pressures from below against variation and variability. If the revival finds its feet again, linguistic diversity seems unlikely to follow.

## 5   Conclusion

Although the primary law of the EU urges respect for linguistic diversity, our legal analysis suggests this is something of a sandcastle at high tide. The language regime of the EU conceived sixty years ago, the respective jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice, and the practice of the institutions of the EU, result in a hierarchical language regime based on restricted multilingualism. The great divide is between official languages of the EU and non-official languages, resulting in a distinction between *de facto* working languages on the one hand and official languages of the EU on the other. The Commission sees language learning as the key to securing linguistic diversity, but this is problematic. Multilingualism conceived in this way actually undermines linguistic diversity overall, creating pressures towards greater linguistic homogeneity of Member States. This in turn increases the likelihood of language loss, and tacitly reinforces the dominance of English as a lingua franca in Europe. Meanwhile the significantly more numerous allochthonous languages spoken across Europe (crowding out autochthonous languages around four to one) are summarily excluded altogether.

Our sociolinguistic analysis curls up further question marks over linguistic diversity within the European regime of promoting minority languages. With its focus on formal language learning, it favours what Wright (2007a) refers to as a "language-as-system" approach, which is fundamentally at odds with the fluctuating and enigmatic reality of "language-as-practice".

None of this is intended to assert that the intention to enshrine multilingualism or promote specific minority languages is outright folly, or a waste of resources. Nor are we claiming that linguistic diversity itself is necessarily, incontrovertibly, a positive end in itself. We have made no case for these positions, nor do we advance them now. Our goal here has been more modest, to hold European language policy up to its own claim about linguistic diversity, to expose that claim to sustained scrutiny from different angles, and to demonstrate some wrinkles in its logic.

This is more than just pedantic heckling. Although we did not advance arguments about the value of this or that position towards linguistic diversity, nevertheless we have shown that a fundamental rhetorical basis of European language policy is ultimately rather threadbare – winnowed away and watered down by the rationalistic funnelling of resources in supra-national political institutions, the mundane practicalities of language

planning on the ground, and heightened social pressures to conform. This in turn is an important contribution to a wider debate on the shortfalls of such grand policy claims, and of grand narratives generally.

We end by repeating our central assertion, that linguistic diversity is complicated, much more so than the existence of a series of countable languages, or even dialects within them. Attempts to officially promote a circumscribed number of specific languages will do little to help this, and may introduce new pressures on diversity which, by every official measure, will be missed. Linguistic diversity transcends language boundaries, and may be harmed by institutional intervention. Thus, linguistic diversity may ultimately belong outside the discourse of contemporary European language policy.

## Acknowledgements

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