

Euromosaic: a still open challenge

A.A. V.V.

Edited by Flavia Cavaliere



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NOTE INTRODUTTIVE

Flavia Cavaliere

Nell'attuale scenario socio-politico, oggi più che mai, il concetto stesso di Europa appare indefinito e confuso: in base a diversi contesti *Europa* può essere un toponimo, anche se per la sua morfologia i geografi tendono a considerare "continente" l'intero blocco eurasiatico – il termine delimita dei territori e assume quindi rimandi (geo)-politici. Tuttavia, *Europa* può anche denotare un etnonimo, e includere un insieme di etnie e culture le quali, pur nelle loro differenze, condividono tratti culturali e comuni origini cristiane, in tal caso, si privilegia una prospettiva storico-culturale. Infine, con *Europa* si può altresì indicare un mercato economico, i cui Stati membri beneficiano della libera circolazione di beni, servizi, capitali e persone che condividono anche, a maggioranza, una valuta comune. Nell'ultimo caso si opera *tout-court* una sovrapposizione, tanto comune quanto ingiustificata, tra l'Europa geo-politica e l'Unione Europea (UE). Come noto, l'odierna UE è il risultato del divenire di una coalizione nata all'indomani della Seconda Guerra mondiale; nel 1958 la Comunità Economica Europea (CEE) nacque proprio, con l'intento di promuovere la collaborazione economica tra paesi sulla base della convinzione che favorire il commercio, e creare quindi una rete di interdipendenza tra vari paesi, potesse ridurre i rischi di successivi eventuali conflitti. L'originaria unione, che includeva solo sei paesi – Belgio, Germania, Francia, Italia, Lussemburgo e Paesi Bassi – e mirava ad una cooperazione economica, si è nel tempo ampliata sia geograficamente sia negli ambiti di interesse, includendo progressivamente settori che spaziano oggi dal clima all'ambiente, alla salute, alle relazioni esterne e alla sicurezza, all'economia ed alle politiche monetarie e alla giustizia, fino ad includere l'attualissimo quanto spinoso problema dell'immigrazione. Per sottolineare tale evoluzione, nel 1993, la definizione stessa di Comunità Economica Europea è stata sostituita, appunto, unicamente con Unione Europea. Tra

i principali valori ed obiettivi dell'UE vi sono la salvaguardia della libertà, della dignità umana, della democrazia, dell'uguaglianza, dello Stato di diritto ed il rispetto dei diritti umani. Nel 2012 all'UE è stato motivatamente attribuito il premio Nobel per la pace, avendo «*for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe*». ¹ Nonostante tale insigne riconoscimento, purtroppo, oggi l'UE vive momenti di grande tensione, attanagliata dalla problematica crisi dei migranti e percorsa dai venti gelidi del cosiddetto euroscetticismo, che ha indotto nel giugno scorso la tanto controversa *Brexit*, anche se è da puntualizzare che la attuazione dell'uscita del Regno Unito dall'UE è ancora in una (dibattuta) fase embrionale.

L'UE è quindi ben lungi dall'essere acquisita e consolidata, ma presenta piuttosto uno scenario estremamente fluido e multiforme, che può e deve essere analizzato sotto diverse angolature e prospettive per poter essere compreso.

Di tale scenario, molteplice e complesso – in cui si intrecciano temi e questioni principalmente di natura socio-politica, lingua-culturale, storica, identitaria – i contributi raccolti in questo volume intendono tracciare una rappresentazione significativa, offrendo dalle loro diverse angolature una vasta gamma di dettagliate analisi. Si mettono in rilievo differenze e/o similitudini all'interno dei vari Stati membri dell'UE, evidenziando in tal modo sia quanto è stato sinora attuato nella effettiva realizzazione dell'Unione, sia quante e/o quali tessere manchino, in particolar modo in specifici settori, per completare e al tempo stesso preservare la edificazione dello sfaccettato Euro-mosaico.

I diversi contributi, forniti da docenti impegnati nell'ambito della didattica delle lingue presso diversi atenei italiani e/o da studiosi delle politiche europee, sono stati suddivisi in tre sezioni in base a tre principali aree di investigazione, e si articolano attraverso una pluralità di approcci e metodologie che rendono i singoli discorsi critici riccamente modulati e ne potenziano gli stili argomentativi. La prima sezione riunisce contributi principalmente focalizzati su analisi più specificatamente socio-linguistiche di alcune politiche adottate dall'Unione Europea.

Il contributo di **Lucia Abbamonte**, ad esempio, è incentrato sulla dibattuta (e innegabile) esistenza della varietà europea dell'Inglese (*Euro-English*) e

¹ The Nobel Peace Prize for 2012. https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/press.html.

sulla sua validità di lingua transnazionale della UE, anche in considerazione dell'attuale fruizione dell'Inglese come lingua franca da parte dei legali a livello planetario. Il dibattito e le reciproche contestazioni si accendono soprattutto fra i sostenitori del ritorno all'uso della varietà Britannica dell'Inglese, che sono prevalentemente anglofoni di madre lingua, e chi invece vuol promuovere una varietà che dia risalto al lessico di origine latina. Nello studio si presentano in prospettiva comparativa sia i temi della campagna *Fight the Fog. Write Clearly*, sia le motivazioni dei sostenitori della validità delle *Latin Heritage words* in un contesto lingua-culturale, quale quello europeo, in cui il Latino ha fornito repertori lessicali alle numerose lingue romanze, e non solo.

Mariavita Cambria mira invece ad investigare la relazione tra Brexit ed emigrazione analizzando – attraverso un approccio metodologico definito *Critical Discourse Analysis* – una serie di articoli pubblicati rispettivamente sul *The Times* e *The Sun*, raccolti in un lasso di tempo compreso tra il 1° aprile 2016 ed il 30 settembre 2016, ossia entro i tre mesi precedenti e successivi al famigerato voto referendario britannico del 23 giugno 2016. I risultati della sua analisi, molto attuale, mostrano in maniera estremamente efficace come il discorso possa divenire al tempo stesso prodotto e produttore di relazioni e scenari sociali.

Nel contributo a firma della **curatrice** si analizza il variegato mosaico linguistico dell'UE in cui le cosiddette lingue autoctone, regionali/minoritarie, non territoriali e quelle parlate dai migranti si sovrappongono in una complessa mescolanza socio-linguistica, non scevra da problemi giuridico-politici ed identitari. Particolarmente complesso è il quadro inerente il vasto numero delle lingue minoritarie parlate nella UE, molte delle quali sono a rischio di estinzione per una serie di diverse concause. Le lingue, le culture e gli ecosistemi stessi sono interdipendenti e la scomparsa di un solo linguaggio provoca la perdita di un più vasto patrimonio culturale che è patrimonio dell'intera umanità, per cui oggi la promozione e la tutela di tali lingue si inserisce in una più ampia esigenza, ormai unanimemente acclarata, di protezione della biodiversità culturale, da tutelare alla stregua di quella naturale. In una tale visione, anche in ambito UE sono state adottate politiche finalizzate alla salvaguardia del patrimonio linguistico europeo.

Da una prospettiva più socio-politica, **Domitilla Sartorio** ripercorre le diverse fasi dei negoziati del tanto controverso 'Partenariato transatlantico su commercio e investimenti tra UE e USA' (il cui acronimo inglese è TTIP – *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership*), giunti attualmente al 15°

ciclo e svoltisi di recente a New York. Il TTIP, come noto, è un accordo commerciale di libero scambio in corso di negoziato dal 2013 tra l'UE e gli Stati Uniti d'America, che si propone principalmente di favorire l'integrazione dei rispettivi mercati e agevolare la possibilità di importare e investire dai due lati dell'oceano. In particolare, tra gli obiettivi preposti figurano, oltre alla riduzione degli oneri amministrativi per le imprese esportatrici, anche la definizione di nuove norme per rendere più agevole l'esportazione, tra cui, ad esempio, la riduzione di dazi doganali e la rimozione, in una vasta gamma di settori, delle barriere non tariffarie, ossia le differenze fra regolamenti tecnici, norme e procedure di omologazione, standard applicati ai prodotti, regole sanitarie, ecc. Ad oggi, tuttavia, le prospettive per raggiungere un accordo globale sembrano attraversare una fase di difficoltà. Come per ogni accordo di libero scambio, alcune decisioni riguardanti argomenti come gli organismi geneticamente modificati e le norme sulla privacy risultano particolarmente complesse da definire e hanno sicuramente rallentato il processo per la conclusione del trattato. In aggiunta, l'attuale situazione politica dell'America e fattori interni all'UE come la Brexit, sembrano allontanare l'ipotesi di una possibile o quantomeno rapida attuazione del TTIP. Attraverso una rigorosa e dettagliata analisi, sono esposte le motivazioni di detrattori e sostenitori di tale accordo ed illustrati tutti quei fattori che ad oggi hanno rallentato, e continuano a rallentare, la firma del trattato e che, soprattutto, nel loro insieme, potrebbero vanificare gli sforzi verso la creazione della più grande zona di libero scambio del mondo.

La seconda sezione è incentrata su differenze e/o similitudini emerse all'interno dell'UE dalla contrapposizione/comparazione di aspetti più squisitamente linguistico-culturali. In particolare, ad esempio, **Marina Niceforo**, dopo aver ripercorso il periodo di instabilità economica e sociopolitica attraversato dall'Europa negli ultimi anni, propone una serie di neologismi nati recentemente in seno a varie lingue europee. Dalla dettagliata analisi della gran parte di tali neologismi, creati oggi generalmente dalle fasce più giovani della popolazione e diffusisi velocemente attraverso Internet ed i social media, sembra emergere una conclusione che induce a ulteriori riflessioni sul futuro dell'inglese e delle lingue europee. Gran parte dei neologismi analizzati rientra principalmente in aree lessicali legate a temi quali migrazione, crisi economica, disoccupazione, *Brexit* e riflette pertanto l'attuale stato d'ansia e di incertezza dei giovani europei riguardo ai suddetti argomenti.

L'interessante selezione di proverbi europei analizzati da **Douglas Ponton** in uno studio cross-culturale di alcuni proverbi siciliani, inglesi, e di altri

contesti lingua-culturali europei offre l'opportunità per approfondire il complesso, inscindibile rapporto tra lingua ed identità. Partendo dall'assunto che ogni lingua consente al popolo che la parla di perpetuare il proprio bagaglio culturale e le proprie tradizioni, tale contributo mira ad investigare la qualità e il valore dei patrimoni linguistico-culturali locali, che esprimono forme storicizzate di saggezza popolare, quale quella veicolata dai proverbi.

Il contributo di **Eleonora Sasso** si snoda attraverso una stimolante rilettura dei sottotitoli forniti nel corso di alcune conferenze TED (*Technology Entertainment Design*) prese in esame, il cui comune tema centrale è la crisi dei migranti. Le migliori conferenze TED – o *TED Talks* – la cui missione è sinteticamente espressa nella formula “*ideas worth spreading*”, sono pubblicate gratuitamente sul sito web del TED e possono infatti essere ascoltate con il supporto di traduzione automatica dei sottotitoli in tutte le lingue esistenti. Dalla precisa analisi di alcune conferenze prese in esame emerge non solo una mappa cognitiva dell'Europa in cui si delinea una comunità purtroppo impreparata a fronteggiare l'ormai quotidiano afflusso di centinaia di migranti in fuga disperata dalle loro terre, ma anche l'indissolubile rapporto tra media e la disseminazione non solo di informazioni, ma anche di idee. In tale ottica il sottotitolaggio delle conferenze TED acquista una specifica valenza socio-politica e culturale nell'arena dell'Euromosaico audiovisivo.

La terza sezione è dedicata ad un'analisi comparativa di metodologie e tecniche (glotto)didattiche adottate in alcuni atenei europei. Data l'importanza della diversità linguistica, è altrettanto fondamentale ed interessante esporre e far conoscere i modi in cui vengono implementate le politiche linguistiche del plurilinguismo e del multilinguismo, e quali siano le (nuove) frontiere della glottodidattica negli atenei italiani ed europei.

Amelia Bandini, in particolare, si sofferma dapprima sulle iniziative messe in atto dall'UE a tutela del plurilinguismo, procedendo poi con una disamina del multilinguismo, inteso sia come patrimonio culturale individuale, sia come strumento indispensabile per una cittadinanza europea consapevole e assertiva. Nell'ambito di un dibattito internazionale, la Bandini riporta poi la visione di diversi studiosi europei sul tema delle competenze multilingue e di come esse abbiano implicazioni e ricadute fondamentali sia sui singoli individui, sia sulle società.

Il contributo di **Cristina Pennarola** e **Silvia Osman** ci guida attraverso le fasi

della pianificazione di due corsi di studi finalizzati alla didattica per la lingua inglese (quindi *English for Specific Purposes* o *ESP*) per studenti di Scienze Politiche presso due prestigiosi atenei europei. Le puntuali analisi delle diverse pratiche didattiche dei due corsi consentono una chiara individuazione dei rispettivi contenuti, ne chiariscono i relativi obiettivi, e forniscono poi nel dettaglio modalità e scansioni temporali adottate per la valutazione. L'analisi si concentra non solo sulle diverse metodologie e tecniche implementate, ma anche sulle modalità di realizzazione, e sui sottostanti principi: le diverse scelte didattiche operate sono minuziosamente motivate esplicitando di volta in volta i piani concettuali di riferimento. Da questo istruttivo raffronto emergono stimolanti spunti di riflessione tra similitudini e divergenze nell'ambito della glottodidattica a livello universitario in campo europeo.

Last but not least, **Sandra Petroni** e **Maria Grazia Sindoni** delineano l'evolversi e le realizzazioni della digitalizzazione nell'ambito della didattica delle lingue in ambito europeo, nei suoi molteplici aspetti e potenzialità. La loro ricerca progettuale muove da una approfondita riflessione sulla nozione stessa di alfabetizzazione digitale e multimodale, e su come ormai essa si ponga quale strumento imprescindibile per la programmazione di sillabi e curricula europei per l'insegnamento dell'Inglese. Tali sillabi si avvalgono delle risorse del *collaborative learning*, al fine di migliorare i processi di apprendimento, anche interculturale, alla luce degli obiettivi socio-educativi condivisi nella UE.

Queste note introduttive forniscono una esposizione inevitabilmente sommaria rispetto alla vastità e attualità dei temi trattati nei singoli contributi. Ne emerge lo scenario di popoli e nazioni che stanno vivendo un'era ricca di fermenti sociali e di cambiamento, in cui la portata del fenomeno migratorio non può essere sottovaluta. Tuttavia, di forte attualità appare il messaggio sotteso all'intero volume, ossia che le differenze linguistiche e socio-culturali presenti sia tra i singoli stati membri, sia al loro interno, lungi dall'essere considerate una minaccia, rappresentano piuttosto una sfida ancora aperta, «*but, in our view, a rewarding challenge*» (Maalouf, 2008:3).²

² Maalouf Amin, *Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment*, 18 September 2008, p.3. <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/language-technologies/docs/multilingual-comm.pdf>.

Euro English – controversial Esperanto or *de facto* transnational and legal language?

Lucia Abbamonte*

Abstract

Efforts have been made to make the EU less English-dominated. Largely, both Esperanto or Interlingua supporters and speakers of other prestigious national languages have been trying to prevent the English language, once defined by John Swales lingua tyrannosaura, from dominating/eliminating all other languages. In particular, the usability of (Euro-) English as the legal language of the European Union is not free from controversy. Predictably, though English is actually much utilised as the global lawyers' lingua franca, different legal system (e.g., Common Law vs Statutory Law, or different civil law contracts and procedures) are obvious obstacles to the development of a trans-national legal language. To say nothing of the occurrence of false friends between similar languages. These and other aspects would advocate for a multifaceted, negotiatory, legal-linguistic response.

Largely, from a European perspective, there are two contrasting attitudes to the effectiveness and reliability of Euro-English (EE), especially where legal communication is considered. On the one hand, we have the pro-native attitude, and on the other the pro- EE stance. The former ranges from the more interlocutory European Commission guidelines and glossaries to the Fight the FOG campaign, declaredly in favour of 'plain language', i.e. the native British English variety and words of Anglo-Saxon origin. The latter unfolds more argumentative positions, encompassing the use of words of classical heritage. Other more nuanced perspectives will also be considered in this study.

* Università degli Studi della Campania L. Vanvitelli

1. Introduction

Of recent, the question that the English language dominates the European Union institutions has been much (and idly) discussed also in the press.

[Should/will] the institutions of the European Union still speak (a kind of) English after [... the Brexit]? Legally, the 24 official languages of the 28 members have equal status. Gradually, however, English has displaced French as the most common language between two Eurocrats or parliamentarians who do not share a native tongue. [...] That would leave an odd fact: a union of 450m dominated by a language spoken officially only in the Republic of Ireland (population 4.6m) and Malta [...].¹

Indeed, as Cavaliere (2017, this volume) observes, there are still open legal issues, since the 'Brexit' referendum is advisory rather than mandatory. Thus, for the time being, the UK is still a member of the EU, whereas, in the near future (after the settlement of the exit), according to the existing EU regulations, English might not have legal title to be an official EU language.

Several efforts have been made to make the EU less English-dominated. Largely, both speakers of other prestigious national languages and Esperanto or Interlingua supporters have been trying to prevent the English language, once defined by John Swales (1997) *lingua tyrannosaura*, from dominating/eliminating all other languages. Indeed, the choice and use of a language cannot be neutral (which is the traditional objection of the former British colonies to an all/mainly-English education); such issues entail ideological, socio-cultural and economic aspects as well.

In particular, the main concern of this study is with the extent/mode of the usability of (Euro-) English as the legal language of the European Union, which is not free from controversy. Predictably, though English is actually much utilised as the global lawyers' *lingua franca*, different legal systems across the nations (e.g., Common Law vs Statutory Law, or different civil law contracts and procedures) are obvious obstacles to the development of a transnational legal language. To say nothing of the occurrence of false friends between similar languages. As Goddard (2013: 283) maintains,

¹ Johnson. *English becomes Esperanto. The institutions of the European Union will still speak (a kind of) English if Britain leaves* (Apr 23rd, 2016). Retrievable at <http://www.economist.com/news/books-and-arts/21697210-institutions-european-union-will-still-speak-kind-english-if-britain>.

while discussing the existing literature on the topic, «in certain legal fields an international technical legal language is developing, but not so in others [...]. This would suggest the need for a nuanced (comparative) legal linguistic response».

From a historical perspective, the obvious comparison is with the use of Latin as the 'lingua' of the science and professions; McArthur (2000: 185) once defined the Latin language as «a lively and useful corpse [...] although described as a dead language». Yet, Husa (2012) observed that English as is now utilised in the EU is not endowed with a common European legal-language grammar. This can be a serious shortcoming given the sequential and formalistic nature of the legal reasoning. However, it is by now a shared notion, also advertised in the media, that Euro-English (EE) has acquired many lexico-grammar features and other traits from the other European languages, which can raise perplexities in native British speakers,

A sort of Euro-English, influenced by foreign languages, is already in use. Many Europeans use "control" to mean "monitor" because controller has that meaning in French. The same goes for "assist", meaning to attend (*assister* in French, *asistir* in Spanish). In other cases, Euro-English is just a naive but incorrect extension of English grammatical rules: many nouns in English that don't properly pluralise with a final "s" are merrily used in Euro-English, such as "informations" and "competences". Euro-English also uses words like "actor", "axis" or "agent" well beyond their narrow range in native English.²

Broadly, from a European perspective, there are two contrasting attitudes to the effectiveness, usability and reliability of EE, especially where legal or official/bureaucratic communication is considered. On the one hand we have the pro-native attitude, and on the other the pro-EE stance. The former ranges from the European Commission guidelines to the EU Directorate-General for Translation *Fight the FOG* campaign, which is declaredly in favour of 'plain language', i.e. the native British English variety and, mostly, words of Anglo-Saxon origin. The latter unfolds more argumentative and nuanced positions, encompassing the use of words of classical heritage. Indeed, to define plain language is no easy tasks, since the comprehension skills of the target receivers need to be taken into account as well.

² See note 1. See also Sonnad Nikhil, *The English language could get really weird if Britain leaves the EU*, May 11 2016. Retrievable at: [HTTP://QZ.COM/679670/THE-ENGLISH-LANGUAGE-COULD-GET-REALLY-WEIRD-IF-BITAIN-LEAVES-THE-EU/](http://qz.com/679670/the-english-language-could-get-really-weird-if-britain-leaves-the-eu/).

2. The EU Commission Guidelines – the prescriptive attitude

Apparently, the European Commission Directorate-General for Translation felt the need to publish eight editions of its *English Style Guide*. A *handbook for authors and translators in the European Commission*,³ as we can read below in the (abridged) introduction

[The guide] is intended primarily for English-language authors and translators, both in-house and freelance, working for the European Commission. **But** now that so many texts in and around the EU institutions are drafted in English by native and non-native speakers alike, its rules, reminders and handy references aim to *serve a wider readership* as well. In this Guide, 'style' is synonymous with a set of *accepted linguistic conventions*; it therefore refers to *recommended in-house usage*, not to literary style. Excellent advice on how to improve writing style is given in *The Plain English Guide* by Martin Cutts [...] all of which encourage the *use of good plain English*. See also [...] *Mis-used English words and expressions in EU publications*. For reasons of stylistic consistency, the variety of English on which this Guide bases its instructions and advice is the standard usage of Britain and Ireland [...]. The Guide is divided into two clearly distinct parts, the first dealing with linguistic conventions applicable in all contexts and the second *with the workings of the European Union* [...]. This should not be taken to imply that 'EU English' is different from 'real English'; it is simply a reflection of the fact that the European Union as a unique body has had to invent a terminology to describe itself. [...] Writing in clear language can be difficult at the Commission, since much of the subject matter is complex and more and more is written in English by (and for) non-native speakers, or by native speakers who are beginning to lose touch with their language after years of working in a multilingual environment. We must nevertheless try to set an example by using language that is clear, simple and accessible as possible, out of courtesy to our readers and consideration for the image of the Commission. In legislative texts, accuracy and clarity are of course paramount. But legal or bureaucratic language that we might regard as pompous elsewhere has its place in both legislation and preparatory drafting, though the specialist terms must be embedded in rock-solid, straightforward English syntax. In some cases – departmental memos or papers for specialist committees – we may regard 'Eurospeak' as acceptable professional shorthand;

³ Retrievable at http://ec.europa.eu/translation/english/guidelines/documents/style-guide_english_dgt_en.pdf. Last updated: September 2016.

searching here for 'plain English' periphrases wastes time and simply irritates readers. **By contrast**, *in-house jargon* is not appropriate in documents addressing the general public, such as leaflets or web pages (my emphases).

This introduction is a negotiatory masterpiece. Through the recurring use of contrastive prepositions/adverbs (in bold) and modals (underlined), it promotes the need for clear 'plain', native English [«encourage the use of good plain English»] and at the same time endorses the need for complexity in the EU communication [«Writing in clear language can be difficult at the Commission»]. In gist, this introduction both denies the existence of EE [«This should not be taken to imply that *EU English* is different from *real English*»], and declares its existence in the same sentence [‘the European Union as a unique body has had to invent a terminology to describe itself’]. Furthermore, a few lines below it justifies the modes of [«pompous»] bureaucratic language. One cannot help remembering the well-known quote from Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922): «What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence».⁴

These observations are not meant to undermine the practical usefulness of the Guide, which, apart from the guidelines for style, provides both very useful terminology/glossaries and concise (hence useful) information on Member States, national legislations, judicial bodies, the EU institutions, courts, committees, agencies, agendas and relations, funds, reports and bulletins, ecc.

3. Gardner’s *Misused English Words and Expressions in EU Publications*

Jeremy Gardner, a senior translator at the European Court of Auditors, is the author of a glossed list of *Misused English Words and Expressions in EU Publications*, which is quoted in the *English Style Guide* as a useful reference publication. Declaredly, Gardner’s aim, as we read in his argumentative Preface to the May 2016 edition (p. 2) is

neither to criticise the work of EU authors nor to dictate how people should speak or write in their internal or private correspondence. In

⁴ From *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (first published in German in 1921 and then in English in 1922): *Was sich überhaupt sagen lässt, lässt sich klar sagen; und wovon man nicht reden kann, darüber muss man schweigen*. Retrievable at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/>.

addition to providing guidance to readers who are unfamiliar with the EU parlance, my comments are mainly designed for those who, for reasons of character or personal taste, would like their *English to be as correct as possible* [UK and Irish native-speaker norms], and those who need, or want, their output to be understood by people outside the European institutions, particularly in our two English-speaking member states. [...] I have heard *two main objections to this basic premise*. The first is an *English-as-a-lingua-franca* type of reasoning, i.e. that international English has taken on its own momentum and, to a certain extent, has its own rules. *Native speaker usage, therefore, is no longer necessarily a model* that needs to be followed. I must admit that *I never found this particularly convincing* to start with, but, more importantly, I do not hold it to be relevant here. Our most important ‘client’ is the European taxpayer (see ‘citizen’, below) and *it does seem to be reasonable that English-speaking readers should be able to read our documents in versions that are linguistically at least as good as the translated versions* (something that is currently often not the case). *The second objection, which I also refute, is that some terms are now so ingrained in EU usage* (the ‘acquis’) *that we have to use them even if they are wrong and, more importantly, even if our readers do not understand them*. This view sees certain past texts, particularly ‘the treaties’, as being akin to some kind of holy book handed down on tablets of stone, whose very word is sacred. In this connection, I have had endless discussions regarding a number of terms, including ‘third country’, which is not only unclear and misleading, but also remarkably easy to replace with something more sensible and meaningful [my italics].⁵

Largely, Gardner posits within a pro-native English stance taking, though acknowledging in the following Introduction that

Over the years, *the European institutions have developed a vocabulary that differs from that of any recognised form of English*. It includes words that do not exist or are relatively unknown to native English speakers outside the EU institutions and often even to standard spellcheckers/grammar checkers (‘planification’, ‘to precise’ or ‘telematics’ for example) and words that are used with a meaning, often derived from other languages, that is not usually found in English dictionaries (‘co-

⁵ Retrievable at http://www.eca.europa.eu/Other%20publications/EN_TERMINOLOGY_PUBLICATION/EN_TERMINOLOGY_PUBLICATION.pdf.

herent' being a case in point) [*ibidem*, my italics].⁶

Ironically, this introduction was published in May, shortly before the Brexit Referendum,

English is the most widely-spoken language in the world and is currently an official language in 88 sovereign states and territories; it therefore follows that it has many different versions and standards [...]. However, our publications need to be comprehensible for their target audience, which is largely British and Irish, and should therefore *follow a standard that reflects usage in the United Kingdom and Ireland*. This is not a value judgment on the other varieties of English, merely recognition of the need to communicate in the language that our readers understand best [*my italics*].⁷

Although in our web-wired, fast changing semiosphere, (electronic) published texts are quickly overcome by events and frequently updated accordingly, this version of the Introduction to the guide has not been altered as yet.

As regards the list, Gardner informs us that it was drawn from «official EU publications, statements of preliminary findings and draft reports by the Court of Auditors and the terms were then checked against dictionaries, native speakers in the UK, and the British National Corpus» (*Ibidem*, p. 5). He also specifies that the list cannot be complete, since both English and its (challenged) EU variety are living languages. The outraged native speaker attitude surfaces while Gardner complains as follows: «A number of the errors mentioned in this paper can be ascribed less to a question of meaning than to an aspect of English grammar that seems to have gone relatively unnoticed in the English teaching in European schools – the distinction between countable and uncountable (or mass) nouns».⁸

Such attitude is often perfectly understandable to the common reader, especially as far as opaque jargon (and maybe worryingly opaque extra linguistic referents and/or ways of thinking) is (/are) concerned, as in the examples below:

⁶ Gardner, cit, p.3.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Idem*.

Comitology

Explanation

There are 1,253 instances of the word 'comitology' in EUR-Lex. However, not only does the word not exist outside the EU institutions, but it is formed from a misspelt stem (committee has two 'm's and two 't's) and a suffix that means something quite different (ology/logy means 'the science of' or 'the study of'). It is therefore highly unlikely that an outsider would be able to deduce its meaning, even in context. Fortunately, as the quote below shows, the procedure has been abolished. Unfortunately, the term seems to have survived.

Example *'The Commission must draft new rules setting out the powers and workings of the bodies replacing the Committees in the framework of the now-abolished **comitology** procedure, to ensure that the new system operates properly'.*

Alternative

The official term is 'committee procedure'.

Contradictory procedure

Explanation

'Contradictory procedure' does not exist in English as a fixed expression, although, of course, a procedure can be contradictory. The dictionary definitions of contradictory are: 'involving, of the nature of, or being a contradiction' or 'given to contradicting', so it is unlikely that an uninitiated reader would appreciate that the notion of the 'contradictory procedure' actually regards the right of any individual to give his/her side of the story. Fortunately, this term is no longer officially used by the Court of Auditors to describe its *inter partes* discussion procedure with the Commission, but less fortunately, it has been replaced by 'adversarial procedure', which, if anything, is even worse.

Examples *'All audits result in detailed findings being sent to the auditee to confirm the accuracy of the Court's observations, followed by a "contradictory procedure" on the final text of the audit report'. 'The rights of the operators should be guaranteed through a contradictory procedure with its Flag State, the criteria for the listing should be clear, objective and transparent, and the de-listing process when the criteria are not met any longer should also be foreseen'.*

Alternatives

The EU's financial regulation lays down 'adversarial procedure' as the technical term for the Court of Auditor's hearing of the Commission with regard to its findings (although, in the 1990s, it was called, rather more informatively, the 'bilateral discussion procedure'). However, 'contradictory procedure' is still used outside this context (e.g., 'the paying agency held a contradictory with the farmer'), and we should bear in mind that people beyond our immediate circle will not understand it. In most cases, it is better to drop the legalese ('inter partes hearing', 'audi alteram partem', and the like) and rework the sentence in layman's terms, e.g., 'the paying agency called the farmer in to discuss the matter'.

Others are perhaps more perplexing for British native speakers than for English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers, as in the examples below.

Aids

Explanation

The word 'aid' is usually uncountable (see introduction) in the meaning covered here (=assistance, which is also uncountable) and should only be used in the singular. With an '-s', it is commonly used to refer to a disease (AIDS) or to devices that help you do something (e.g., 'hearing aids' or 'teaching aids'). Significantly, of the 3,23218 examples of the word 'aids' included in the British National Corpus, nearly all those used to mean 'assistance' come from EU sources.

Example *'State aids – Decisions to propose appropriate measures pursuant to Article 108(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union where the Member State concerned has accepted those measures'.*

Alternatives

Aid, subsidies.

Financial envelope

Explanation

This curious term is used to mean something like: ‘the total budget available for something’. It is so odd¹¹⁷ that it is rather surprising to see that it has not only made it into the second decade of the twenty-first century, but, with 500 hits in EUR-Lex, many of them recent, it is going so strong that the Commission’s new state-of-the-art machine translation system¹¹⁸ cheerfully offers it as an equivalent for ‘financial allocation’ and the like. This term is often defended tooth and nail by people who should really know better simply because it is believed to be in one of the sacred texts¹¹⁹.

Example *‘The key parameters of the macroeconomic adjustment programme, notably the duration of the programme and the overall **financial envelope** remain unchanged’* ¹²⁰.

Alternatives

Budget, financial allocation.

Formulate

Explanation

Formulate is heavily over-used in our documents; it means ‘to put into or express in systematic terms’, ‘to express in (or to express as if in) a formula’ or ‘to devise’. In our work, it is often overused with a meaning akin to ‘draw up’ or ‘prepare’.

Example *This is estimated at €646,832 on a yearly basis, covering 4.0 FTEs to manage the documents and the website (including dealing with confidentiality issues and one ‘communication manager’) to **formulate** urgent safety communications).*

Alternatives

Draft, draw up, produce, prepare.

Other instances could potentially raise problems of legal interpretation, for example, as regards «foresee», a «foreseen penalty» is something different from an actual «penalty» ('the penalties «foreseen» in the Regulation', *ibidem*, p. 5).

Foresee

Explanation

People find it inexplicably difficult to use this word properly, so maybe the safest policy is to avoid it. If you do insist on using it, bear in mind that it may not mean what you think and that many people find its misuse unreasonably annoying. Its basic meaning in English is 'to see something in advance' and therefore to 'predict' or 'expect'. It is often used to describe the activities of soothsayers and fortune tellers ('she foresaw that you would meet a tall dark stranger') and, perhaps for this reason, it may sometimes not be clear whether the prediction in question is based on fact or not. In EU texts, it is incorrectly used in many ways that correspond more or less to the uses of the French word *prévoir* or the German *vorsehen* (both literally fore-see). We are told that 'X is foreseen in the regulation' (=set out in/provided), that 'on-the-spot checks are foreseen' (=intended/planned) and that 'our procedures foresee (=include/provide for) documentary checks'. Even when used with the right meaning, 'foresee' is often syntactically awkward as it does not, for example, normally govern the infinitive: thus 'Croatia is foreseen to join the Union in 2013' is odd, whereas 'Croatia is expected to join the Union in 2013' is not.

In the example below, the author intended to say that the fleet adjustment schemes provide for the scrapping of 367 vessels. What he actually says is that they predict it.

Example 'In total, Member States adopted 13 Fleet Adjustment Schemes (FAS), which **foresee** the scrapping of 367 vessels accounting for 32 448 GT and 50 934 kW'.

Alternatives

According to the exact meaning intended: envisage, plan, lay down in, set out in, provide (for), contemplate, expect, predict.

As a whole, the list raises many relevant issues and is definitely worth using, apart from being a very pleasant reading for linguists. However, since new and (unfortunately/unnecessarily) complicated EU bodies require new vocabulary, and the reality of ELF cannot be ignored, a more compre-

hensive perspective, or perhaps a 'companion list' for acceptable EE usage, would also be very welcome.

4. *Fighting the FOG*

The EU Directorate-General for Translation has published an unapologetically assertive booklet for all writers of English at the European Commission, titling *Fight the Fog. Write Clearly*, which focuses on the following contents (abridged, p. 1):

- Put the reader first
- Use verbs, not nouns
- Concrete, not abstract
- Active, not passive
- Whodunnit? Name the agent
- Making sense – managing stress
- Kiss – keep it short and simple
- False friends and other pitfalls

Again, this is both an interesting reading and a useful reference booklet, with its attention to the needs of the reader and the many very useful pieces of advice, such as, to use verbs (e.g., «by introducing»; «renew») instead of unnecessary nominalizations («by the introduction of»; «effect a renewal of»). Here follows an interesting example of unnecessary EU communication complexity: «The committee **came to an agreement** to the effect that a **study should be carried out** by the consultants into the feasibility **of the provision of** national funding». In plainer English: «The committee **agreed** that the consultants should **study** the feasibility of **providing** national funding» (*idem*, p. 3). Reasonable suspicions may arise in common readers' minds as to what the reasons for such «foggy» phrasing can be.

Largely, as far as syntax, grammar, word order, naming the agents and prioritizing important information are concerned, the booklet gives sound advice. However, where specific vocabulary issues are raised, the discussion becomes more controversial. In particular, let us consider the following suggestions, which will be discussed in paragraph 5.

Concrete, not abstract

English is a notoriously blunt language. Too much abstract language (FOG) may make your reader suspect that something real and unpalatable is being wrapped up in verbiage. In general, if you have a choice between an abstract word and a more concrete one that means the same, choose concrete. It will make your message more direct.

Sometimes, instead of this ... :	... you could try this:
establish	fix
emphasise	highlight
orient	steer
eliminate	cut out
determine	set
objective	goal, target
initiating impulse	trigger
employment opportunities	jobs
negative evolution	downward spiral
decisive innovation	breakthrough

5. EE and classical heritage words

McArthur (2000: 180-196 and passim) defined *Latin in English* as a complex inheritance (*idem*, p. 188). He emphasised how Latin (the «lively and useful corpse», p. 185) has been part of a formal education in the British Isles from the early Middle Ages to the beginning of the XX century

and has been variously absorbed into English; he mentions in particular bisociate pairs, like *freedom* and *liberty* (*idem* 190), medical vocabulary, ecc. To cut a long (and well-known) story short, the importance of Latin heritage in English is not easily overvalued, as a large amount of (easily retrievable) research in the history of English language has shown.

Why is this relevant here? Because the Latin heritage is also common to the majority of the European languages, including English. Hence, the observation that «English is a notoriously blunt language» (*supra*, par 4, in the quote) is not easily acceptable. More importantly, such hostility to the use of Latin heritage words in EE definitely undermines the potentiality of English to be more easily understood by speakers of other European languages. As Castorina (2010: 54-55), among others, highlighted, this is a serious limitation. In his words,

The *Fight the FOG* campaign offers clear examples of linguistic ethnocentrism and myopia. [... In particular] the booklet *Fight the FOG* advocates the replacement of English words of classical origins, [...] easily understood by native and most non-native speakers, with British ones. [Thus] it fights not only against the EU's principles of equal language rights between Member States, but against English itself, which is now spontaneously evolving into a more European and international language and which has much to gain in appropriately valuing shared European terminology, which uses common structures and combining forms.

Furthermore, Castorina notices how some of the Anglo-Saxon/Old English heritage words (e.g., phrasal verbs) can cause problems of receptive understanding not only to most non-native speakers, but also to many Anglophone speakers, especially considering how many native varieties do exist. In brief, in his opinion, it should be clear that words such as *establish*, *emphasize*, *orient* are more internationally transparent than their bisociate/quasi synonyms), i.e. *fix*, *highlight*, *steer*. Plainly, to native speakers of Romance languages *negative evolution* is more transparent than *downward spiral*. Accordingly, a greater «tolerance of English Latin heritage words would contribute to compensating the advantages of native English speakers (Castorina, *ibidem*)». Not to mention that EE grammar and syntax would predictably benefit from the assimilation of some Romance languages' syntactic features to the purpose of conveying European legal concepts more effectively. The implementation of a «rock-solid, straightforward English syntax» wished for in the English

Style Guide (*supra*, par 2) seemingly overlooks the fact that English has virtually no clear conjugation/inflection system as compared to other languages; this can be a serious shortcoming in legal communication.

6. Discussion and concluding remarks

The issues at stake are many and multifaceted, entailing both ideological, political, socio-economic reasons and more specific lingua-cultural, historical, philological, and morphosyntactic aspects. However, the focus of the present study needed to be limited to the right to existence of EE and its usability for clear, plain EU communication and for legal purposes. Apparently, EE exists and prospers, notwithstanding the attempts to deny its existence (par. 2). Indeed, it should not be forgotten that linguistics is a descriptive science, rather than a prescriptive discipline.

As for the issue of plain language, as Taglialatela (2015: 184) clarifies, «no technique defines plain language. Plain language is rather defined by results». In other terms, it depends on how easy it is read, understood and used by its intended speakers. Accordingly, in the case of EE, using terms of Latin (or Greek) heritage can improve international communication, since such heritage is common to many European languages and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, many efforts have been made for creating a neutral auxiliary language (e.g., Esperanto, Interlingua, ecc.) that could be common to all. The hypothesis that English might one day accomplish the destiny once envisioned for Esperanto is supported by the existing estimates. Seemingly, between 1.5 and 2 billion people speak English in one form or another, and the number is increasing, owing to the contemporary virtually global real-time opportunities for communication. From this perspective, whatever English native speakers (ENSs) might consider as standard or plain English, the EE could increasingly become a fluent, independent variety within a large community. Let us only consider the evolution of English in India, where a much larger number of NNSs overcomes the small group of ENSs. Possibly, as the English language becomes more and more global, either phrasal verbs, or some tricky usage of prepositions, or complex verb forms (e.g., *I'll be seeing you*, now, see you) might disappear in the process. Bluntly, it amounts to the cost of diffusion.

More complex is the issue of EE as a legal language (par 1). The reality of English as the global lawyers' legal *lingua franca* cannot be denied, as Goddard (2013: 284) clarifies, and this *de facto* includes the EU, but, on the other hand, the difficulties of communication among different national legal systems cannot be overlooked. In Italy, the jurist linguists, with the purpose of revising the EU normative texts, and eliminating equivocation and ambiguity, have created a *Rete di eccellenza dell'italiano istituzionale*. No simple task, given the deep-rooted and lovingly cherished complexity of the Italian legal (and bureaucratic) apparatus, codes and procedures.⁹ Apparently, the membership in the EU has not contributed to overcoming such complexity, rather the other way round. Obviously, the real problems revolve around the differences in the juridical institutions and the involved *entities/arrangements* (broad translation of the Italian '*istituti giuridici*'). A form of negotiation of the legal language (Williams and Tessuto, 2013), as well as nuanced translational approaches, appear to be the only viable routes in the *multiversum* of both the participants in the European legal communication and the European legislature (Abbamonte e Cavaliere, 2010).

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⁹ Just one (depressing) example: “[si veda come] il «contratto», istituto italiano espresso in lingua italiana, non possa essere tradotto letteralmente in “contract” (o, più precisamente, “simple contract”), concetto inglese, in quanto mentre il contratto nell’ordinamento italiano comprende l’istituto della donazione, il *contract* inglese la esclude, essendo la donazione (*gift*) inglese un “deed” e non un “simple contract”.» (Ioriatti Ferrari, 2005: 5).

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“Siamo o non siamo europei?”

Brexit, lingua e migrazione

Mariavita Cambria*

Abstract

We are European, aren't we? The language of Brexit

On 23rd June 2016, the United Kingdom voted on whether to remain a member of the European Union or to leave. The European Union referendum will be a battle between competing visions of Britain's place in the world, including the 19th century imperialist discourse of a so called “Anglosphere” (Kenny and Pearce, 2016). A British withdrawal from the EU has somehow changed Britain, the EU, the politics of Europe and the place of all three in the international system. Migration and EU migration policies have been key issues in the UK public debate and have distinguished between “Eurosceptic” – wishing to leave, or stay and reduce the EU's powers – and “Europhiles” – wishing to remain or increase the EU's power. (Kroll and Leuffen, 2016; Tarran, 2016).

To explore the relationship between Brexit and migration, as they have been discussed in the public debate, this article compares articles published in a quality newspaper and in a tabloid. Specifically, it draws on a corpus of articles gathered from www.times.co.uk and www.thesun.co.uk in the period 1st April 2016-30th September 2016 (roughly three months before and three months after the referendum day) coping with Brexit. In adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, the article looks at how discourse on/about “brexit” are linked to those of the EU politics (and fears) of/about migration.

Introduzione

A Maggio 2015, il partito conservatore britannico inglese ha vinto le elezioni politiche in Gran Bretagna e l'allora Primo ministro inglese David Cameron, si è impegnato a chiedere una rinegoziazione dei rapporti tra Regno

* Università degli Studi di Messina

Unito e Unione Europea sia su temi strettamente economici (Boulanger e Philippidis, 2015) che sociali. Nel rendere pubblico il suo rapporto con l'UE, Cameron sottolineava di non avere un «*romantic attachment to the European Union and its institutions*» (Cameron, 2015). Fino alla richiesta ufficiale di un referendum, i dibattiti che si erano svolti in Gran Bretagna sull'UE non erano sicuramente passati inosservati ma vi erano livelli diversi di comprensione e condivisione del problema con sentimenti contrastanti su quello che avrebbe potuto comportare un'eventuale Brexit, l'uscita cioè della Gran Bretagna dall'UE. Si possono trovare infatti numerosi dibattiti sulla Brexit prima del voto in svariati stati membri ma, fino a quando non è stata accettata la negoziazione, essi venivano considerati circoscritti alle comunità politiche e diplomatiche e quindi considerate di stampo prevalentemente elitario (Barrett, Bergin, FitzGerald, Lambert, McCoy, Morgenroth, Siedschlag e Studnicka, 2015; EUROPP, 2015), tranne ovviamente in quegli stati vicini al Regno Unito, come ad esempio l'Irlanda. Tra gli argomenti degli euroscettici vi era anche quello di un ritorno ad una "Anglosphere" come rimedio ad una stagnazione economica dell'UE, secondo Kenny e Pearce (2016: 306):

Economic stagnation in the eurozone has given a superficial gloss to claims that the UK would do better expanding its trade with the Commonwealth than remaining inside the EU. For the free-market right, adding former British colonies and city states to the Anglosphere has a further appeal: the fast-growing Asian economies have the appearance of mirror images of neoliberal Anglo-Saxon ones, unencumbered by large welfare states, strong trade unions or high taxes. Reunited with the Anglosphere and trading with Asia, Britannia would be simultaneously unchained from Europe and social democracy.

Chiaramente la retorica di un ritorno ad una anglosfera gioca su corde ideologiche e non geopolitiche; il referendum ha sicuramente rappresentato una sfida al tabù di un'eventuale 'withdrawal' di uno stato dall'Unione, questione che è alla base degli statuti internazionali degli stati membri (Oliver, 2013, 2015). Secondo Wendt (1992: 396) interessi e questioni politiche sono prodotti e riprodotti attraverso le pratiche discorsive degli attori che ne prendono parte, popoli e stati «*act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them*». Per questo motivo, il risultato del voto ha agito come una sorta di boomerang non solo per la Gran Bretagna ma per tutta l'Unione aprendo un ventaglio di possibilità fino ad allora rimaste inesplorate.

Il voto del referendum che si è svolto il 23 Giugno 2016 e che ha portato alla Brexit, si colloca infatti all'interno di un movimento tellurico enorme e di grande impatto politico e sociale all'interno dell'Unione. La 'strana' alleanza di socialisti e conservatori può essere vista come una reazione a quell'apparato burocratico che sembrava promuovere migrazione di massa e multiculturalismo sfavorendo forme di autogoverno e protezione di taluni modelli di vita. Un atteggiamento simile si sta facendo strada anche in altri paesi, generato da paure derivanti da quella che viene definita la 'crisi' dei migranti.¹ I partiti social-democratici stanno perdendo il consenso tradizionale della classe operaia che si avvicina sempre di più alle alternative dei cosiddetti "euroscettici" (Tarran, 2016), come ad esempio quelli britannici che ritenevano che «*EU needs Britain more than Britain needs the EU*» (Zielonka, 2014). Il voto pro-Brexit ha fatto emergere la desolata e desolante sensazione che xenofobia, intolleranza, razzismo, nazionalismo estremo ed anche violenza comincino ad emergere come nuovi valori nazionali. Sebbene gli esponenti del "Remain" rimangano associati prevalentemente ad un elettorato colto e residente in città, mentre quelli del "Leave" si concentrano in un elettorato medio basso, secondo Pabst (2016: 192), la Brexit va ben oltre le categorie binarie metropoli vs province, urbano vs rurale, ricco vs povero, giovani vs anziani, uomini di affari vs lavoratori, nord vs sud facendo piuttosto emergere:

a new divide between libertarians and post-liberals that cuts across the opposition of Remainers and Leavers. This new divide reflects the culture wars that have been raging below the political radar for some time. While this tends to be couched in terms of the conflict of "cosmopolitan" versus "provincial," it is far more accurate to say that these culture wars are about a clash between an aggressively amoral libertarian liberalism and the more small "c" conservative disposition [...]. Since libertarians oscillate between abstract cosmopolitanism, economic globalism, and ethnic nativism all at once while post-liberals seek to combine patriotism with an internationalist outlook, post-liberalism can be the new center ground of Western politics.

Sicuramente il voto inglese ha a che vedere con un declino significativo della classe media e di quello che si è cristallizzato come "American Dream", quella promessa che la generazione successiva avrebbe avuto una qualità

¹ Il movimento migratorio degli ultimi mesi dettato da guerre civili, carestie e stermini di massa nei luoghi dai quali i migranti scappano è spesso rappresentato sui media come "crisi" con un ventaglio retorico che rimanda ad esodo e similari, su questo si veda tra gli altri Meo (2016).

della vita migliore rispetto alla precedente grazie a maggiori opportunità e mobilità nella scala sociale. La Brexit è il segnale più drammatico che la promessa di pace e prosperità che ha caratterizzato il progetto dell'Europa del dopo-guerra sembra essere arrivato al capolinea. Molta gente sta sperimentando insicurezza economica e culturale e la risposta di una parte della politica si può riassumere nel motto Brexit *"take back control"* a cui fa eco, nell'attuale campagna politica americana, lo slogan di Trump *"Make America Great Again"*. Ed è proprio in questi meandri che si trova quella che sempre Pabst (2016) definisce l'ironia tragica della Brexit, cioè che i vincitori del referendum sono in effetti coloro che hanno perso nel gioco della politica economica del ventunesimo secolo, definito come un *"libertarianism"* che attraverso l'uso demagogico di alcune paure popolari, soprattutto per quanto riguarda l'impatto dell'immigrazione, ha portato in avanti un *«advance an ultra-liberal economic project and a socially reactionary agenda»* (Pabst, 2016: 195). Paradossalmente la Brexit si profila come risposta alla crisi economica che proviene proprio dal fallimento di quel sistema economico che ha generato la crisi.

Se ci spostiamo dal livello socio-politico a quello linguistico, la Brexit ha già fatto emergere i suoi risvolti negativi. Tra gli altri, lo intuisce subito il blog satirico www.spinoza.it che nel post *Leave and let it die* scrive ironicamente «Quindi ora la lingua ufficiale dell'Unione è quella di un isolotto di extracomunitari?» Di fatto quando la Gran Bretagna uscirà dall'Unione Europea, l'inglese potrebbe scomparire come lingua della UE in quanto esiste una norma in base alla quale ogni paese membro ha diritto di scegliere una lingua ufficiale e di fatto gli irlandesi hanno scelto il gaelico mentre a Malta il maltese lasciando la Gran Bretagna come unico paese ad avere come lingua ufficiale l'inglese. Le lingue ufficiali della UE sono 24, un numero inferiore rispetto agli stati membri perché alcune lingue, come ad esempio tedesco e francese, sono parlate in più di uno stato. L'inglese rimarrà la lingua franca nei corridoi dell'Unione, si continuerà a comunicare nel *broken English* dei parlanti come seconda lingua, lingua franca o lingua straniera, tipico di alcuni scambi comunicativi (Jenkins, 2015). Danuta Hubner, presidente della commissione Affari costituzionali del Parlamento europeo (di cui è deputata in rappresentanza della Polonia), nell'asserire che con l'uscita della Gran Bretagna dall'unione si potrebbe non parlare più inglese nella UE, perlomeno a livello ufficiale riconosce che l'inglese è la lingua dominante fra i funzionari dell'Unione, aggiungendo che per cambiare la regola di una lingua a paese serve un voto unanime di tutti i Paesi membri (Franceschini, 2016).

Tra gli elementi che sono stati determinanti per il voto Brexit, vi è sicu-

ramente il rapporto tra Gran Bretagna e immigrazione. I report svolti da Economist/Ipsos MORI su "Issues Facing Britain" hanno rilevato che negli ultimi anni coloro che i partecipanti menzionavano l'immigrazione tra i problemi primari della Gran Bretagna. Tale problema è sentito come strettamente connesso all'appartenenza all'Unione in quanto la libertà di movimento rientra tra le quattro libertà di cui godono i cittadini europei e le limitazioni imposte su questo argomento dall'Unione sono tra i motivi che hanno favorito la Brexit. Tale percezione di disagio è stata sicuramente acuita dall'ondata migratoria degli ultimi due anni e da quella che è stata più volte definita come the "Migrant crisis".

Lungi dal volersi addentrare nelle sfere tentacolari della politica della Brexit, il presente contributo si prefigge lo scopo di analizzare il rapporto tra migrazione e Brexit attraverso l'uso di alcune collocazioni linguistiche nella stampa britannica popolare e di qualità. Attraverso l'analisi di un piccolo corpus di articoli di quotidiani, il presente contributo si propone di fornire un case study su come Brexit collochi nella stampa di qualità e popolare inglese. Nello specifico, si guarderà a due corpora di articoli raccolti nel periodo Aprile-Settembre 2016, ossia i tre mesi precedenti e successivi al giorno del voto, il 23 Giugno 2016.

1. Corpus e metodologia

Il corpus di articoli sulla Brexit è stato raccolto attraverso la banca dati full-text Lexis Nexis (lexisnexis.com) che consente di fare una ricerca per key words scegliendo fonti, arco temporale ed anche la posizione nella stringa linguistica nella quale si intende ricercare il termine.

Nel caso della nostra ricerca, si è scelto di selezionare gli articoli in base alla loro presenza all'interno del titolo degli articoli. Lexis Nexis infatti consente una selezione in base ai seguenti parametri: "in the headline", "at the start", "company", "in the indexing", "major mention", "3 or more mentions", "byline". La figura 1 mostra la schermata di Lexis Nexis utilizzata per la ricerca.

Figura 1

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'LexisNexis Services', 'What's New', 'English (UK)', 'My Documents (0)', and 'Contact'. Below this is the 'Nexis' logo and a 'Helpdesk: + 44 (0)8' link. The main navigation bar includes 'Search' and 'Sources'. Under 'Search', there are links for 'Home', 'Power Search', 'News', 'Companies', 'Market Insight', 'Biographies', 'US Public Records', and 'Legal'. The 'News' section is active, showing a search box with the text 'Brexit and migration'. A dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Anywhere in the text', '✓ In the Headline' (selected), 'At the Start', 'Company', 'In the Indexing', 'Major Mentions', '3 or More Mentions', and 'Byline'. Below the search box, there is a 'Custom date' section with 'From' and 'To' date pickers set to '01/04/2016' and '30/09/2016' respectively. There is also a 'UK National Newspapers' dropdown menu. At the bottom, there is a 'More sources' section with a list of sources including 'The Guardian, The Sun' and a link for 'Advanced source search'.

Nello specifico, il caso di studio mira a valutare la presenza di una determinata collocazione linguistica o cooccorrenza, un tipo particolare di combinazione lessicale (Partington, 1998; Sinclair, 1991). Le collocazioni svolgono «un importante ruolo comunicativo, favorendo il passaggio di informazioni nella comunicazione linguistica, soprattutto quella quotidiana, prestandosi al ruolo di mattoncini lessicali prefabbricati con cui comporre il testo» (Rossi e Ruggiano, 2013: 295). Tra le caratteristiche delle collocazioni vi è il legame immotivato o imprevedibile tra i due costituenti, sostanzialmente consolidato dall'uso e non dettato da regole. Il caso di studio mira ad analizzare in che modo *Brexit* collochi nei titoli dei due quotidiani. Si è scelto di effettuare una ricerca per il *quality paper* *The Guardian* ed una per il *tabloid* *The Sun*. Lo scopo della ricerca era investigare in che termini la *Brexit* fosse collegata al fenomeno della migrazione sulla stampa inglese. La ricerca è stata condotta associando *Brexit* a *migration*, *immigration*, *migrants*, *UE* e *European* nei due quotidiani. Si è optato per controllare la cooccorrenza sia con *migration* e derivati che con *immigration* e derivati perché, sebbene i due termini abbiano connotazioni diverse sono usati in modo interscambiabile nella stampa e nel linguaggio odierno vengono spesso utilizzati come sinonimi.

I due corpora, denominati "BrexitGuardian" e "BrexitSun" contengono rispettivamente 166 articoli il primo per un totale di 123.042 parole (con una media di 740 parole ad articolo per gli articoli del Guardian) e 31 articoli il secondo per un totale di 14.050 parole (con una media 453 parole ad articolo). Le tabelle 1 e 2 mostrano i risultati in termini di quantità di

articoli che hanno prodotto le ricerche prima e dopo il referendum del 23 Giugno mentre i grafici 1 e 2 mostrano i risultati della presenza di Brexit e migration e derivati nei due corpora.

Tabella 1 – Risultati ricerca su Lexis Nexis per il *The Guardian*

The Guardian			
Termine ricercato	01 Aprile-23 Giugno 2016	24 Giugno-30 Settembre 2016	Totale
Brexit	1482	1272	2754
Brexit and immigration	59	33	92
Brexit and immigration and EU	31	11	42
Brexit and immigration and European	6	2	8
Brexit and migration*	11	9	20
Brexit and migration and EU*	11	9	20
Brexit and migrants	10	14	24

Tabella 2 – Risultati ricerca su Lexis Nexis per il *The Sun*

The Sun			
Termine ricercato	01 Aprile-23 Giugno 2016	24 Giugno-30 Settembre 2016	Totale
Brexit	565	217	782
Brexit and immigration	2	4	6
Brexit and immigration and EU	1	1	2
Brexit and immigration and European	0	0	0
Brexit and migration	8	2	10
Brexit and migration and EU	0	2	2
Brexit and migrants	9	2	11

Grafico 1 – Risultati nel corpus BrexitGuardian

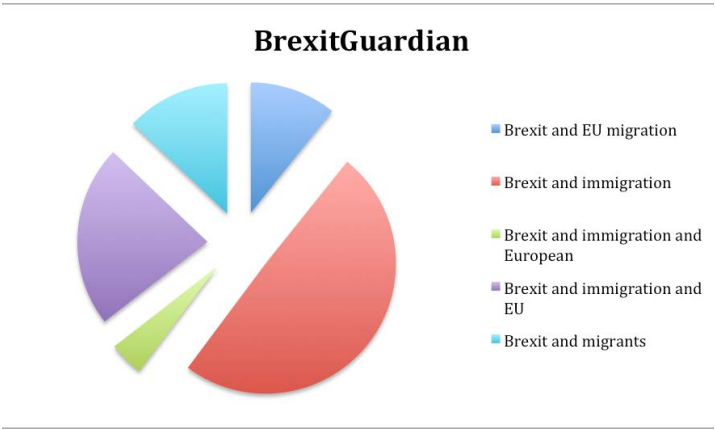
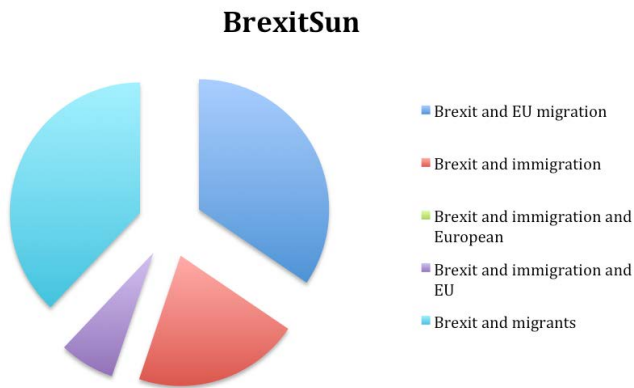


Grafico 2 – Risultati nel corpus BrexitSun



2. Discussione dei risultati e conclusioni

I due corpora sono profondamente diversi sia per quantità e lunghezza degli articoli sia per la ricorrenza di *Brexit* negli stessi. Il primo dato in comune nei due corpora è che, sebbene la *Brexit* continui ad essere presente nei titoli anche dopo il 23 Giugno, diminuisce in proporzione la collocazione con *migration* e derivati confermando come questa tematica fosse probabilmente ritenuta dirimente nella campagna elettorale e sia lentamente sparita dai media nel post referendum. Per quanto riguarda la collocazione di *Brexit* nei titoli, nel *BrexitGuardian migration* colloca con EU nel 100% dei casi, in tutti i 20 articoli infatti *migration* è preceduto da EU generando un collegamento netto tra migrazione ed Unione Europea. Diverso è il comportamento di *immigration* che si trova associato in 92 articoli con *Brexit* ma in 42 con EU e in 8 con *European*.

Una ricerca tra la cooccorrenza di *Brexit* con l'ambito semantico della migrazione nel corpo dell'articolo dimostra di avere in entrambi i quotidiani una percentuale molto più alta, pari a circa l'80% degli articoli contenenti *Brexit* nel titolo. Tale risultato è desunto sempre grazie a LexisNexis che contiene alla fine di ogni articolo le aree semantiche contenute negli stessi articoli e che rivela un'altissima presenza di tali argomenti negli articoli. In un secondo momento, i due corpora sono stati interrogati tramite antconc3.2.1 che ha permesso di creare delle wordlist con i termini più ricorrenti, passando quindi all'analisi di contesti per creare una mappa che facesse emergere i campi semantici prevalenti negli articoli per controlla-

re se fossero o meno in linea con quanto espresso nel titolo. I dati raccolti fanno emergere una differenza tra i due corpora. *BrexitGuardian* rivela che *migration* colloca nel testo soprattutto con EU, *system*, *policy*, *rules*, *numbers* e *target* un linguaggio piuttosto tecnico e che rimanda all'area della burocrazia. Per quanto riguarda il *BrexitSun* invece, *migration* colloca prevalentemente con *freedom*, *work* e *employment*. Un dato significativo emerge quando si controlla il contesto linguistico situazionale nel quale vengono collocati gli articoli. L'impatto di *Brexit* collegato a *migration* può infatti aumentare e/o diminuire se collegato ad immagini di maggiore o minore impatto. L'analisi dell'impatto di notizie sui quotidiani online è di fondamentale importanza è l'interazione tra testo e contesto. La rappresentazione di una notizia è strettamente collegata al processo di creazione dello stesso e al contesto comunicativo nel quale avviene. Nella galassia testuale dei quotidiani online è importantissimo collegare la componente strettamente linguistica con quella visuale (Baldry e Thibault, 2006; Cambria, Arizzi e Coccetta, 2012). I testi si configurano come l'esemplificazione di quello che Halliday definisce il potenziale di significato complessivo del sistema in un particolare contesto (2004 [1985]) e, in quanto tali, rivestono una valenza sia per coloro che li adoperano sull'asse dei contesti nei quali sono usati, creati e interpretati ma, in quanto forme e come emblematici di funzioni testuali, contengono una storia e sono i prodotti di processi materiali e semiotici complessi e stratificati. Tali processi possono essere amplificati anche dal semplice accostamento con un'immagine di grande impatto. I testi inoltre costituiscono anche delle risorse che usiamo per creare significati in contesti diversi tra di loro, per creare dei legami con altri, storie con testi precedenti che parlano tra di loro.

Se teniamo in considerazione il contesto nel quale appare la figura 2 in un articolo pubblicato il 7 Settembre 2016, ad esempio, ci accorgiamo come, sebbene nel titolo non sia presente alcun riferimento a Brexit o alla migrazione, il contesto visivo è un continuo rimando ai due argomenti. La relazione immagine parola amplifica e rende evidente il messaggio.

Figura 2



Il caso di studio conferma che nell'analizzare testi dinamici quali i quotidiani online, è necessario tenere in considerazione anche il contesto visivo nel quale essi si realizzano. La cooccorrenza di *Brexit* e *migration*, sebbene

maggiore quantitativamente in *BrexitGuardian*, si può rivelare di maggiore impatto visivo in *BrexitSun* soprattutto quando vengono associate a delle foto di particolare impatto visivo.

L'utilizzo di *migration* e *immigration* nella titolazione si dimostra particolarmente rilevante nel periodo pre-referendum quando *migration* è soprattutto associato ad EU *migration*, dimostrando quanto il dibattito per la Brexit sia stato intimamente connesso con lo spinoso problema della migrazione.

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L'EUROmosaico linguistico: scenario e politiche di tutela

Flavia Cavaliere*

Abstract

Promoting and Safeguarding the linguistic Euromosaic

Linguistic diversity has been an issue tackled since the EU began its life as an economic community; in 1958 the 4 languages (Dutch, French, German and Italian) in which the Treaty was drafted were recognised as official languages in the Members States and therefore became the working and official languages of the Institutions. However, progressive enlargements have brought in additional states and the current UE official languages are 24 and, consequently, all legislation is promulgated in parallel in all official languages, while interpretation/translation is provided in all languages. Additionally, apart from official state languages, in the linguistic Euromosaic some other 60 languages, i.e. regional minority languages, are currently in use by almost 46 million EU citizens, together with a large number of immigrant minority languages spoken by the large migrant/refugees communities. All these languages represent an essential component of EU fabric and identity. Not surprisingly, in an age of intensive political and socio-cultural changes, language policy has been acquiring increasing importance while diversity, in particular, has become an issue of growing social importance, recognized also as an all-encompassing dimension of the socio-economic pillars of any truly sustainable development. Nonetheless, a majority of living languages, for different reasons, are threatened in their existence. Given the interdependence among languages, cultures, and ecosystems, the loss of cultural and linguistic diversity represents an undeniable loss of our collective human heritage, resulting in social and cultural disruptions. Additionally, as highlighted by many eminent linguists, similarly to bio-diversity, promoting and supporting language diversity requires constant nurturing. This

* Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

is the reason why, nowadays, minority languages have been increasingly gaining support both at global level and at European one, and many initiatives/projects have been promoted in order to support minority and/or endangered languages. Among the main educational language policy issues enacted in contemporary Europe is NPLD 2020 Project, whose aim is both the safeguard and promotion of minority and endangered languages such as Irish, Welsh and Estonian language.

1. Il variegato Euromosaico linguistico

La pluralità delle lingue parlate all'interno dell'Unione Europea (UE) genera diverse tipologie di problemi, legati ai rapporti tra diritti dell'uomo, diritto comunitario, politica linguistica e diritto degli Stati membri, cui si aggiungono le prevedibili questioni di ordine pratico e organizzativo che il pluralismo linguistico provoca in ambito comunitario, nonché, come vedremo, la necessità di promuovere politiche di tutela e salvaguardia verso le lingue cosiddette minoritarie.¹

Agli albori della UE la questione linguistica non rappresentava problematiche particolarmente complesse, essendo allora le lingue ufficiali solo quattro – tedesco, francese, italiano e olandese – ossia le lingue corrispondenti alle lingue ufficiali dei sei paesi fondatori.² Gli articoli 1-6 del regolamento

¹ La nostra analisi del plurilinguismo europeo sarà condotta su una base politica, considerando solo criteri di appartenenza (o meno) all'UE; saranno quindi esaminate solo le realtà linguistiche degli Stati membri del Consiglio d'Europa. Le lingue parlate all'interno di tali Stati membri divengono pertanto 'le lingue dell'Europa', ma ciò da un punto di vista strettamente linguistico non implica, necessariamente, che esse siano tutte lingue europee. Nella maggioranza dei casi si tratta di lingue cosiddette indo-europee, mentre altri gruppi linguistici – come ad esempio il sami o le lingue ugro-finniche – provengono, come vedremo, da famiglie linguistiche del tutto diverse. Cfr. Skutnabb-Kangas Tove, *Why should linguistic diversity be maintained and supported in Europe? Some arguments. Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe from Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2002.

<https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Skutnabb-KangasEN.pdf>.

² Il testo ufficiale del primo atto di integrazione europea, il Trattato della Comunità Europea del Carbone e dell'Acciaio (CECA), firmato a Parigi il 18 aprile 1951, fu redatto esclusivamente in francese e non prevedeva alcuna disposizione relativa alle politiche di regime linguistico da adottare in ambito comunitario. Successivamente, il tedesco, il francese, l'italiano ed il neerlandese furono tuttavia riconosciute come lingue ufficiali e di lavoro della CECA dai Ministri degli Esteri degli Stati membri, come prefigurava il regime linguistico delle due Comunità che sarebbero nate pochi anni dopo. Il Trattato che istituiva la Comunità Economica Europea (CEE) ed il Trattato che istituiva la Co-

CEE n° 1 del Consiglio del 15 aprile 1958 che legiferavano specificamente sul regime linguistico della Comunità Economica Europea, sancivano il principio secondo cui tutte le lingue ufficiali potevano essere utilizzate a pieno diritto e al medesimo titolo nelle istituzioni.³ Progressivamente, con le successive adesioni di nuovi Stati membri, le lingue ufficiali sono diventate 24,⁴ mentre le diverse comunità linguistiche presenti nei 28 paesi che

munità Europea dell'Energia Atomica (EURATOM), furono infatti firmati a Roma il 25 marzo 1957 in quattro versioni, corrispondenti alle lingue ufficiali dei sei Paesi fondatori (Belgio, Francia, Germania, Italia, Lussemburgo e Paesi Bassi). Questa adesione ad un regime comunque multilingue già differenziava la nascente Unione dalle altre organizzazioni internazionali, tutte basate su un bilinguismo funzionale, ovvero sulla conoscenza attiva di due lingue, normalmente l'inglese e il francese. La Storia dell'Unione Europea: 1945-1959. http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1945-1959/index_it.htm.

³ All'interno dell'UE la questione linguistica è stata quindi affrontata fin dalla prima negoziazione dei Trattati. In particolare, gli articoli 2-5 del regolamento (CEE) n° 1 del Consiglio, del 15 aprile 1958, che stabilisce il regime linguistico della Comunità economica europea (GU 1958, 17, pag. 385) dispongono quanto segue: Art. 2 «I testi, diretti alle istituzioni da uno Stato membro o da una persona appartenente alla giurisdizione di uno Stato membro, sono redatti, a scelta del mittente, in una delle lingue ufficiali. La risposta è redatta nella medesima lingua»; Art. 3 «I testi, diretti dalle istituzioni a uno Stato membro o ad una persona appartenente alla giurisdizione di uno Stato membro, sono redatti nella lingua di tale Stato»; Art. 4 «I regolamenti e gli altri testi di portata generale sono redatti nelle lingue ufficiali». Art. 5 «La Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea è pubblicata nelle lingue ufficiali»; EUR-Lex. Access to European Union Law. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/ALL/?uri=CELEX:31958R0001>.

⁴ Si tratta – nello specifico delle seguenti lingue: bulgaro, ceco, croato, danese, estone, finlandese, francese, greco, inglese, gaelico, italiano, lettone, lituano, maltese, olandese, polacco, portoghese, rumeno, slovacco, sloveno, spagnolo, svedese, tedesco e ungherese. Official EU languages. http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-of-europe/eu-languages_en.htm. Tuttavia, come ben noto, a seguito del referendum consultivo sulla permanenza o meno del Regno Unito nell'UE indetto il 23 giugno 2016, il 51,9% dei cittadini del Regno Unito ha espresso voto contrario – *leave* – a tale permanenza (a fronte di 48,1% *remain*, ossia favorevoli), decretando quindi l'ormai arcinota BREXIT, neologismo sincretico formato dalla fusione dei termini *British* ed *Exit*. Non è questa la sede per commentare/valutare le immediate ripercussioni di questa scelta all'interno sia del Regno Unito sia dell'UE, ma è necessario ricordare che il processo formale per uscire è tuttora in corso e nello stesso Regno Unito sono state sollevate a riguardo, addirittura controversie legali circa la validità stessa del voto referendario. I numerosi sostenitori del *remain*, invocando principi costituzionali, hanno inteso appellarsi all'Alta Corte sostenendo che «*The relevant legislation did not provide for the referendum result to have any formal trigger effect. The referendum is advisory rather than mandatory [...] invoking Article 50 is a legally distinct step from the referendum result – it is not an obligation*». Green David Allen, *Can the United Kingdom government legally disregard a vote for Brexit?*, in “The Financial Times”, 14 giugno 2016. <http://blogs.ft.com/david-allen-green/2016/06/14/>. Al momento il Regno Unito è quindi ancora da considerarsi uno Stato membro dell'Unione. È da segnalare, tuttavia, che tra le tante,

attualmente rientrano nell'UE (UE-28), includono «*approximately 500 million EU citizens, and of those some 10% speak a regional or minority language*».⁵ All'interno del variegato mosaico linguistico europeo è necessario infatti distinguere tra:⁶

1) 'lingua autoctona', ossia una lingua parlata da una popolazione che si è stanziata in una specifica regione da generazioni ed è quindi strettamente associata con l'area geografica dove la lingua in questione è parlata, come

possibili, conseguenze della Brexit si paventa anche la sostituzione della lingua inglese come lingua franca ufficiale delle istituzioni europee. Danuta Hübner, europarlamentare polacca, capo del Comitato per gli affari costituzionali del Parlamento europeo, il 27 giugno 2016 ha ricordato che «*We have a regulation [...] where every EU country has the right to notify one official language [...]. The Irish have notified Gaelic, and the Maltese have notified Maltese, so you have only the U.K. notifying English*». Pertanto, una volta formalizzata definitivamente l'uscita del Regno Unito dall'UE, l'inglese potrebbe quindi non avere più titolo ad essere considerata lingua ufficiale. Una controversa interpretazione/traduzione delle versioni del Trattato del 1958 non chiarisce, infatti, attualmente se uno Stato membro può riconoscere contemporaneamente come ufficiali due lingue diverse (nella fattispecie si tratterebbe di due Stati membri – Irlanda e Malta – i quali, pur essendo anglofoni, come visto, hanno tuttavia già scelto rispettivamente il gaelico e il maltese come proprie lingue ufficiali). In caso contrario, all'indomani della Brexit, per poter continuare ad utilizzare l'inglese come lingua ufficiale, sostiene l'euro-parlamentare Hübner, si renderebbe necessaria una modifica, da approvare all'unanimità, dell'attuale regolamento che elenca le lingue dell'UE. Goulard Hortense, *English will not be an official EU language after Brexit, says senior MEP*, in "Politico", 27 June 2016. <http://www.politico.eu/article/english-will-not-be-an-official-eu-language-after-brexit-senior-mep/>. Intanto, indicativa delle nuove 'tendenze' linguistiche all'interno dell'UE dopo il voto referendario del Regno Unito appare la scelta del Presidente della Commissione europea, Jean-Claude Juncker, di rilasciare dichiarazioni e interviste esclusivamente in tedesco, una scelta interpretata come intenzionale e provocatoria. Steinhauser Gabriele, *English Loses Currency as Europe's Lingua Franca After Brexit Vote*, in "The Wall Street Journal", 6 June 2016.

⁵ Languages in Europe: <http://languageknowledge.eu/>.

⁶ L'Europa, tuttavia, nonostante l'elevato numero di varietà linguistiche, è nello scenario mondiale il continente con il minor numero di lingue autoctone parlate. In Asia, ad esempio, delle circa 6.909 lingue attualmente censite nel mondo si parlano circa 2'197 lingue, mentre, le lingue parlate in Europa sono solo 230. Nonostante infatti gli europei continuino ad avere la percezione di avere un numero vastissimo di diverse lingue all'interno del proprio continente, vi sono molti paesi nel mondo dove si parla un numero di lingue diverse tra loro di gran lunga maggiore a quelle parlate in Europa. In Papua Nuova Guinea, ad esempio, si parlano ben 832 lingue diverse, in Indonesia 701, in Nigeria 427, in India 418, in Cameroon 270, in Australia 250, in Mexico 240, in Brasile 236, negli Stati Uniti 224, nello Zaire 210, in Cina 206, etc. Tuttavia, queste cifre potrebbero variare in un prossimo futuro, dovendo molte lingue sono in via di estinzione in parti del mondo che non includono regioni europee. Anderson Stephen R., *Languages: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.

nel caso, ad esempio, dell'ungherese, del tedesco o dell'italiano. La madrelingua più diffusa è il tedesco, parlata dal 23% dei cittadini europei; francese e italiano sono in seconda posizione, con il 16% circa, mentre la lingua inglese è parlata dal 15,9% dei cittadini europei;⁷

2) 'lingua regionale o minoritaria', ossia una lingua usata tradizionalmente sul territorio di uno Stato dai cittadini di tale Stato i quali formano un gruppo numericamente inferiore al resto della popolazione di quello Stato. La denominazione 'lingua regionale o minoritaria' è, naturalmente, non solo diversa dalla(e) lingua(e) ufficiale(i) detta anche 'di Stato', ma non include né i dialetti della(e) lingua(e) ufficiale(i) dello Stato né le lingue dei migranti;

3) 'lingue non territoriali', ossia le lingue usate da alcuni cittadini dello Stato che differiscono tuttavia dalla(e) lingua(e) usata(e) dal resto della popolazione di detto Stato ma che, pur essendo usate tradizionalmente sul territorio dello Stato, non possono essere ricollegate ad un'area geografica particolare di quest'ultimo. È questo, ad esempio, il caso del ladino (sefardita) o dell'yiddish (lingue che documentano l'influenza del castigliano e del tedesco sull'ebraico durante la diaspora del popolo semita). In questa definizione rientrano anche le lingue dei Rom e dei Sinti, dal momento che si tratta di lingue tradizionalmente usate, ma non riconducibili ad uno specifico territorio;⁸

4) lingue parlate dai migranti, tra cui, ad esempio, curdo, tagalog, cinese, hindi, punjabi o il cingalese. Come conseguenza degli incessanti flussi migratori di cui l'UE continua ad essere teatro, al già particolarmente composito panorama linguistico autoctono dell'UE, si aggiungono le oltre 250 lingue parlate dai cosiddetti 'nuovi europei', una cifra di gran lunga superiore a quella delle lingue locali. Soprattutto nella popolazione scolastica delle grandi metropoli, particolarmente nell'Europa Occidentale, si registrano mediamente oltre 150 lingue diverse, una percentuale che sale fino a 300 nella capitale britannica.⁹ In tali scenari, prevedibilmente, si verificano anche continui fenomeni di mescolanza socio-linguistica. In Europa si sta infatti assistendo alla nascita di nuovi *pidgin*, risultato appunto della interazione linguistica tra i 'nuovi europei' ed i nativi europei. I flussi migratori da

⁷ Il termine autoctono, come l'etimo greco suggerisce - αὐτός (autós, ossia 'stesso') e χθών (chthōn, ossia 'terra'), indica ciò che in senso figurato è 'nativo', 'aborigeno'.

⁸ Lariccia Sergio, *I problemi della tutela delle minoranze nell'Unione Europea*, in Sergio Panunzio, a cura di, *I costituzionalisti e l'Europa*, Milano, Luiss Edizioni, 2002.

⁹ «London is now widely regarded as the most multilingual city in the world [as] children in London schools spoke over 300 languages». Graddol David, *English Next*, London, The British Council, 2006, p. 28.

paesi extracomunitari (in particolar modo dall'Africa) verso paesi dell'Europa occidentale e dall'Asia verso l'Europa orientale hanno indotto/stanno inducendo delle interferenze linguistiche che progressivamente creano nuovi pidgin, a base francese (nelle conurbazioni di Parigi e di Bruxelles), inglese (nelle città industriali del Regno Unito) e tedesca (negli agglomerati urbani delle grandi metropoli).

La distribuzione e le percentuali di rappresentanza di tali lingue all'interno dei vari Stati membri sono molto variabili,¹⁰ e il numero di parlanti per ogni singola lingua differisce notevolmente in relazione alla tipologia della lingua stessa.

2. Lingue minoritarie: le tessere più fragili dell'Euromosaico linguistico

Da un punto di vista giuridico non esiste in ambito europeo una definizione

¹⁰ È possibile tuttavia raggruppare le lingue in base alla principale famiglia di origine, ossia la grande famiglia linguistica Indo-Europea. Le famiglie che in Europa contano più lingue-membro e sono maggiormente parlate sono i. le lingue germaniche (la famiglia linguistica germanica ha, a sua volta, un ramo nordico al quale appartengono il danese, il norvegese, lo svedese, l'islandese e il faroese, e un ramo occidentale al quale appartengono il tedesco, l'olandese, il frisone, l'inglese e lo yiddish); ii. le lingue romanze (cui appartengono l'italiano, il corso, lo spagnolo, il portoghese, il catalano, l'occitano, il francese, il romancio, il ladino, il sardo e il rumeno) ed infine iii. le lingue slave (in cui rientrano il russo, l'ucraino, il bielorusso, il polacco, il sorbian, il ceco, lo slovacco, lo sloveno, il serbo, il croato, il macedone e il bulgaro). Con la sola eccezione della lingua basca, che non appartiene alla famiglia Indo-Europea e le cui origini sono sconosciute, le lingue indo-europee sono parlate nei paesi dell'Europa occidentale. Le lingue germaniche sono parlate in Europa centrale e nel nord (Inghilterra e Scandinavia), mentre le celtiche nei paesi del nord-ovest. Le lingue romanze predominano nelle aree occidentali e meridionali, ma nell'estremo meridione europeo si ritrova il maltese, avamposto di una lingua di origine afro-asiatica. Infine l'ungherese, in Europa centrale, circondato da lingue indo-europee, rappresenta un'enclave ugro-finnica isolata dalle altre lingue limitrofe. Vi sono poi lingue di famiglia celtica, tra cui l'irlandese, il gaelico scozzese, il gallese e il bretone, con il ritorno di movimenti per il cornico, mentre nel sud-est europeo incontriamo rappresentanze delle lingue Altaiche, in particolare il turco e l'azero, mentre alla famiglia Baltica appartengono invece il lettone e il lituano. Famiglie separate con un solo membro sono il greco, l'albanese e l'armeno. A nord si ritrovano il finlandese, l'estone, l'ungherese, alcune lingue Lapponi, e altre lingue della parte settentrionale della Federazione Russa non molto conosciute come Ingriano o Kareliano che rappresentano un'enclave ugro-finnica isolata dalle altre lingue limitrofe. Le lingue della famiglia caucasica, tra cui georgiano e Abkhaza, si parlano in una piccola e compatta zona tra il Mar Nero e il Mar Caspio. La famiglia afro-asiatica include il maltese, l'ebraico e il berbero. Tutte queste lingue usano diversi caratteri alfabetici. La maggior parte delle lingue usa l'alfabeto romano (o latino). Il russo e alcune altre lingue slave usano il cirillico. Il greco, lo yiddish, l'armeno e il georgiano hanno il loro proprio alfabeto.

univocamente adottata per definire il concetto di minoranza e/o lingua minoritaria.¹¹ Nondimeno, con il termine minoranza generalmente si indicano «gruppi che si identificano per peculiari legami etnici, linguistici o religiosi, con ciò differenziandosi dal resto della collettività del Paese preso in considerazione [e che] manifestino – anche in modo implicito – un sentimento di solidarietà, tendente a preservare la propria cultura, le proprie tradizioni, la propria religione o la propria lingua» (Montanari, 2006: 3651).¹² L'aggettivo 'minoritario' non implica naturalmente un giudizio di valore sulla lingua stessa, dal momento che nessuna lingua ha di per sé maggiore o minore dignità rispetto ad altre. Il concetto di lingua minoritaria rispecchia piuttosto il divario (demografico, sociale, politico, etc.) tra la comunità che parla la lingua cosiddetta minoritaria e la comunità limitrofa che parla una lingua cosiddetta maggioritaria e/o ufficiale; più specificamente, le lingue maggioritarie godono di un maggiore grado di istituzionalizzazione e legittimazione.

¹¹ Anche in Italia, la nozione di 'minoranza linguistica' non trova alcuna specifica definizione a livello normativo. Tuttavia, nella nell'art.6 della Costituzione italiana, il termine minoranza/e colloca esclusivamente con l'aggettivo linguistica/he laddove si dichiara che la Repubblica si impegna appunto a tutelare tali minoranze linguistiche attraverso l'adozione di specifiche norme. La tutela delle minoranze si iscrive nel più ampio principio di uguaglianza che vieta ogni discriminazioni in base alla razza alla lingua ed alla religione, come previsto dall'art. 3 Costituzione Italiana. Anche la legge n° 482 del 1999, di attuazione dell'art. 6 Cost., non sancisce alcun criterio utile per l'identificazione delle minoranze linguistiche, ma individua tuttavia le popolazioni destinatarie di tutela stabilmente residenti, ovvero parlanti «minoranze linguistiche storiche» diverse dall'italiano. In tal caso è da sottolineare che l'inserimento dell'aggettivo 'storiche' è stato specificamente «introdotto dalla Commissione referente sulla base del suggerimento del Comitato per la legislazione, volto a precisare ulteriormente l'effettivo contenuto del provvedimento in considerazione del fatto che il fenomeno dell'immigrazione avrebbe potuto favorire l'insediamento in Italia di nuove minoranze linguistiche non contemplate nel provvedimento in esame». Note di Lettura. Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche. Legge 15 dicembre 1999, n° 482 (G.U. n. 297 del 20 dicembre 1999) <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2016/02/10/16G00022/sg>; https://www.senato.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg17/file/lavori_preparat_n_8.pdf. Viene tuttavia tralasciato qualsiasi possibile esplicito riferimento ad eventuale tutela di idiomi localistici, ossia i dialetti, che potrebbero invece ragionevolmente essere altrettanto essere salvaguardati.

¹² Un'ulteriore definizione comunemente adottata recita: «A group which is smaller in number than the rest of the population of a State, whose members have ethnic, religious or linguistic features different from those of the rest of the population, and are guided, if only implicitly, by the will to safeguard their culture, traditions, religion or language. Any group coming within the terms of this definition shall be treated as an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority». Skutnabb-Kangas Tove, *Linguistic genocide in education – or worldwide diversity and human rights?*, Mahwah/New Jersey/London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000, pp. 489-490.

Nell'UE si contano oltre 70 lingue autoctone regionali o minoritarie, parlate da circa 40 milioni di persone, tra cui, ad esempio, il catalano, il basco, il frisone, le lingue sami, il gallese.

Riportiamo qualche dato tra i più significativi.¹³

Le più vaste comunità linguistiche di parlanti una lingua minoritaria si ritrovano in Finlandia, ed includono gli svedesi della Finlandia (297'000 parlanti), i Rom (10-13'000 parlanti) e i Sami (o Lapponi, 6'000-6'900 parlanti).

Il livone, viceversa, una lingua ugro-finnico parlata nelle aree settentrionali della Livonia, ai confini con l'Estonia, era annoverata come lingua minoritaria con minor numero di parlanti, ma dal 2013 risulta ormai del tutto estinta a seguito della scomparsa dell'ultimo parlante nativo.¹⁴

La Spagna è la nazione con la più alta percentuale di multilinguismo, con circa 10,5 milioni di persone – corrispondenti al 26% della popolazione totale – che parlano lingue diverse. Lo scenario è alquanto complesso dal sovrapporsi di lingua nazionale, lingue co-ufficiali e altre lingue minoritarie. L'articolo 3 del Titolo Preliminare della Costituzione spagnola infatti recita:

«1. Il castigliano è la lingua spagnola ufficiale dello Stato. Tutti gli spagnoli hanno il dovere di conoscerla e il diritto di usarla.

2. Le altre lingue spagnole saranno ufficiali nelle rispettive Comunità Autonome in accordo coi loro statuti.

3. La ricchezza delle diverse lingue della Spagna è un patrimonio culturale che sarà oggetto di speciale rispetto e protezione».¹⁵

Se infatti in Spagna unica lingua nazionale, ed anche unica lingua per la quale all'interno dell'UE sia stato richiesto lo status di lingua ufficiale,¹⁶

¹³ Raymond Gordon (ed.), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Dallas, SIL International, 2005.

¹⁴ Nel 2013 infatti, all'età di 103 anni, è deceduta in Canada l'ultima parlante nativa, e con lei si è estinta purtroppo l'intera comunità linguistica della lingua livone. Charter David, *Death of a language: last ever speaker of Livonian passes away aged 103*, in "The Times", June 5 2013. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/europe/article3782596.ece>.

¹⁵ La Costituzione Spagnola: <https://www.boe.es/legislacion/documentos/ConstitucionITALIANO.pdf>.

¹⁶ A tale riguardo nel 1988-89 il Parlamento delle Isole Baleari e quello della Catalogna

è lo spagnolo, o castigliano, tuttavia il governo centrale di Madrid riconosce alcune lingue co-ufficiali parlate all'interno di comunità, come Catalogna, Galizia e Paesi Baschi che, vantando una loro distinta cultura, storia, letteratura, godono di statuti di autonomia. Come sancito infatti dall'articolo 6 dello Statuto di Autonomia di Catalunya, ad esempio,

presentarono congiuntamente un documento al Parlamento Europeo in cui, sulla base di diverse considerazioni, si chiedeva di dichiarare il catalano lingua ufficiale. Non avendo tuttavia il Parlamento europeo il potere per esprimersi in merito, fu tuttavia adottata nel 1990 una Risoluzione per includere il catalano in una serie di iniziative e progetti volti a promuovere e tutelare la vitalità e la diffusione di tale lingua. In particolare, nella risoluzione del Parlamento europeo dell'11 dicembre 1990 sulla situazione delle lingue nella Comunità europea e della lingua catalana (A3-0169/90) si invitava la Commissione ad adottare, relativamente alla lingua catalana, misure finalizzate a favorire i seguenti obiettivi:

1. «pubblicazione in catalano di trattati e testi fondamentali della Comunità;
2. diffusione in catalano dell'informazione pubblica relativa alle istituzioni europee, attraverso tutti i mezzi di comunicazione;
3. inserimento del catalano nei programmi della Commissione per l'apprendimento ed il perfezionamento delle lingue europee;
4. utilizzo del catalano nelle relazioni orali e scritte col pubblico presso l'ufficio o gli uffici della Commissione della Comunità europea nelle regioni autonome interessate».

Risoluzione dell'11 dicembre 1990 del Parlamento europeo relativa alla lingua catalana. GU C 19 del 28.1.1991, pag. 42. Una ulteriore richiesta affinché si riconosca il catalano come lingua ufficiale dell'UE è stata nuovamente avanzata nel 2010 dal governo catalano. Official status for Catalan in the EU is a must, Catalan government says, in "Nationalia", 18 gennaio 2010. <http://www.nationalia.info/new/9107/official-status-for-catalan-in-the-eu-is-a-must-catalan-government-says>. Sono a tutti note le ulteriori, recenti spinte autonomiste che hanno poi portato al controverso referendum d'autodeterminació de Catalunya, ossia una consultazione popolare tenutosi in Catalogna il 1° ottobre 2017 per esprimere (o meno) la propria volontà di ottenere l'indipendenza dalla Spagna e divenire stato autonomo. Come noto, il referendum, fortemente osteggiato dal governo spagnolo poiché ritenuto illegale, si è concluso con una vittoria quasi unanime dei suoi sostenitori. Il 27 ottobre, a seguito della dichiarazione di indipendenza della Catalogna dalla Spagna e l'istituzione della Repubblica di Catalogna come stato sovrano da parte del Parlamento catalano, il Senato spagnolo ha poi approvato l'applicazione dell'art. 155 della Costituzione spagnola al fine di destituire il governo catalano con il conseguente commissariamento della regione, e indire per il 21 dicembre 2017 nuove elezioni nella comunità autonoma. Badcock James, *EU warns 'more cracks' in bloc as Spain dissolves Catalonia's parliament after it declares independence*, 28 October 2017, in "The Telegraph". <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/27/spanish-government-demands-special-powers-could-remove-catalan/>. Tuttavia, non appare questa la sede per approfondire dettagli e motivazioni di questa spinosa situazione che, ad oggi, appare ancora lungi da una conclusione unanimemente condivisa.

«1. La lingua propria della Catalunya è il catalano. Come tale, il catalano è la lingua di uso normale e preferenziale in tutti i corpi dell'amministrazione pubblica catalana e nei mezzi di comunicazione pubblici, ed è anche la lingua veicolare e d'apprendimento nell'insegnamento.

2. Il catalano è la lingua ufficiale di Catalunya. Insieme al Castigliano, che è la lingua ufficiale dello Stato spagnolo. Tutte le persone hanno il diritto di usare le due lingue ufficiali ed i cittadini di Catalunya hanno il diritto e il dovere di conoscerle. Le autorità pubbliche di Catalunya stabiliranno le misure necessarie per permettere l'esercizio di questi diritti e l'adempimento di questo dovere. D'accordo con il disposto dell'articolo 32, non ci sarà discriminazione in base all'uso di una o dell'altra lingua».¹⁷

Il catalano è lingua co-ufficiale anche nelle isole Baleari e nella Comunità valenzana dove più specificamente si parla il valenzano, considerato una sorta di dialetto del catalano.

Altre lingue considerate co-ufficiali sono: il basco, o *euskara*, una lingua pre-indoeuropea di difficile collocazione all'interno dei ceppi linguistici, unica in tutto il territorio non di origine romanza, parlata nei Paesi Baschi e gran parte della Navarra; il galiziano, lingua derivata dal gruppo linguistico *galego-portugués* e che conserva pertanto alcune somiglianze con il portoghese, parlato da circa 4 milioni di persone in Galizia, nell'Asturia occidentale ed in alcuni limitrofi territori come Zamora e León e da circa 1/2 milione di emigranti tra Sud America e nel resto dell'Europa.

Il catalano, il basco ed il galiziano godono di una massiccia presenza nei media audio-visivi e di specifiche politiche e strutture finalizzate alla loro rispettiva promozione/divulgazione. Le tre lingue hanno propri canali digitali satellitari e stazioni radio, diversi quotidiani e molte riviste e la loro produzione letteraria è considerevole (circa 7'300 in catalano, 1'200 in galiziano, e 1'100 in basco) e tutte e tre, particolarmente il catalano, hanno inoltre una apprezzabile presenza in Internet.

Accanto a queste lingue co-ufficiali, coesistono *dialectos* e *hablas*. Con *hablas*, in particolare, si intendono delle varianti dei dialetti, delle parlate dialettali-gergali molto radicate in piccoli spazi geografici, diffuse in ambiti geografici ristretti, prevalentemente in aree campestri. Tra que-

¹⁷ Statuto di Autonomia di Catalunya: <http://www.issirfa.cnr.it/download/File/Catalogna.Nuovo%20statuto-traduzione%20italiana.pdf>.

sti va segnalato l'aranese; si tratta di un dialetto occitano originario della Guascogna, un'antica provincia della Francia, oggi parlato come lingua ufficiale in Val d'Aran, una comarca¹⁸ della Catalogna, rimasta l'unico territorio dove una varietà della lingua occitana conserva ancora uno statuto di ufficialità. Dal 2006 è riconosciuto inoltre, assieme al catalano, lingua ufficiale in Catalogna. Altre lingue parlate da minoranze includono l'aragonese l'asturiano, l'arabo, il berbero (o *tamazight*), il leonese, l'occitano e il portoghese.¹⁹

In Irlanda l'irlandese, o gaelico, non è lingua minoritaria o regionale, ma è prima lingua nazionale, ufficialmente riconosciuta nella Costituzione irlandese all'articolo 8:

«1) La lingua irlandese, in quanto lingua nazionale, è la prima lingua ufficiale.

2) La lingua inglese è riconosciuta come seconda lingua ufficiale».²⁰

Il gaelico è stata l'unica lingua in uso in terra d'Irlanda fino al XVI secolo, ma nel XVIII secolo l'inglese si è pervasivamente diffuso dalle città alle zone rurali, fin quasi a soppiantarla. Tuttavia, dopo il 1921, a seguito della nascita dello Stato Libero d'Irlanda,²¹ si diffuse un movimento di riscossa teso a reintrodurre il gaelico come lingua nazionale, per cui, se nel 1926 si registrava una sola percentuale del 18% di parlanti, nel 1996 tale percentuale era salita al 41% (1'430'205). Secondo recenti sondaggi, il 3-4% della popolazione adulta usa costantemente il gaelico nelle comunicazioni quotidiane, mentre circa il 4-6% degli intervistati ha dichiarato di parlare frequentemente gaelico mentre è al lavoro, e l'8% riferisce di aver sentito/di sentir parlare gaelico

¹⁸ In Spagna la comarca corrisponde ad una suddivisione storica delle province, equivalente al distretto o alla pieve nell'Italia del passato. Attualmente le comarche rappresentano enti locali istituiti per legge la cui attivazione e delimitazione è affidata ad ogni singola comunità autonoma, ossia le regioni del paese iberico.

¹⁹ Palici Di Suni Prat Elisabetta, *Intorno alle minoranze*, Torino, Giappichelli, 2002.

²⁰ Diritto degli Stati membri – Irlanda: https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_member_state_law-6-ie-maximizeMS-it.do?member=1.

²¹ Come noto, nel 1921, con la firma del *Trattato di pace anglo-irlandese* tra Irlanda e Regno Unito, all'Irlanda fu concesso lo status di 'dominion', equivalente ad una larga autonomia nell'autogoverno e alla formazione dello Stato Libero d'Irlanda (costituito da 26 contee a maggioranza cattolica) all'interno del Commonwealth britannico. Tuttavia, fu imposta una divisione del paese, poiché il Regno Unito mantenne l'autorità su sei delle nove contee a maggioranza protestante costituenti la provincia dell'Ulster, o Irlanda del Nord. Cottrell Peter, *The War for Ireland, 1913-1923*, Oxford, Osprey, 2009.

sul proprio posto di lavoro.²² Agli inizi del secolo scorso l'insegnamento del gaelico è stato introdotto come materia obbligatoria della scuola primaria; alle scuole si richiede infatti di preparare nuove generazioni bilingue. In linea con questa politica, oggi, ad esempio, l'università di Galway offre corsi esclusivamente in gaelico. Sebbene inoltre in Irlanda il mondo degli affari parli inglese, nei tribunali è consentita la scelta tra l'inglese ed il gaelico (anche se la scelta del gaelico può provocare comprensibili ritardi nello svolgimento del processo, laddove il giudice o l'imputato non abbiano una conoscenza particolarmente adeguata del gaelico). I segnali e indicazioni stradali sono ovunque redatti sia in inglese che in gaelico.

Nel Regno Unito di Gran Bretagna e Irlanda del Nord la lingua ufficiale è, naturalmente, *de facto* l'inglese, ma ad esso si aggiungono diverse lingue minoritarie – il cornico, il gaelico, lo scozzese, il gaelico scozzese ed il galles –²³ il cui status legale varia notevolmente. Il cornico, una lingua celtica imparentata con il galles ed il bretone e salvata dall'estinzione nel XIX secolo, è parlato nell'Inghilterra sud-occidentale da circa 1'000-2'000 parlanti e non beneficia attualmente di alcun tipo di tutela politico-istituzionale, tranne essere insegnata in una decina di scuole elementari.

Il Galles beneficia della legislazione britannica che protegge i diritti dei circa 536'000 cittadini che parlano galles ed ha istituito un Consiglio di Vigilanza e Pianificazione sulle politiche linguistiche denominato '*Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg*' (*The Welsh Language Board*). La scolarizzazione in lingua galles è molto diffusa e le trasmissioni della *TV channel S4C*, una tv satellitare con sede a Cardiff che trasmette esclusivamente in galles, contribuiscono ad aumentare il prestigio e la diffusione di questa lingua e a creare anche molti posti di lavoro ad essa correlati. Il galles è presente anche in molti siti web e molti settori tecnologici.

L'irlandese, nell'Irlanda del Nord, è parlato soprattutto da irlandesi di regione cattolica (circa 124'000).

Il lussemburghese è una lingua germanica del ramo occidentale, adottata come lingua ufficiale nel 1984 del Granducato del Lussemburgo,²⁴ e parlata da circa 300'000 parlanti autoctoni i quali la riconoscono quale simbolo

²² Unione Europea – Statistiche e Sondaggi: https://europa.eu/european-union/documents-publications/statistics_it.

²³ Le lingue parlate nell'isola di Man e nelle isole del Canale non sono comunque prese in considerazione dal momento che questi territori sono rimasti al di fuori dell'UE.

²⁴ Come noto, tuttavia la lingua amministrativa del paese è il francese.

di identità nazionale e strumento di integrazione e coesione sociale. Alcune stazioni radio e/o programmi televisivi trasmettono esclusivamente in lussemburghese, così come molti siti web. Il lussemburghese predomina anche nel Granducato per tutto ciò che concerne le performance artistiche, sia in forma orale che scritta.

In Francia, nazione che ha coniato la definizione di lingue regionali, si parla, oltre naturalmente al francese, anche tedesco, corso, catalano, olandese, bretone, basco e occitano.²⁵

Last but not least, un accenno all'Italia. Nel *Bel Paese* la lingua ufficiale è naturalmente l'italiano, lingua romanza evolutasi dalla lingua latina. Le sole variazioni linguistiche si riferiscono ai dialetti, ossia parlate regionali o provinciali le quali, pur vantando spesso una vera e propria letteratura, grammatica e cultura, non sono impiegate in ambiti scolastici, burocratici, giuridici, ecc., ma esclusivamente nei rispettivi luoghi d'origine. In tutti i settori istituzionali è utilizzato esclusivamente l'italiano (con le sole eccezioni del tedesco parlato anche nella regione autonoma dell'Alto Adige, o Sud Tirolo; del ladino, parlato intorno alle vallate dolomitiche, e del catalano, parlato nella città sarda di Alghero). Dati statistici diffusi dal Ministero dell'Interno, riportano, tuttavia, che il 5% della popolazione italiana ha come lingua materna una lingua diversa dall'italiano.²⁶ Risale nondimeno al 1999 la prima legge promulgata a specifica tutela delle minoranze linguistiche, mentre precedentemente non esisteva alcuna norma che legiferasse a riguardo. Le uniche minoranze nazionali riconosciute erano quella francofona in Valle d'Aosta, quella germanofona in Trentino-Alto Adige e la slovena in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, cui era attribuito un certo status privilegiato sulla base dei rispettivi statuti regionali, adottati con legge costituzionale, in esecuzione della relativa normativa di attuazione e di alcuni obblighi internazionali. Le altre minoranze linguistiche presenti nei territori sia delle regioni ordinarie che a statuto speciale, non godevano di alcun riconoscimento giuridico e, prive di una legge generale di tutela, erano oggetto di sporadiche disposizioni statali e regionali. Con la legge 482 del 1999, invece, la Repubblica si impegna a valorizzare il patrimonio linguistico e culturale della lingua italiana riconosciuta lingua ufficiale, ma per la prima volta riconosce altresì formalmente l'esistenza di altre mino-

²⁵ Dati riguardanti il creolo non sono considerati dal momento si tratta di lingue parlate in possedimenti francesi oltreoceano e pertanto non rientranti nella giurisdizione dell'UE.

²⁶ Ministero dell'Interno, III Rapporto Nazionale sull'attuazione degli strumenti di protezione delle Minoranze linguistiche 2009.

ranze linguistiche rispetto a quelle già riconosciute e tutelate in sede regionale, e pertanto «tutela la lingua e la cultura delle popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle parlanti il francese, il francoprovenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l'occitano e il sardo».²⁷ Nei suoi vari articoli la legge 482 individua un «catalogo di diritti linguistici», declinati in base al criterio della territorialità, disciplinando determinati usi pubblici degli idiomi minoritari nelle rispettive aree di insediamento. Tali diritti prevedono, ad esempio, il diritto all'uso della lingua minoritaria come materia di insegnamento e/o come materia curricolare nelle scuole materne, elementari e secondarie inferiori, con la possibilità di prevedere anche iniziative per la valorizzazione e la ricerca anche a livello universitario (artt. 4-6), all'impiego della madrelingua nelle adunanze degli organi amministrativi (art. 7), alla pubblicazione nell'idioma minoritario di atti ufficiali dello stato, delle regioni, degli enti locali territoriali e non territoriali, fermo restando l'esclusivo valore legale del testo redatto in lingua italiana (art. 8), all'impiego della lingua minoritaria nei rapporti con l'amministrazione locale e davanti all'autorità giudiziaria (art. 9), nelle indicazioni topografiche (art. 10), nell'ambito della programmazione radiofonica e televisiva (art. 12).

3. Multilinguismo e Traduzione: aspetti giuridico-legali

Parallelamente alle annessioni di nuovi stati all'interno dell'UE, nel corso degli anni, si sono avute anche diverse proposte per (tentare di) destreggiarsi con il progressivo multilinguismo all'interno delle istituzioni europee, ma nessuna ha riscosso particolare successo.²⁸ Attualmente tutti i re-

²⁷ Articolo 2 legge 482. Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche, pubblicata nella Gazzetta Ufficiale n° 297 del 20 dicembre 1999.

²⁸ Ricordiamo, ad esempio, l'interrogazione sottoposta alla Commissione Europea nel 1974 da due europarlamentari olandesi, Patijn and Van der Hek, i quali chiedevano: «Does [the Commission] also agree that Latin should be made the European language if American English is not to become generally accepted, thus increasing Europe's dependence?» (OJ C 61/28, 1974). La Commissione, tuttavia, evitò intenzionalmente di pronunciarsi in merito dichiarandosi incompetente a riguardo. Ancora, nel 1978, Renee van Hoof, a capo della Direzione generale dell'Interpretazione e delle Conferenze del Parlamento europeo (DG INTE), propose l'introduzione della cosiddetta 'traduzione asimmetrica', che prevedeva la possibilità per i membri del Parlamento di tenere i discorsi nella propria madrelingua, ma avrebbe garantito la sola traduzione in inglese e francese. La proposta del 'metodo asimmetrico' fu respinta (Coulmas, 1991: 6-7). Ancora, nel gennaio 2003 si è riunita una commissione di esperti linguisti degli stati membri (all'epoca 15), sul tema «Il multilinguismo nell'Unione Europea e nelle sue istituzioni» per definire principalmente la questione delle 'lingue di lavoro'. Sono state

golamenti e gli tutti atti legislativi dell'UE sono pubblicati in *tutte* le lingue ufficiali, con la sola esclusione dell'irlandese (attualmente sono tradotti in irlandese unicamente i regolamenti adottati congiuntamente dal Consiglio dell'UE e dal Parlamento europeo), in base dell'art 55, pilastro giuridico del multilinguismo dell'UE, che dopo l'elencazione delle 24 lingue delle versioni del trattato, sancisce che i testi di ciascuna di queste versioni fa fede.

Ci si potrebbe forse legittimamente meravigliare della necessità di pubblicare in *tutte* le lingue ufficiali, e non limitarsi invece ad un numero più ristretto, come avviene ad esempio nel caso delle Nazioni Unite, la NATO, l'OCSE ed altre organizzazioni internazionali. Tuttavia, mentre le summenzionate organizzazioni internazionali non emanano leggi, ciò avviene invece all'interno dell'UE, ed impone quindi che *tutti* i cittadini di *tutti* gli Stati Membri siano in grado di comprendere quanto promulgato all'interno dell'UE. «*Europeans have a right to know what is being done in their name. They must also be able to play an active part without having to learn other languages*».²⁹ Comprensibilmente, dal momento che i singoli Stati non possono chiedere ai propri cittadini di rispettare leggi che potrebbero non essere in grado di comprendere perché pubblicate in lingue non conosciute, le leggi devono quindi necessariamente essere pubblicate in tutte le lingue ufficiali di tutti gli Stati membri.

La scelta dell'UE di optare per la 'coredazione' testuale in tutte le lingue ufficiali degli atti, e consentire dunque al multilinguismo di operare effettivamente ed efficacemente, muove inoltre dalla necessità di consentire l'attiva e fattiva partecipazione di ogni Stato membro nella vita dell'U-

avanzate principalmente tre proposte: 1) comunicare in una sola lingua, l'inglese (l'opzione della lingua franca tuttavia continua ad essere avversata in larga maggioranza perché ritenuta 'aculturale' e non espressione della variegata identità culturale europea); 2) prediligere un ristretto numero di lingue, non oltre cinque, sulla base di criteri che tengano conto di valori diversi, tra cui, ad esempio, notevole entità demografica del Paese in cui si parla la lingua prescelta, diffusione della lingua al di fuori del Paese di appartenenza nei diversi Paesi dell'Unione, contributo della cultura di quel Paese alla costruzione della civiltà europea, ecc. (tale scelta ha raccolto il maggior numero di consensi anche se si riconosce una certa difficoltà nella sua attuazione pratica); 3) conservare una pluralità di lingue (tesi sostenuta da quanti sostengono l'importanza di sostenere il variegato patrimonio linguistico europeo anche a fronte degli elevati costi che una tale opzione comporta). La Parità delle Lingue nell'Unione Europea. Nota informativa presentata dal prof. Francesco Sabatini sul problema delle 'lingue di lavoro'. Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 8 aprile 2003. http://www-old.accademiadellacrusca.it/Europa_plurilingue.shtml.html.

²⁹ Translating for EU: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/translating/officiallanguages/index_en.htm.

nione. «*It is therefore against the democratic nature of Parliament to limit the use of languages in its meetings*» (Coulmas, 1991: 6-7). Come sottolinea Johan Haggman, coordinatore del team della Commissione europea che si occupa di multilinguismo, «la traduzione in tutte le lingue ufficiali è una questione democratica e di trasparenza» (Pascale, 2013). Da un punto di vista strettamente giuridico, tuttavia, più specificamente si richiede non, *sic et simpliciter*, la traduzione delle varie normative, bensì versioni linguistiche equivalenti. Quanto deliberato dal Parlamento deve infatti necessariamente essere inequivocabile ed equivalente in tutte le ventiquattro versioni linguistiche. La verifica della qualità linguistica e giuridica dei testi è pertanto necessariamente affidata ad una team di specialisti, nello specifico di 75 giuristi linguisti.³⁰ Il ruolo del giurista linguista all'interno dell'UE è fondamentale e complesso poiché ben lungi dallo svolgere una mera traduzione letterale; esso, infatti, consiste nell'assicurare l'esatta equivalenza delle diverse versioni linguistiche delle nuove normative. Deve quindi essere perfettamente in grado di cogliere tutti gli intenti di una nuova normativa, rendendone poi fedelmente il senso nella rispettiva lingua madre. Per svolgere tale compito il traduttore deve pertanto essere non solo naturalmente competente in materia di diritto, ma anche avere un'eccellente padronanza linguistica (di almeno tre lingue europee) ed essere particolarmente esperto nelle tecniche di traduzione e revisione dei testi. Inoltre, per garantire la migliore qualità possibile dei testi legislativi in tutte le lingue dell'Unione, il giurista linguista partecipa a tutte le fasi della intera procedura legislativa. Nello specifico dettaglio, il giurista linguista:

- fornisce ai deputati e alle segreterie di commissione una consulenza redazionale e procedurale dalla stesura iniziale dei testi legislativi sino all'approvazione definitiva in Aula;
- prepara e pubblica i testi legislativi da sottoporre all'approvazione del Parlamento in commissione e in Aula, garantendo la massima qualità, in tutte le diverse versioni linguistiche, degli emendamenti delle relazioni e il corretto svolgimento della procedura;
- ha competenze utili per la preparazione tecnica degli emendamenti da sottoporre all'esame dell'Aula e la pubblicazione di tutti i testi approvati nel giorno della votazione in Aula;

³⁰ Per conseguire il titolo di giurista linguista si richiede come requisiti indispensabili la laurea in giurisprudenza, la conoscenza documentata di almeno due lingue europee (oltre la lingua madre), mentre una comprovata esperienza nel campo della traduzione – preferibilmente di testi giuridici – rappresenta un titolo preferenziale. Consiglio UE Giuristi Linguisti: lavoro al Parlamento. <http://www.ticonsiglio.com/giuristi-linguisti-lavoro-parlamento-europeo-consiglio-ue/>.

- provvede a ultimare gli atti legislativi insieme ai giuristi linguisti del Consiglio.

La pari dignità fra le lingue ha, nondimeno, come corollario non certo secondario, l'assenza di un riferimento, di un rinvio a un testo unico in una unica lingua. Questo scenario solleva molteplici problemi dal punto di vista giuridico. La questione del diritto linguistico è infatti un argomento estremamente dibattuto che si radica nel diritto internazionale, diritto comunitario diritto degli Stati membri, sia anche nel diritto sub statale.³¹ Tuttavia, se gli atti legislativi ed i documenti programmatici di maggiore rilevanza pubblica sono sempre tradotti, per motivi di tempo e soprattutto di risorse finanziarie,³² nella prassi, è stato comunque limitato il numero dei documenti di lavoro tradotti in tutte le lingue.³³ Nella pratica, infatti, introducendo in modo surrettizio una distinzione tra 'lingue ufficiali' e 'lingue di lavoro',³⁴ senza tuttavia che tale demarcazione trovi fondamento in nessuna norma, si verifica di fatto una sistematica deriva verso un trilinguismo (inglese/francese/tedesco), cui di norma si aggiunge, per i lavori del Consiglio, la lingua del Paese che esercita la Presidenza di turno.³⁵ Il Parlamento europeo traduce i suoi documenti in base alle esigenze dei parlamentari. L'Italia, nello specifico, in una attitudine costruttiva e per uniformarsi all'esigenza di contenere i costi, si adegua al suddetto regime linguistico ridot-

³¹ In ambito europeo è inoltre necessario distinguere ulteriormente tra la tutela prevista in seno al Consiglio d'Europa e quella prevista nell'ambito dell'UE.

³² Per «motivi d'urgenza e d'economia finanziaria», secondo un'espressione usata da un esponente dell'EPSO durante una discussione sollevata nel corso di una riunione del 5 marzo 2003.

³³ I costi complessivi di traduzione, tuttavia, sono meno elevati di quanto probabilmente ci si immagina. Il costo complessivo di tutta l'attività di traduzione e interpretariato all'interno delle istituzioni europee (che includono Commissione, Consiglio, Parlamento, Comitato delle Regioni e Comitato economico e sociale) ammonta a circa 1,1 miliardi all'anno, una spesa che incide per meno dell'1% del bilancio totale dell'UE, una cifra decisamente molto bassa se comparata ad esempio all'agricoltura che ne costituisce il 40%. Johan Haggman così ridimensiona, «Se la si divide per la popolazione dell'UE, che è di 500 milioni di persone, diventa 2,2 euro per persona ogni anno: costa come un caffè macchiato, diciamo un cappuccino». Pascale Letizia, Multilinguismo: la sfida quotidiana per gestire la babele europea, in "EUnews", 20 maggio 2013. <http://www.eunews.it/2013/05/20/multilinguismo-la-sfida-quotidiana-per-gestire-la-babele-europea/7127>.

³⁴ Le lingue ufficiali sono le lingue state riconosciute tali dall'Unione, su istanza degli Stati membri e usate in ambito di contatti formali tra istituzioni, cittadini e Stati membri, mentre le lingue di lavoro sono quelle usate all'interno delle varie istituzioni scelte dalle varie istituzioni fra le lingue ufficiali e usate all'interno delle istituzioni stesse.

³⁵ Ortolani Andrea, *Lingue e politica linguistica nell'Unione Europea*, in "Rivista Critica del Diritto Privato", XX, 1, 2002, pp. 127-168.

to, pur esprimendo preferenza per un interpretariato simultaneo attivo e passivo³⁶ per la propria lingua.³⁷

4. Politiche ed Iniziative di Tutela e Salvaguardia della Diversità Culturale e delle Lingue Minoritarie e Regionali

Nell'era della globalizzazione, che ha visto il propagarsi della McDonaldizzazione e Starbuckizzazione,³⁸ si sono contemporaneamente diffusi particolarismi nati proprio come contro-reazione, «*la mondialisation accélérée provoque, en réaction, un renforcement du besoin d'identité*» (Maalouf, 1988: 125).³⁹ In tale scenario socio-culturale-politico, la promozione e la tutela delle lingue minoritarie va ad inserirsi in una più ampia esigenza, ormai unanimemente acclarata, sia a livello mondiale che europeo, di proteggere la biodiversità culturale,⁴⁰ da tutelare alla stregua di quella naturale. Dal momento che «*damage to any one of the elements in an ecosystem can result in unforeseen consequences for the system as a whole*» (Crystal, 2000: 33), la diversità linguistica appare non meno importante di quella ecologica. «*Surely, just as the extinction of any animal species diminishes our world, so does the extinction of any language. Surely we linguists know, and the general public can sense, that any language is a supreme achievement of a uniquely human collective genius, as divine and endless a mystery as a living organism. Should we mourn the loss of Eyak or Ubykh any less than the loss of the panda or California condor?*» (Krauss, 1992: 8).

³⁶ Per lingua attiva si intende una lingua parlata dagli interpreti e ascoltata dai delegati, mentre per lingua passiva si intende invece una lingua parlata dai delegati e compresa dagli interpreti.

³⁷ Sulla questione è tuttavia intervenuto anche il Parlamento italiano, con due distinte mozioni approvate dalla Camera dei deputati il 19 aprile 2011, in cui ha riaffermato il principio della non discriminazione linguistica ed ha impegnato il Governo a contrastare ogni tentativo di marginalizzazione della lingua italiana. La stessa problematica è stata spesso anche oggetto di intervento da parte della Corte di giustizia europea, si veda ad esempio la sentenza 27 novembre 2012 Repubblica italiana c/ Commissione [C-566/2010], che, nel caso specifico, si è espressa contro il ricorso al trilinguismo.

³⁸ Per maggiori approfondimenti su tali temi si veda Ritzer George, *The McDonaldization of Society*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 1993; Ritzer George, *The Globalization of Nothing*, 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 2007; Featherstone Mike, (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, globalization and modernity*, London, Sage Publications, 1990.

³⁹ Si veda anche Robertson Roland, *Globalization Theory and Civilizational Analysis*, in "Comparative Civilizations Review", XVII, 1987, pp. 20-30.

⁴⁰ Nell'ambito della vasta letteratura a riguardo, si vedano ad esempio le pubblicazioni di Skutnabb-Kangas (1992), Krauss (1992) e Maffi (2000).

Un'ulteriore analogia tra la diversità linguistica e quella presente in natura, nota come *the language garden analogy*, è proposta anche da Garcia: così come le varie specie di fiori esistenti in natura arricchiscono la nostra percezione estetica del mondo, ed il mondo apparirebbe estremamente piatto e monotono se esistesse una sola varietà di fiori monocolore, similmente, la varietà linguistica rende la nostra percezione del mondo più stimolante ed interessante.⁴¹ Una visione condivisa da molti altri studiosi: «*Just as in biology, diversity is the norm. So it is with language: multilingualism is the norm*» (St. Clair, 2001: 102). La varietà linguistica deve quindi essere tutelata e le lingue in pericolo di estinzione protette, dal momento che la scomparsa di una lingua rappresenta una perdita significativa per l'umanità intera. Come ricorda Crystal (2000: 27-67) ogni lingua è infatti depositaria di un patrimonio culturale ed identitario e mezzo primario di trasmissione di tale patrimonio che con essa viene inesorabilmente perso per sempre. «*A language is a crucial part of the heritage of a specific community, shapes and builds its identity in the same way as its physical heritage does. Therefore its existence needs to be valued and preserved as we do with the cultural and environmental heritage of a region*». (Abdullah, Talif e Jan, 2011: 260).

Sull'onda di questa attenzione ed interesse a livello globale, governi e/o organizzazioni internazionali stanno attuando, particolarmente nel nuovo millennio, specifici *language planning*, ossia «*deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to acquisition, structure or functional allocation of language codes*» (Cooper, 1989: 45) finalizzati a sensibilizzare/promuovere l'interesse verso la diversità culturale/linguistica. Le politiche e le attività di tutela coinvolgono ambiti in cui si intrecciano discipline quali diritto, storia, letteratura, geografia, sociologia, e in cui si contrappongono la riscoperta e la valorizzazione di realtà locali in un mondo sempre più globalizzato. Nell'ambito di queste politiche si veda, ad esempio l'Articolo 1 dell'*Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, proclamata nel 2001, che recita:

⁴¹ Garcia individua suggestive corrispondenze tra il mondo vegetale e l'universo linguistico e elenca strategie di salvaguardia:

«1. *Adding flowers to the garden: Learning other languages can be an enriching experience*

2. *Protecting rare flowers: Protecting languages at risk through legislation and education*

3. *Nurturing flowers in danger of extinction: Intervention may be necessary and may imply positive economic discrimination*

4. *Controlling flowers that spread quickly and naturally: Spread can be allowed if it does not kill other species.*» García Ofelia, *Societal multilingualism in a multicultural world in transition*, in H. Byrne (ed.), *Languages for a multicultural world in transition*, Illinois National Textbook Company, 1992, p. 8.

«Article 1 – Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations».⁴²

In linea con i principi espressi da tale Dichiarazione, nel 2003 l'UNESCO ha poi adottato l'*Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention*⁴³ con la precisa finalità di salvaguardare l'immateriale eredità culturale delle comunità e di divulgarne il valore e l'unicità all'interno delle comunità stesse. Nel 2005 è stata successivamente firmata l'*UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression*.⁴⁴ Punti fondamentali della Convenzione sono: «Affirming that cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of humanity, conscious that cultural diversity forms a common heritage of humanity and should be cherished and preserved for the benefit of all [...]; Celebrating the importance of cultural diversity for the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other universally recognized instruments [...]; Recalling that linguistic diversity is a fundamental element of cultural diversity, and reaffirming the fundamental role that education plays in the protection and promotion of cultural expressions; Taking into account the importance of the vitality of cultures, including for persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples, as manifested in their freedom to create, disseminate and distribute their traditional cultural expressions and to have access thereto, so as to benefit them for their own development».⁴⁵ Ancora, sempre l'UNESCO nel 2009 ha pro-

⁴² UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁴³ Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>.

⁴⁴ Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁴⁵ «The UNESCO Convention on the diversity of cultural expressions» è stata approvata nel corso della *General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* tenutasi a Parigi dal 3 al 12 ottobre 2005, ed entrata poi in vigore il 18 marzo 2007. Ratificata ad oggi da 134 Stati membri dell'UNESCO, punti fondamentali della Convenzione sono: «Affirming that cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of humanity, conscious that cultural diversity forms a common heritage of humanity and should be cherished and preserved for the benefit of all [...]; Celebrating the importance of cultural diversity for the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other

mosso un'ulteriore iniziativa denominata "*Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*" con l'intento di promuovere studi e ricerche volti soprattutto a sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica sul valore della diversità culturale, dimostrando come essa rappresenti una risorsa all'interno di vari settori socio-economici piuttosto che una minaccia.⁴⁶ Sempre in tale prospettiva, nel 2014 è stato bandito poi il *JPI Cultural Heritage*, che prevede programmi di finanziamento per progetti di ricerca transnazionali aventi ad oggetto la valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale dei vari paesi.⁴⁷

Anche all'interno dell'UE,⁴⁸ la pluralità linguistica viene da tempo riconosciuta al tempo stesso come un valore ed uno specifico obiettivo da perseguire.

universally recognized instruments [...] Recalling that linguistic diversity is a fundamental element of cultural diversity, and reaffirming the fundamental role that education plays in the protection and promotion of cultural expressions; Taking into account the importance of the vitality of cultures, including for persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples, as manifested in their freedom to create, disseminate and distribute their traditional cultural expressions and to have access thereto, so as to benefit them for their own development». 'Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression'. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001429/142919e.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Tale iniziativa si inserisce inoltre nel più ampio quadro del *Millennium Development Goals*, ossia gli 8 obiettivi di sviluppo del millennio inseriti nella cosiddetta 'Dichiarazione del Millennio delle Nazioni Unite', firmata nel settembre del 2000, in cui tutti i 193 Stati membri delle Nazioni Unite si sono impegnati a raggiungere – entro l'anno 2015 – i seguenti obiettivi:

1. sradicare la povertà estrema e la fame nel mondo
2. rendere universale l'istruzione primaria
3. promuovere la parità dei sessi e l'autonomia delle donne
4. ridurre la mortalità infantile
5. ridurre la mortalità materna
6. combattere l'HIV/AIDS, la malaria e altre malattie
7. garantire la sostenibilità ambientale
8. sviluppare un partenariato mondiale per lo sviluppo.

Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001852/185202E.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Welcome to JPI on Cultural Heritage: <http://www.jpi-culturalheritage.eu/>.

⁴⁸ L'articolo 3 del Trattato dell'Unione Europea del 2008 sancisce che l'UE «rispetta la ricchezza della sua diversità culturale e linguistica e vigila sulla salvaguardia e sullo sviluppo del patrimonio culturale europeo». 12008M003. Versione consolidata del trattato sull'Unione europea – TITOLO I: DISPOSIZIONI COMUNI – Articolo 3 (ex articolo 2 del TUE) . *Gazzetta ufficiale n° 115 del 09/05/2008 pag. 0017 – 0017*. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12008M003&from=EN>. Parimenti l'articolo 22 della Carta dei Diritti Fondamentali stabilisce che «l'Unione rispetta la diversità culturale, religiosa e linguistica». 26.10.2012. *Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione europea*. C 326/391 Carta dei Diritti Fondamentali dell'Unione Europea. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN-IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT&from=EN>.

Nell'ambito del Consiglio d'Europa (STE 148) fin dal 5 novembre 1992, è stato concluso a Strasburgo un trattato internazionale, l'*European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (ECRML) o 'Carta europea delle lingue regionali o minoritarie',⁴⁹ i cui obiettivi primari sono appunto la salvaguardia e la promozione delle lingue storiche regionali e di minoranza, nel rispetto dell'inalienabile diritto di usare una lingua regionale o minoritaria

⁴⁹ La Carta è entrata poi in vigore il 1° marzo 1998 dopo essere stata ratificata da almeno cinque stati, e ad oggi conta un numero totale di 25 ratifiche/adesioni e 8 firme non seguite da ratifica. La Francia, infatti, ad esempio, dopo aver firmato la convenzione, ha deciso di non ratificarla, ed ha poi redatto una propria lista di quelle che ritiene essere le proprie lingue minoritarie. I paesi nei quali la carta è in vigore dal 2009 sono: Armenia, Austria, Cechia, Cipro, Croazia, Danimarca, Finlandia, Germania, Liechtenstein, Lussemburgo, Montenegro, Norvegia, Paesi Bassi, Polonia Regno Unito, Romania, Serbia, Slovacchia, Slovenia, Spagna, Svezia, Svizzera, Ucraina e Ungheria. Cfr. Stato delle firme e ratifiche di trattato 148 Carta europea delle lingue regionali o minoritarie. <http://www.coe.int/it/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148/signatures>. Alcuni paesi, aderendo alla carta, hanno specificato l'elenco delle lingue applicabili, e, ad esempio, ai sensi della Carta, l'italiano è riconosciuto lingua minoritaria in Svizzera, Slovenia, Croazia, Bosnia-Erzegovina e Romania. La Carta fornisce anche un elenco di azioni che gli Stati firmatari possono adottare per proteggere e promuovere le lingue storiche regionali e delle minoranze, come ad esempio l'uso di segnaletica bilingue o l'istituzione di scuole specializzate nell'insegnamento della lingua protetta. Gli Stati firmatari dovrebbero mettere in atto almeno 35 di queste azioni. Carta europea delle lingue regionali o minoritarie. <http://www.coe.int/it/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148>. Per quanto concerne il nostro paese, l'Italia ha firmato la carta il 27 giugno del 2000, ma non l'ha ancora ratificata. Tuttavia, nell'ambito dell'attuale legislatura, nella seduta del Senato del 12 febbraio 2015, su proposta di alcuni senatori è stata sollecitata la ratifica ed esecuzione della Carta europea delle lingue regionali e minoritarie. Cfr. Senato della Repubblica. Legislatura 17^a – Commissioni 1° e 3° riunite – Resoconto sommario n° 1 del 12/02/2015 https://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/frame.jsp?tipodoc=SommComm&leg=17&id=00902833&part=doc_dc-sedetit_isr-d-dlbl_51eccedlrom&parse=si&stampa=si&toc=no. Come si legge nel documento presentato nella seduta, «L'Italia dispone di una legislazione nazionale particolarmente avanzata in materia di tutela dei alcune minoranze linguistiche storiche, in attuazione dell'articolo 6 della Costituzione.» La legge n° 482 del 1999 tutela la lingua e la cultura delle popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle che, nel territorio italiano, parlano il francese, il franco-provenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l'occitano ed il sardo. In alcune regioni vi sono poi ulteriori previsioni di tutela. Le modalità di ratifica da parte dei 25 Stati in cui la Carta è attualmente in vigore propongono alcune indicazioni significative: la maggior parte dei Paesi ha provveduto alla ratifica in tempi abbastanza lunghi (salvo la Croazia, la Slovenia, la Norvegia e la Svezia); fra i Paesi firmatari che non hanno ancora provveduto alla ratifica si annoverano l'Azerbaijan (dal 2001), la ex Repubblica Jugoslava di Macedonia (dal 1996), la Francia (dal 1999), Malta (dal 1992), la Moldova (dal 2002) e la Russia (dal 2001). Fra i Paesi che hanno già provveduto a ratificare la Carta, in cui l'Italiano è considerata lingua minoritaria protetta, rientrano la Bosnia-Erzegovina, Slovenia, Croazia, Svizzera e Romania.

sia nella vita privata che pubblica. Il trattato muove dalla constatazione che in varie parti d'Europa vivono popolazioni autoctone che parlano una lingua diversa da quella della maggioranza della popolazione dello Stato di appartenenza, ma, tuttavia, non include le lingue parlate dalle comunità di immigrati. Gli Stati membri possono liberamente scegliere di riconoscere la lingua che vogliono, ma sempre operando in conformità delle regole stabilite dalla Carta. Inoltre, agli Stati è offerta la possibilità di aggiungere altre lingue minoritarie a quelle già proposte all'atto della ratifica. Tutti i paesi europei, senza eccezione, possono essere firmatari della Carta, anche se non hanno una lingua regionale o minoritaria (come, ad esempio, nel caso del Lussemburgo). Ogni Parte firmataria del Trattato si impegna ad applicare almeno 35 paragrafi, o sottoparagrafi, scelti tra le varie misure, indicando la lingua (regionale o di minoranza) parlata in tutto o parte del suo territorio cui si applicano le disposizioni scelte. Un Comitato di esperti è poi preposto ad esaminare i rapporti periodici presentati dalle Parti relativamente all'ottemperanza delle misure espresse dal Trattato. Nel Trattato sono specificate varie politiche e iniziative da implementare nel rispetto dei principi evocati, tra cui, ad esempio, la promozione dell'uso delle lingue regionali o minoritarie (sia nella forma scritta che orale) nella vita pubblica e privata, ricorrendo anche a specifiche, mirate metodologie glottodidattiche e/o di apprendimento, ad esempio facilitando scambi transnazionali tra stati in cui sono presenti le stesse lingue.

Nello specifico, con la firma e la ratifica della Carta gli Stati si impegnano a:

- «riconoscere le lingue regionali o minoritarie come espressione della ricchezza culturale;
- proibire ogni distinzione, discriminazione, esclusione, restrizione o preferenza relative alla pratica di una lingua minoritaria o ogni atto destinato a scoraggiare o mettere in pericolo il mantenimento o lo sviluppo di essa;
- promuovere la comprensione reciproca tra tutti i gruppi linguistici di un Paese».

Altre misure indicate dal Trattato per tutelare/facilitare l'uso delle lingue regionali o di minoranza nella vita pubblica interessano, in una prospettiva più ampia, il rispetto dell'aria geografica di ognuna di queste lingue, la giustizia, le autorità amministrative ed i servizi pubblici, i media, le attività e le strutture culturali, la vita economica e sociali e gli scambi transfrontalieri.

Ancora, ribadendo che la diversità linguistica e culturale è uno dei principi costituenti dell'UE, secondo cui «l'Unione rispetta la diversità culturale, religiosa e linguistica»,⁵⁰ principio ripreso poi anche nella Risoluzione del Consiglio del 14 febbraio 2002 laddove, al punto 4, si ricorda che «tutte le lingue europee sono, dal punto di vista culturale, uguali in valore e dignità e costituiscono parte integrante della cultura e della civiltà europee».⁵¹

Nel corso degli anni l'UE ha iniziato a varare iniziative a tutela delle lingue minoritarie o regionali,⁵² ma è dalla pubblicazione della comunicazione sul multilinguismo CE nel 2008 che in ambito EU si sono effettivamente adottate politiche di 'discriminazione positiva',⁵³ volte in particolar modo

⁵⁰ Questo principio fondato sull'articolo 6 del trattato sull'Unione Europea e sull'articolo 151, paragrafi 1 e 4 del trattato CE, ora sostituiti dall'articolo 167, paragrafi 1 e 4 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea, relativi alla cultura. Il rispetto della diversità culturale e linguistica è ora sancito anche all'articolo 3, paragrafo 3 del trattato sull'UE. L'articolo si riporta anche alla dichiarazione n° 11 allegata all'Atto finale del trattato di Amsterdam sullo status delle chiese e delle organizzazioni non confessionali, ripreso ora nell'articolo 17 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'UE.

⁵¹ Risoluzione del Consiglio del 14 febbraio 2002 relativa alla promozione della diversità linguistica e dell'apprendimento delle lingue nel quadro dell'attuazione degli obiettivi dell'Anno europeo delle lingue 2001: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32002G0223\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32002G0223(01)&from=EN).

⁵² Oltre la già citata "Carta europea delle lingue regionali o minoritarie", ad esempio, nel 2001 il Parlamento europeo ha votato una Risoluzione a favore delle lingue regionali e minoritarie, in cui «invita la Commissione a proporre misure concrete per la promozione della diversità linguistica [...]; chiede, con riferimento all'allargamento dell'Unione europea, che il Consiglio e la Commissione obblighino i paesi candidati a rispettare le lingue e le culture regionali o minoritarie [...]; ha votato, nel bilancio 2002, lo stanziamento di 1 milione di euro per azioni preparatorie in materia di promozione e salvaguardia di lingue, dialetti e culture regionali e meno diffusi». European Parliament resolution on regional and lesser-used European languages: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2001-0719+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>. Nella linea della tutela del patrimonio della diversità linguistica e culturale deve essere anche interpretata la Risoluzione IRIS adottata dal Consiglio dell'UE nel 2001 finalizzata alla tutela degli archivi dei materiali audiovisivi, considerati appunto patrimonio storico-culturale dei vari Stati Membri. Resolution by the Council of the European Union on the Development of the Audiovisual Sector, adopted at the 2381st Council meeting (Cultural/Audiovisual Affairs) of 5 November 2001, Press: 377 - N° 13126/01: http://merlin.obs.coe.int/cgi-bin/show_iris_link.php?iris_link=2001-9%3A3&id=668.

⁵³ Il concetto di 'discriminazione positiva' fu applicato inizialmente verso la metà degli anni '60 in materia d'istruzione. Molti studi, in particolar modo quelli condotti da Pierre Bourdieu, evidenziarono la stretta correlazione tra il rendimento degli studenti e la loro origine socio-economica. Successivamente, in un articolo nel 1974 apparso sul quotidiano francese "Le Monde", Edmond Maire, segretario generale della CFDT - *Confédération française démocratique du travail* - la Confederazione francese demo-

deva sostenere e salvaguardare le lingue minoritarie e/o regionali a rischio di estinzione.⁵⁴ Tra le più recenti ed importanti ricordiamo *The European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity*, una risoluzione presentata nel settembre 2013.⁵⁵ Obiettivi primari di tale Risoluzione sono «*to outline a new vision for the future of languages and linguistic diversity within the European Union [...] and to ensure that the languages of Europe are able to survive and prosper*».⁵⁶ Ancor più recentemente, il 5 febbraio 2015,⁵⁷ stata presentata al Parla-

cratica del lavoro, uno dei più grandi sindacati nazionali francesi, seguendo un principio originariamente esposto da Bertrand Schwartz, dichiarò che, dovendo la scuola compensare gli effetti di una società disuguale, essa stessa deve necessariamente essere 'disuguale', ossia accordare un trattamento scolastico preferenziale a categorie di popolazione svantaggiata o in difficoltà. Si doveva quindi attuare una 'discriminazione positiva' in cui la scuola doveva rimediare a una discriminazione di fatto provocata da disuguaglianze economiche. La stessa rivendicazione acquisì poi connotazioni più specificamente politiche. Cfr. Pierre Bourdieu, Passeron Jean-Claude, *Les Héritiers. Les étudiants et la culture*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1964.

⁵⁴ Tali progetti, nel solco del Trattato di Lisbona, continuano a promuovere il rispetto delle diversità culturali presenti in Europa, nella ferma convinzione che la pari dignità linguistica rappresenti un elemento fondamentale e imprescindibile per la realizzazione dell'integrazione europea, come già espresso appunto nel suddetto Trattato. Come noto, il Trattato di Lisbona, entrato in vigore il 1° dicembre 2009, prevedeva tra i suoi obiettivi la promozione del patrimonio culturale e linguistico dell'UE in tutta la sua diversità. Trattato di Lisbona: http://ec.europa.eu/archives/lisbon_treaty/glance/index_it.htm.

⁵⁵ Proposta di Risoluzione del Parlamento Europeo sulle lingue europee a rischio di estinzione e la diversità linguistica nell'Unione Europea (2013/2007(INI)): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2013-0239+0+DOC+PDF+V0//IT>.

⁵⁶ "Launch of the European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity": <http://www.npld.eu/news/latest-news/113/launch-of-the-european-roadmap-for-linguistic-diversity/>.

⁵⁷ Il NPLD (*Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity*) interessa una vasta gamma di lingue che comprende sia lingue che rientrano a pieno tra quelle titolate dell'UE quali estone, finlandese, gaelico, o svedese, sia lingue che hanno uno status ufficiale nei territori in cui sono parlate, come basco, catalano, frisone (o *frysk*, lingua parlata nel nord dei Paesi Bassi – Frisia – e Germania nord-occidentale – distretti di Frisia settentrionale, Pinneberg e Cloppenburg), galiziano, gallese, sia altre lingue le quali, pur non godendo ancora di alcun riconoscimento ufficiale, sono tuttavia attivamente parlate dalle rispettive comunità, come bretone; carelia (noto anche come Karjala, Ingrian, Iudica, Livvi – si parla nel Nord della Russia occidentale conosciuta come la Repubblica russa di Carelia, ma le comunità di lingua Carelia si possono trovare anche nella regione di Tver a nord ovest di Mosca. Carelia è anche parlato in Finlandia); Kernewek (lingua parlata in Cornovaglia); corso (lingua parlata in Corsica). lituano; occitano e sami (parlato in Nord e Norvegia centrale, settentrionale e centrale della Svezia, Finlandia del Nord e del Nord Europa occidentale la Russia – provincia di Murmansk). "NPLD 2020. Project to promote and safeguard Minority Languages": <http://www.npld.eu/about-us/npld2020/>.

mento Europeo una nuova bozza di tale risoluzione, indicata come *NPLD 2020 Project*, e vi si elencano le seguenti finalità:

- la necessità di sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica su una definizione ampia della diversità linguistica
- la necessità di aumentare la consapevolezza circa l'importanza sociale ed economica della diversità linguistica
- la necessità di una piattaforma europea per promuovere la diversità linguistica che riunisce tutte le parti interessate
- la volontà di sviluppare il potenziale delle lingue CRS per costruire un'Europa intelligente e inclusiva
- coordinare gli sforzi per una strategia europea di pianificazione a livello di lingua
- coinvolgere ulteriormente i responsabili politici a livello nazionale.⁵⁸

Nel riconoscere che, come visto, al pari della biodiversità naturale, la diversità linguistica/culturale europea è parte integrante del patrimonio socio-culturale e indispensabili per lo sviluppo sostenibile delle nostre società, essa deve essere salvaguardata e protetta da ogni rischio di estinzione. In tale ottica si ribadisce inoltre che qualsiasi tentativo di rendere una lingua egemone sulle altre rappresenta una violazione dei valori fondamentali dell'Unione e che le lingue a rischio di estinzione devono essere concepite come parte integrante del patrimonio culturale europeo e non strumentalizzate per aspirazioni politiche, etniche o territoriali. «Considerando che ogni lingua, comprese quelle a rischio di estinzione, riflette un'esperienza storica, sociale e culturale, nonché un modo di pensare e di creare che contribuisce alla ricchezza e alla diversità dell'Unione europea e che sono la base della sua identità [...] la diversità linguistica e la presenza di lingue a rischio di estinzione all'interno di un paese devono essere considerate una risorsa anziché un onere e devono essere quindi sostenute e promosse; la presenza di lingue a rischio di estinzione all'interno di un paese devono pertanto essere considerate una risorsa anziché un onere e devono essere quindi sostenute e promosse».⁵⁹

⁵⁸ "NPLD 2020 Progetto per promuovere e salvaguardare le lingue minoritarie"! <https://translate.google.it/translate?hl=it&sl=en&u=http://www.npld.eu/about-us/npld2020/&prev=search>.

⁵⁹ *Ivi*.

In merito a tali premesse la Commissione ha dunque 'invitato' le politiche dell'UE ad adeguarsi a tali considerazioni ed a definire specifici programmi volti a sostenere la preservazione delle lingue in pericolo di estinzione e a promuovere la diversità linguistica, avvalendosi del sostegno finanziario di strumenti europei per il periodo 2014-2020.

La Commissione prevede che tali programmi, in particolare, includano la documentazione di queste lingue, e coinvolgano settori quali l'istruzione e la formazione, l'inclusione sociale, la gioventù e lo sport, la ricerca e lo sviluppo, il programma cultura e mezzi di comunicazione, i Fondi strutturali, e soprattutto si avvalgano di tutti gli strumenti e le piattaforme di scambio concepiti per promuovere le nuove tecnologie, i media sociali e le piattaforme multimediali. La Commissione infatti «ritiene che i mezzi di comunicazione, in particolare i nuovi mezzi di comunicazione, possano svolgere un importante ruolo nella salvaguardia delle lingue a rischio di estinzione, in particolare per le generazioni future; sottolinea inoltre il fatto che le nuove tecnologie potrebbero essere anche utilizzate per il conseguimento di tali obiettivi; osserva che la digitalizzazione può essere un modo per prevenire la scomparsa delle lingue; esorta, pertanto, le autorità locali a raccogliere e pubblicare su Internet libri e registrazioni in tali lingue nonché tutte le altre manifestazioni di patrimonio linguistico».⁶⁰

All'interno di questa *roadmap* rientrano vari progetti da promuovere/implementare da parte di singoli governi europei nell'arco di vari anni, tra cui:

- '20 year strategy for the Irish Language', un piano strategico ventennale (2010-2030) per favorire il radicarsi del bilinguismo (lingua inglese/gaelico) nella comunicazione quotidiana dei territori interessati;⁶¹
- 'A living language; a language for living', a tutela e salvaguardia del gallese;⁶²
- 'The development plan of the Estonian Language' (2011-2017), per promuovere la diffusione della lingua estone.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Ivi.*

⁶¹ "20 year strategy for the Irish Language": <http://www.ahg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/20-Year-Strategy-English-version.pdf>.

⁶² A living language; a language for living (Welsh Language Strategy 2012-17): <http://gov.wales/topics/welshlanguage/publications/wlstrategy2012/?lang=en>.

⁶³ "Estonian and foreign languages. Estonian language development plan": <https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/estonian-and-foreign-languages>.

5. Verso una reale transculturalità: un auspicio finale

L'auspicio conclusivo è che tali politiche ed iniziative contribuiscano davvero a sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica mondiale ed europea verso l'importanza della diversità culturale e quindi del multilinguismo, favorendo un reale dialogo interculturale. Le società contemporanee, caratterizzate sotto ogni latitudine da rapide trasformazioni socio-economiche e da una sempre maggiore dinamicità di flussi migratori, si definiscono ormai multietniche e multilingue. Ciò nonostante, troppo spesso, gli odierni contesti multiculturali, dove «*two styles or traditions co-existing side by side, without the twain meeting, must really be seen as plural monoculturalism*» (Sen, 2006: 27) e pertanto, nonostante la ricerca di una reciproca comprensione, continuano a percepirsi come del tutto distinti. La diversità etnico-linguistica invece può, e deve, indubbiamente rappresentare un'opportunità di crescita e ricchezza all'interno dei singoli paesi, ma senza adeguate politiche essa può ingenerare pericolosi ostacoli, quando non veri e propri conflitti, come purtroppo troppo spesso si verifica nei nostri giorni.

Negli odierni scenari migratori l'(inter)scambio comunicativo di popoli e culture è infatti spesso complesso e genera una serie di problematiche diverse che coinvolgono molteplici aspetti che spaziano dalle tematiche connesse all'apprendimento della L2 o L3 da parte del migrante e/o agli aspetti legati alle difficoltà di integrazione scolastica o culturale,⁶⁴ da cui scaturiscono anche, ad esempio, fenomeni come il controverso *Child Language Brokering*.⁶⁵ È fondamentale che soprattutto le nuove generazio-

⁶⁴ Basti considerare le difficoltà di integrazione scolastica o culturale, questioni tutt'altro che risolte, soprattutto in un'Europa che purtroppo appare essere sempre meno unita e lo è anche, ad esempio, per quanto concerne i sistemi educativi dei vari stati dell' UE che continuano a basarsi su differenti modelli scolastici. Fin dal primo momento fondativo dell'UE in nessun testo/riferimento relativo all'istruzione, si trovano espliciti richiami a possibili auspici/aspettative di omogeneizzazioni dei vari sistemi educativi, a riprova che una tale prospettiva non sarebbe probabilmente né auspicabile né raggiungibile. Tuttavia, le disparità tra i vari sistemi educativi comportano il pericolo che le disomogeneità che emergono dal confronto tra i percorsi formativi dei vari paesi europei non sempre garantiscano a tutti, in particolare ai giovani migranti, le stesse potenzialità e possibilità. Per ulteriori approfondimenti a riguardo si veda Cavaliere Flavia, *L'integrazione multiculturale e i diversi percorsi dell'istruzione in Europa*, in "RISE", II (4), 2016, pp. 10-17.

⁶⁵ Come noto, il *Child Language Brokering* è un complesso processo di mediazione e rappresenta un fenomeno di vasta e rilevante portata sociale in cui l'adulto immigrato, in assenza di figure professionalmente formate che possano consentirgli un'adeguata socializzazione, si ritrova costretto a dover ricorrere all'intermediazione di quei membri che, all'interno della propria comunità, posseggono una maggiore padronanza della

ni comprendano che il plurilinguismo, nella sua accezione più ampia, è lo strumento primario di ogni mediazione cross-culturale, poiché la strada dalla marginalizzazione – o peggio discriminazione – alla piena integrazione passa innanzitutto attraverso lo scambio interculturale. Solo tale scambio consente di scoprire e valorizzare, piuttosto che temere, la diversità, imparando al tempo stesso, a trascendere gli stereotipi e a ricercare piuttosto un comune terreno di dialogo. Qualsiasi forma accettazione e/o integrazione, in qualsiasi tipologia di rapporto, avviene infatti, necessariamente attraverso il dialogo che, secondo appunto l'etimologia greca (*dià-légein*)⁶⁶ consente di legare ciò che è separato. La lingua svolge infatti «un indiscutibile ruolo di aggregazione e identificazione sociale [consentendo di] conservare l'identità di una comunità umana, sia che questa coincida con la popolazione di uno Stato ovvero con una formazione sociale minoritaria che trova nella coesione linguistica dei propri aderenti il fondamento – o uno dei fondamenti – per la condivisione di un distinto corredo di valori storici, tradizionali, culturali [ovvero] di un determinato patrimonio culturale, inteso come insieme di elementi materiali e immateriali da proteggere e tramandare alle generazioni future in quanto significativo della peculiarità di un popolo ovvero di comunità particolari» (Piergigli, 2010: 2).

La inscindibile, articolata relazione tra linguaggio e identità,⁶⁷ che coinvol-

lingua e conoscenza della cultura del paese che lo ospita, ossia i bambini. Cfr. Cavaliere Flavia, *Bambini immigrati e mediazione linguistica: il fenomeno del 'Child Language Brokering'*, in "RTH - Research Trends in Humanities", I, 2014b, pp. 2-5.

⁶⁶ Il termine dialogo, dal latino *dialogus*, a sua volta deriva dal greco *διάλογος*. Il lemma di origine greca *logos* cioè 'discorso', è derivazione di *διαλέγομαι* ossia 'conversare', 'discorrere', ma anche legare, unire insieme, mentre la preposizione *dià* ossia 'fra', indica separazione, ma anche reciprocità. Devoto Giacomo, Oli Gian Carlo, *Il dizionario della lingua italiana*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 2000-2001, p. 617

⁶⁷ È indubbio, tuttavia, che un aspetto caratterizzante della realtà contemporanea sia la concezione della fluidità delle identità culturali, non più considerate stagnanti o immobili, ma in costante evoluzione, incessantemente rimodellate dall'azione delle complesse dinamiche attivate dal quotidiano interscambio di merci, dati, informazioni ed interazioni tra gruppi ed individui. La nozione identitaria non può essere circoscritta ad una realtà univoca e monolitica, dal momento che ogni individuo possiede identità stratificate che non possono, né dovrebbero essere, etichettate. L'identità non si basa su caratteristiche innate, immutabili, geneticamente trasmesse, ma piuttosto si delinea su percezioni socio-culturali soggette a variabili diacroniche e sincroniche. Particolarmente in Europa nel corso dell'ultimo ventennio del secolo scorso il ritmo dei cambiamenti ha profondamente alterato il senso di termini come 'comunità', 'frontiera', 'territorio e pertanto oggi le identità culturali non rientrano in 'fisionomie' omogenee circoscrivibili entro precisi confini geografici. Le nazioni odierne non sono più paesi monolingue, bensì aree di contatto multilingue in cui convivono cittadini appartenenti a più razze e che, a loro volta, usano linguaggi in cui si mescolano continuamente

ge contemporaneamente fattori sociopolitici, socioeconomici e socioculturali, in Europa, appare, comprensibilmente, ancora più complessa proprio a causa dell'estrema pluralità linguistica: «*All who live with linguistic diversity – whether in multilingual contact zones, in the urban milieu shared by native 'old Europeans' and immigrant 'new Europeans', or on the level of the European Union with its more than 20 official languages – are confronted in one way or another with the concept of a European identity [...] a concept far more multi-layered than a simple cultural blending of Europeans*» (Harmann, 2011: 93). In tale prospettiva le politiche di promozione del plurilinguismo e di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche assumono un aspetto particolarmente significativo e si inscrivono all'interno del più vasto tema della tutela dei diritti fondamentali, divenendo «un problema che presuppone la consapevolezza dell'importanza che assume la difesa delle identità e delle diversità per la costruzione di società democratiche e pluraliste» (Lariccia, 2001: 762). Peraltro, come recita il preambolo della 'Convenzione-quadro per la protezione delle minoranze nazionali' «una società che si vuole pluralista e genuinamente democratica deve non solo rispettare l'identità etnica, culturale, linguistica e religiosa di ogni persona appartenente ad una minoranza nazionale, ma anche creare condizioni appropriate che le consentano di esprimere, di preservare e di sviluppare questa identità».⁶⁸ Una identità che deve essere conosciuta e rispettata nelle sua 'alterità' poiché la consapevolezza culturale della diversità ha una dimensione socio-politica, laddove il processo di conoscenza e di comprensione delle differenze delle culture può/deve portare attivamente all'azione ed a cambiamento. «*Once you are aware of your own mental models and cultural predispositions, and once you can respect and understand that those of another culture are legitimately different, then it becomes possible to reconcile [these] differences*» (Trompenaars e Woolians, 2004: 32). Come esorta Maa-louf, in una più ampia prospettiva di reciprocità, noi tutti dovremmo essere incoraggiati a riconoscere le nostre identità come la summa di varie parti piuttosto che come un'irriducibile unità. «*il me paraît utile de faire référence*

codici, registri e varietà diverse. Nel nuovo scenario globale ed europeo, gli individui continuamente negoziano le loro diversità linguistiche, culturali, etniche o religiose, e ne emergono nuove configurazioni identitarie e culturali, che si configurano prevalentemente in termini di 'ibridità'. Si richiede una continua negoziazione tra nuove identità e linguaggi e, non a caso, uno dei temi centrali dell'era postmoderna è la rappresentazione della propria identità, in riferimento, all'Altro. Cfr. Cavaliere Flavia, *In the wake of Mediterranean-ness: Identity and Transculturality*, in "Civiltà del Mediterraneo", XXV, 2014a, pp. 279-300.

⁶⁸ Convenzione quadro per la protezione delle minoranze nazionali. Strasburgo, 1 novembre 1995. In Italia tale Convenzione è stata ratificata il 3 novembre 1997 ed è entrata in vigore il successivo 10 marzo 1998, Supplemento ordinario alla GAZZETTA UFFICIALE, Serie generale – n° 215: <http://www.gfbv.it/3dossier/diritto/conv-min-it.html>.

au principe-clé qu'est celui de 'réciprocité': aujourd'hui, chacun d'entre nous doit nécessairement adopter d'innombrables éléments venus des cultures les plus puissantes; mais il est essentiel que chacun puisse vérifier aussi que certains éléments de sa propre culture — des personnages, des modes, des objets d'art, des objets usuels, des musiques, des plats, des mots — sont adoptés sur tous les continents, [...], et font désormais partie du patrimoine universel, commun à toute l'humanité». (Maalouf, 1998: 158). Tale reciprocità presuppone un incontro/scambio interculturale che consenta alle diverse popolazioni/etnie non solo di conoscere le reciproche differenze e/o similitudini culturali, religiose, filosofiche, scientifiche, ma di riflettere sul loro valore e significat. Tale riflessione può avvenire solo all'interno di una reale dimensione interculturale.⁶⁹ «*Transcultural networks are more capable of affiliation with one another than were the old cultural identities [...]. They include segments which also occur in other networks and thus represent points of affiliation between the different transcultural forms. So the new type of differentiation by its very structure favors coexistence rather than combat*» (Welsch, 1999:207). L'interculturalità infatti, piuttosto che omologare, garantisce il valore della diversità, ed ogni relazione realmente interculturale implica «*the processes of consciousness that allow us to create a mental representation, [...] guessed-at correspondences with, and differences to, other cognitively constructed patterns*» (De Kock, 2006: 20-21) creando spazi per una produttiva comparazione ed integrazione tra lingue e culture diverse.

⁶⁹ Come postulato da Welsch: «*Transculturality is, in the first place, a consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures. These encompass a number of ways of life and cultures, which also interpenetrate or emerge from one another.*» (Welsch, 1999: 196). Welsch iniziò a teorizzare il suo concetto di transculturalità agli inizi degli anni 90, pubblicato poi nel saggio. *Transkulturalität del 1992 (Lebensformen nach der Auflösung der Kulturen* (in *Information Philosophie*, 2, 1992, pp. 5-20). Versioni più dettagliate furono pubblicate poi anche in successive traduzioni apparse in diverse lingue, in seguirono, in particolare in italiano (*Transculturalità. Forme di vita dopo la dissoluzione delle culture*, in "Paradigmi", Special edition Dialogo interculturale ed eurocentrismo X (1992),30, pp.665-689); in lingua inglese: *Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today*, in "California Sociologist", XVII and XVIII, 1994/1995, pp. 19-39; ed infine in una nuova in versione lingua tedesca *Transkulturalität – Zur veränderten Verfassung heutiger Kulturen*, in *Hybridkultur*, eds I. Schneider and C. W. Thomsen, Cologne, Wienand, 1997, pp. 67-90). Il concetto di Transculturalità ha tuttavia origini storiche remote ma, naturalmente, una analisi diacronica dei vari pensatori che hanno anticipato/auspicato una dimensione di comunicazione interculturale si pone ben al di fuori del tema di questo contributo. Ricordiamo qui solo Jaspers e Nietzsche; quest'ultimo dichiarava che nel futuro i popoli avrebbero dovuto «*work actively on the merging of nations*» (Nietzsche, trad. ingl., 1984: 228). Cfr anche Jaspers Karl, *Vernunft und Widervernunft in unserer Zeit*, Munich, Piper, English trans. by Stanley Goodman, *Reason and Anti-Reason in our Time*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1952.

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TTIP: much ado about nothing?

Domitilla Sartorio*

Abstract

In 2013 the United States of America and the European Union started negotiations for a free trade agreement, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The general idea behind the agreement is to make it easier for European firms to trade with and invest in America, and for US firms to do business in Europe. What is more, TTIP would reinforce shared western values globally by generating high standards for trade and investment rules. The idea is simple enough, yet TTIP has been highly controversial from the start for a number of reasons that will be analysed in this paper. These reasons, together with shifts in soft power and hints of geopolitical changes, have propagated the general idea that TTIP is not going to achieve its expected goals. The objective of this work is to illustrate each obstacle that has been slowing down the sealing of the agreement and how the sum of these factors could result in much ado, TTIP-wise, about nothing.

Introduction

In 2013 the United States of America and the European Union began negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Since then, public opinion has reacted in a variety of ways. Much has been said and written about the pros and cons of the agreement and on whether the effects of TTIP would be positive and for whom. In spite of the hopes that have been raised around the topic, at the time of writing the prospects for reaching a comprehensive deal are riddled with difficulties.

The first chapter of this paper will take a 'behind the scenes' look at the treaty and the Free Trade Agreements that preceded TTIP. The reasons that brought the European and American superpowers to the bargaining table to talk business will also be discussed.

* Royal Holloway – University of London / Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

From the very start of the talks, TTIP ran into significant political and public opposition and has already had to overcome a number of obstacles. Even though both parties aim at creating the world's largest free trade zone, issues concerning topics such as GMO and privacy regulations have been delicate topics since the start of negotiations and have failed to pave the way to concluding the treaty. The main hurdles concern the so-called *sensitive issues*, i.e., matters that neither party is ready to negotiate on or compromise, in line, respectively, with their European and American constituencies. The main points under discussion are: public services, food and environment safety, banking regulations, privacy, jobs and democracy.

The objective of this work is also to review the geopolitical factors determining the slowdown TTIP has met within its final phase. We will look into the evolution of Germany's role in the deal and how Europe's milestone policies have changed and why. What is more, we will take account of the effect of Brexit¹ on the world in general and on the treaty in particular, as well as (and perhaps especially) the election of Donald Trump as US President.

Signing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership would be not only in the interest of both the US and EU, but it could also create a new, open and fair global trading system for the 21st century. The only question that must still be answered is whether, together, the EU and the US are strong enough to influence the rules. The outcome hoped for is that the the US and the EU will come together to fashion a framework that they can agree upon for their own trade, but which also acts as a model of greater fairness for the global trading system.

The conclusion that will be drawn after looking at the above-mentioned factors is that, possibly, the TTIP has lost momentum. Too many factors have changed since negotiations began, and weak governments all around Europe regret having gotten involved in something bigger than their political aspirations. Yet, globalization cannot be stopped, and if TTIP is not signed in the near future, in a decade or so another partnership with a different acronym will no doubt manage to set the rules for the largest free trade zone.

1. Understanding the transatlantic trade and investment partnership

Free Trade Agreements (FTA) have a long history but the majority of those

¹ Brexit, as known, is the term used to describe the 'British Exit' from the European Union. On June 23, 2016 British citizens voted to exit the European Union.

that have been brought forward so far have been based on asymmetrical bargaining, mainly North-South agreements between a developing and developed countries aimed at fostering commercial and financial cooperation between nations (Solis, 2013). These deep integration initiatives cover regulatory and non-tariff barriers, and a significant share of the world's GDP is regulated by these trade groupings: TPP 12 (38%), RCEP (30%) Japan-EU FTA (34%) US-EU FTA (46%) (Egan, 2014).

The above-mentioned percentages point to a detail worth mentioning: the agreements signed so far, respectively by the US and the EU with third parties have different patterns. As for the US, it is easy to identify the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)² as the model the US has followed for all of its successive FTAs. The European Union, on the other hand, has always developed different kinds of trade agreements ranging from those associated with development and millennium goals based on former colonial ties to stability and association (SAA) pacts that generate potential accession negotiations to the free trade agreement with EFTA or non-European countries.

As we can see, over the past two centuries the North Atlantic countries have dominated the world economy through different kinds of agreements, but the transatlantic axis is expected to lose influence in the world economy at an increasing rate over the next few years. What is more, 2007 marked the onset of the global financial crisis, and the major recession that followed ensures that the future belongs to the emerging economies. The winners will be the new emerging powers, especially in Asia, but also in Latin America and Africa. One example highlighted by Babarinde (2014) is that African exports to China leaped dramatically from roughly \$1 billion in 1996 to over \$56 billion in 2011. Therefore, the US and Europe have a duty to act, not only because they would otherwise fall behind economically, but also because rapidly emerging countries do not necessarily share the core principles that underpin open rules-based commerce, and are now showing no real interest in new market-opening initiatives. As a result, the global economy is drifting dangerously towards the use of national discriminatory trade, regulatory and investment practices. What is more, European nations are still recovering from the economic crisis that has significantly slowed down their growth, and there has been limited progress in multilateral rounds; therefore the

² The North America Free Trade Agreement took effect in 1994 and was signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, creating a trilateral trade bloc in North America. Available at <http://www.naftanow.org/>.

timing for a new trade initiative seemed compelling for both sides of the Atlantic.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership arose in this context as a desire in both Washington and Brussels to strengthen the role of the West in the global economy. Starting in 2013, the first round of trade negotiations under TTIP was supposed to «strengthen the international economic system [...] by supporting innovation, economic growth, and job creation in the United States and the EU and around the world».³

The US and the EU, the UK included, still account for almost half of global GDP and a third of world trade, and therefore closing the TTIP agreement would have created the world's largest free trade zone and free movement of capital. In summary, despite the economic surge of the emerging economies, the US and the EU are still the big players in the international economic system, in addition to having the most fluid, intense and open bilateral trading and investment relations. Their aim is therefore to 'act before it is too late' by reducing commercial barriers between the US and the EU through the elimination of most taxes applied to imports, particularly benefiting small business that could sell goods across the Atlantic more easily and cheaply (Walker, 2016). Investments also play a big part in TTIP as a big slice of the agreement concerns plans for rules and protection to make international investment more attractive. The EU and the US opened negotiations to create the world's largest volume of free trade and investments, covering more than 40% of global GDP, a third of global trade flows (around US\$ 650 billion per year) and almost 60% of global accumulated investment stocks (over US\$ 3.7 trillion) (Steinber, 2014).

The two parties also believe that achieving such a big free trade zone would increasingly lead to higher income and employment. Efforts to open transatlantic markets must be tied to joint efforts to strengthen the ground rules of the international economic system and to engage the emerging growth markets in a common effort to extend the benefits of open markets to their citizens and companies.

Unfortunately, free trade agreements between the EU and the US have a long history of false starts. After successive rounds of the General

³ Forging a Transatlantic Partnership for the 21st Century, Business Roundtable, Transatlantic Business Dialogue and the European Roundtable of Industrialists, April 18, 2012.

Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)⁴ negotiations, officials realized that true growth would come about through elimination of non-tariff barriers and a new focus on services and regulation (Vastine, Jensen and Lee-Makiyama, 2015). The New Transatlantic Agenda and Transatlantic Business Dialogue (1995), and the Transatlantic Economic Council (2007) did not produce meaningful results. For this reason, the promise of both chief negotiators, Dan Mullaney for the US and Ignacio Garcia Bercero for the EU, to get the agreement going by the end of 2016 seems to have fallen wide of the mark.

2. *Sensitive issues, public worries*

As for every FTA negotiations, each side has its set of politically *sensitive issues*. The U.S. and EU economies are so integrated that the remaining *sensitive issues* are few. Yet they have been slowing down the path to the finalization of the deal right from the beginning of negotiations in 2013. These issues are barriers rooted in the respective legal and political structures, and their resolution may not necessarily fit into the negotiating structure of a new transatlantic agreement (Vastine, Jensen and Lee-Makiyama, 2015). At the same time, they also coincide with preoccupations about which public opinion has not yet been reassured. In fact, the EU's secretive and largely corporate driven approach to trade negotiations has attracted strong criticism from civil society, making it increasingly difficult, especially for Europe, to compromise in order to close the deal.

In an article written for the *Independent*, Leo Williams summed up in an apocalyptic but exhaustive way the six TTIP issues public opinion is most worried about. These are the same *sensitive issues* on which the US and the EU would have to meet halfway in order to close the deal:

1. Public services
2. Food and environments safety
3. Banking regulations
4. Privacy
5. Jobs

⁴ The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was a multilateral agreement signed in 1947 which lasted until the establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1995.

6. Democracy

2.1 Public services

This follows the idea that governments should provide their citizens, regardless of their income, with certain public services. Depending on societies' needs, such services may include health, education and social welfare, or utilities such as gas, electricity, and water. However, governments are increasingly turning to the private sector to get these services. Under TTIP public services could increasingly open up to commercialisation and liberalisation, be subjected to international competition and privatisation. All this could become more difficult and expensive to reverse in the future.

What is more, Fritz (2016), among others, worries about how, under the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS),⁵ US corporations could sue the EU and its member states over regulatory changes in the service sector, diminishing corporate profits. Policies regulating public services have in fact already been targets of ISDS claims (Fritz, 2016). However, it is a mistake to think that the ISDS is merely about 'lost profits'. Investment treaties and ISDS were created by and for governments, not as an instrument that could circumscribe its ability to adopt laws and regulations in the public interest.

A tangible example of the public's idea of the effects of TTIP on public services can be evinced by glancing at British newspapers such as "The Guardian"⁶ or "The Independent"⁷ which have been commenting the impact of TTIP on National Health Service (NHS). TTIP's opponents have been arguing that including healthcare in the agreement will force the privatisation of the NHS, make privatisation impossible to reverse or enable US firms that own a stake in an English hospital to sue under the agreement if they were nationalised. The European Commission has said that it will include "tried and tested" provisions in TTIP that will ensure governments to have the freedom to organise their health services as they wish and that EU countries will reserve the right to exclude foreign companies from «health services which receive public funding or State support in any form and

⁵ Investor-state dispute settlement is a system through which individual companies can sue countries for alleged discriminatory practices.

⁶ E.g., see: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/ttip-nhs-privatisation-jeremy-hunt-junior-doctors-strike-obama-isds-a7001691.html>.

⁷ E.g., see: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/feb/22/ttip-deal-real-serious-risk-nhs-leading-qc>.

are therefore not considered to be privately funded» (McKinney, 2016, available on line). The government, as in McKinney's article, had stated that nothing in TTIP would affect its ability to make decisions on the NHS. Of course this was before Brexit, which has made the whole matter even more confused.

Generally, the public is fighting for public services to stay out of TTIP, as there is growing concern that profit will distort the ability of these services to be run in the public interest. But when in September 2013 the European Commission circulated a detailed questionnaire⁸ to European industry to ascertain their particular interests in the US and the obstacles they had encountered when trying to participate in public tenders the results showed that European businesses were interested in commercial activities such as energy, health, transportation and public utilities. These results cannot be ignored. What is more, business groups are also advocating inclusion in TTIP rules on public-private partnerships (PPPs),⁹ which in light of austerity, public cuts and recession, could be a positive alternative in Europe to the conventional public spending model. Although the European Parliament's TTIP resolution voted in July 2015 asks for the exclusion of public services from the agreement's scope of application,¹⁰ the issue is yet to be closed and it is hard to picture that TTIP agreements on the matter will be resolved in the foreseeable future.

2.2 Food and environmental safety

As for food and environmental safety, the widespread fear is that TTIP could lower European standards and alter American ones. Due to scientific assessments in the EU and insistent demands by EU citizens, almost no GE crops are grown in EU countries. On the other hand, in 2013 alone, farmers in the US planted around the nation roughly 169 million acres of GE corn, cotton and soybeans (Fernandez-Cornejo et al., quoted in Barker, 2014).

In her report *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership – Impacts on*

⁸ BusinessEurope 2013: Response to "European Commission's Questionnaire to EU Industry on Public Procurement in the U.S. (September 2013)", November 5, 2013.

⁹ PPPs are contracts between governments and private companies under which companies finance, build and operate elements of a public service and get repaid over a number of years, either through charges paid by users or by payments from the state.

¹⁰ European Parliament 2015: European Parliament resolution of 8 July 2015 containing the European Parliament's recommendations to the European Commission on the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (2014/2228(INI)).

Food and Farming, Debbie Barker (2014) highlights some interesting points that are worth looking at.

Among the Food safety threats that TTIP would impose on the EU the author recognizes that:

- The EU will have to accept U.S. meat imports of livestock treated with non-therapeutic antibiotics and growth-enhancing hormones.
- The EU will have to accept U.S. chemically washed poultry.
- Geographical Indicators would be eliminated or eased.

On the other hand, there will be TTIP effects on the US too, such as:

- Relaxed standards of feed ingredients that include ruminant materials known to transmit mad cow disease.
- Substitution of “Buy American” procurement policies with “Buy Transatlantic,” which would be particularly negative for American products because recently Maine, Connecticut, and Vermont have approved mandatory labelling bills which are also being introduced in approximately 26 other states.
- Recognition of European-wide milk standards as equivalent to the U.S. Grade A standard.

So, on one side we have most industry groups in the EU supporting and working with American biotech companies and hoping for a softening of EU rules on issues such as genetically engineered (GE)¹¹ crops and products. On the other, there are NGOs such as Greenpeace,¹² which denounce the treaty. In particular, Greenpeace has hardened its position on TTIP after obtaining in May 2016, 248 pages of leaked TTIP negotiating texts. Following the leak, Jorgo Riss, director of Greenpeace EU, said: «[TTIP] would lead to European laws being judged on their consequences for trade and investment – disregarding environmental protection and public health concerns.»¹³

¹¹ In genetically engineered (GE) goods the DNA has been modified with genes from other plants or animals in order to add to the former a desired trait only present in the latter.

¹² Greenpeace is the worldwide known independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment.

¹³ As reported on: <http://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/en/News/2016/TTIPleaks-confidential-TTIP-papers-unveil-US-position/>.

Changes in food and farming policy are particularly controversial, since they affect consumer choices as well as agricultural methods and market choices (Vastine, Jensen and Lee-Makiyama, 2015). Environmental issues are also at stake. Policies regarding food and environmental safety are yet another controversial point in TTIP, especially since European leaders have asserted that under no circumstances will they allow TTIP negotiations to influence the EU's GMO regulations. But even though this matter could prolong the process, the results could allow the partnership to create pragmatic and speedy procedures and decisions on trade regulations.

2.3 Banking regulations

The EU and the US have reacted differently to the financial crisis of the last decade, through different programmes and reforms to regulate banks and other governmental financial institutions. In this light, TTIP has been seen as an attempt to harmonise these regulations, since a common framework on banking regulations would increase economic stability. It is not easy, though, to draw a distinction between regulations that are barriers to trade and regulations that are necessary for prudential purposes (Barbee and Lester, 2014).

Previous trade agreements safeguarded the regulatory sovereignty of states, but this has resulted in some regulatory divergences, especially following domestic post-crisis regulatory reforms in various jurisdictions (Quaglia, 2016). Different regulatory frameworks could cause market fragmentation, reduce cross border trade and potentially trigger regulatory arbitrage. Moreover, transatlantic regulatory divergence about financial regulation towards third countries, especially in Asia could create the dilemma of having to side one way or the other. What is more, the US is currently opposed to negotiating stronger cooperation within TTIP, as they fear that the cooperation framework proposed by the EU could slow down their process of domestic reform.

Finally, NGOs and governments are asking whether financial service liberalisation and commitments in trade agreements could limit room for government manoeuvre and how it could affect the on-going reform of domestic financial regulations imposed by states to regulate this area of their economies. Trade liberalisation could impinge upon the regulatory power of sovereign states, a matter of concern following the international

financial crisis. Puccio (2015) pointed out that this would not be the case, as trade agreements provide ample security for sovereign actions in regulating financial markets. Yet financial services, trade and banking regulations are currently one of the most controversial service chapters in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations.

2.4 Privacy

Data protection is among the most debated issues of recent years. Additionally, considerations about the right to protect one's personal data have increased since it was revealed that the NSA illegally spies on millions of people, including the current German Chancellor Angela Merkel, through their mobile phones. The news of US electronic surveillance and wiretapping coincided with the first round of TTIP talks in Washington in 2013. This obviously had a negative effect on politicians' willingness to commit their political capital to the TTIP negotiations, and increased the paranoia of Europeans about securing open flows of data and the effect of TTIP on privacy. The concern is that the agreement could undermine data protection by creating loopholes for companies abroad to gain access to personal data otherwise under the jurisdiction of the European data protection law. Data collection is an asset for US companies such as Google or Facebook, whose data collection through their platforms is highly profitable. An easing of data privacy laws and a restriction of public access to pharmaceutical companies' clinical trials are also thought to be on hot issues.

TTIP would be an agreement between the world's most data-dependent service economies, and therefore it is a priority to secure the right to free flows of data. Franke (2015) points out the positions of the whole Union about this topic. The European Commission, Franke (2015) writes, has no right to discuss fundamental rights in its mandate to negotiate TTIP, since data protection is a fundamental right. Likewise, the European Parliament (EP) has always been clear in its position on this matter. Data protection is so highly regarded that the EP, rightly or wrongly, denied the US access to data financial transfers in the EU as part of the Terrorist Finance Tracking programme. The Commission, on its end, has no power to discuss data flows in a trade agreement and has been working for data protection to remain out of the deal. The whole thing further raises the question of whether the European Union is entitled to conclude TTIP negotiations unless the US reforms its own data protection rules.

2.5 Jobs

Critics also voice concerns about regulation, since the deal could lead to lower standards for workers and the environment (Walker, 2016), as well as job losses. The Germans have been particularly concerned about losing their jobs and have taken part in a number of marches, such as the one in Berlin on October 10, 2016, during which 150,000 expressed their disapproval of TTIP. The reason for the strong opposition is dual. First of all, despite the profound economic crisis, Germans consider their country to be stable, and such a big change to the *status quo* could destabilize it. Secondly, Germany and Austria have comprehensive social welfare systems, and low rates of unemployment might threaten existing privileges rather than creating opportunities for growth.

What is more, as we have previously seen, the belief is that the EU is prepared to sacrifice public services and sensitive tariffs on agriculture, a move which would cause significant loss of jobs. Yet, the CEPR Impact Assessment report suggests that the EU could benefit by up to 119 billion euro a year under a comprehensive agreement. So much so that Outgoing Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht believes that TTIP «would likely translate into millions of new jobs for our workers».¹⁴

2.6 Democracy

Last but not least, Molly Scott Cato, a Green British politician, through her position of MEP was able to access reserved documents relating to TTIP. In February 2015, talking about TTIP, she stated:

What I am able to reveal from my visit to the [European Parliament] library is that I left without any sense of reassurance either that the process of negotiating this trade deal is democratic, or that the negotiators are operating on behalf of citizens.¹⁵

Of course, for every agreement of this scope judgments cannot help but be biased. For all the above-mentioned reasons and many more the Greens

¹⁴ Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/march/tradoc_150759.pdf.

¹⁵ Cato, Molly Scott. "I've Seen the Secrets of TTIP, and It Is Built for Corporations Not Citizens | Molly Scott Cato." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 4 Feb. 2015, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/04/secrets-ttip-corporations-not-citizens-transatlantic-trade-deal.

criticised TTIP right from the start. Yet many have of the criticisms been about whether the agreement is fully democratic, and more than anything why every round of talks has been carried out in complete secret and the little information that has reached the public opinion has been delivered through leaked documents.

The reason why people are afraid TTIP could be anti-democratic is a sum of everything that has been discussed so far. The lesson to be learned seems to be that progress means transparency, with respect to trade as well.

3. The European and American political framework

During past electoral campaigns, on both sides of the Atlantic, concerns about international trade agreements have been important issue, and will continue to be. The opposition against TTIP in EU member states is still growing and mobilizing — and the EU has entered a phase in which key EU member states keep a short leash on the European Commission. Several member states are weak, politically vulnerable coalition governments. The US, on the other hand, has just elected Donald Trump as President. During the electoral campaign Mr. Trump highlighted several times that these foreign deals are under threat if co-signatories refuse to renegotiate them in America's favour.

TTIP talks were opened because Germany decided that it was prepared to pay for the talks, a role it no longer has any intention of playing alone. Governments throughout the Union are really weak at this moment, and in Germany, as in many other countries, they depend on weak coalitions, none of which are strong enough to take unnecessary political risks. As mentioned, TTIP negotiations arouse sensitive issues, many of which European citizens hold dear. Because European governments are at their weakest (Vastine, Jensen and Lee-Makiyama, 2015), trade could also be an important campaign issue in the European polls and make some political leaders less keen on TTIP. French President Francois Hollande and the leader of Germany's Social Democratic Party, Sigmar Gabriel, have already expressed reservations. And, as seen, there are many problems that the negotiators themselves are finding it hard to agree on. They have made progress on offers to cut or eliminate tariffs but not on all goods, and, as Walker (2016) points out the two parties are still struggling to agree on what are called geographical indications: is feta just a type of cheese or does it have to be made in Greece? Therefore it is politics, espe-

cially the disquiet of many voters about the impact of trade liberalisation that could delay TTIP or eventually sink it entirely.

Brexit surely introduced new elements into the equation. There is every reason to suspect that the UK will now try to develop a bilateral deal with the USA, not only as a trade and economic partner, but also as a political and military one. In fact, to compensate for any possible trade losses as a result of leaving the EU, London is increasing trade links with countries outside of the European Union. The US is the UK's main trading partner. In 2015, the total value of UK export goods was \$460.1 billion, and just over half of UK exports went to Europe (Katasonov, 2016). Washington, as declared by the newly elected US president, will prioritize a free trade deal before any European agreement is signed, which may be of some comfort to the Conservative Brexit supporters leading negotiations.

It is disappointing that Europeans do not see how TTIP could be. To mention one aspect, TTIP will make transatlantic economic policy towards Russia more consistent, meaning that any new round of sanctions may have a broader and more coordinated effect, making the European Union stronger. At the other side of the Atlantic, in 2016 the US has been consumed by presidential politics, with Republican nominee Donald Trump building his campaign on US closure to the rest of the world in any way possible, and his opponent Hillary Clinton raising her own concerns on the matter as well. Last year the Democrats promised American voters that if Barack Obama's administration ran out of time to conclude the TTIP agreement, it would be up to the new Democrat president: given the electoral results, this promise is no longer relevant. Just as it is hard to see the EU and the US closing the gap on vital points of disputes such as the proper labelling of feta cheese, it is difficult to envision Mr Obama's successor feeling much enthusiasm for trade agreements of any kind after the election (Donnan, 2016).

As seen, the EU and the US are still important enough to influence the rules, but geopolitics is too weak today, and postponing the treaty could have a profound effect on the international balance of economic power. Thus it is imperative that the US and the EU come together to fashion a framework that they can agree upon for their own trade, but that establishes a model for the global trading system, as Vastine, Jensen and Lee-Makiyama already reported back in 2015.

4. TTIP and international settings

To think that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership only concerns the European Union and the United States would be an understatement. For TTIP to be achieved it will be necessary for the two parties not only to overcome domestic obstacles, but also convince the emerging countries to accept the regulatory standards agreed upon by the European Union and the United States. A lot is at stake for both sides with the initiation of this major trade agreement. TTIP is expected to achieve several important goals at the international level, and the most important one is to generate high standards for trade and investment rules. After all, the whole point of a trade agreement is to secure commercial benefits that can improve the quality of life for all the citizens involved. As a consequence of TTIP, the role of the U.S. and the EU in the world economy would increase.

The US and the EU have sought cross-regional bilateral free trade agreements as a mean to promote export growth and disseminate new trade and investment rules for global governance. As stated at the Transatlantic Business Dialogue and the European Roundtable of Industrialists (2012): «The goal is not to build an Atlantic Fortress, but instead to pave the way for sustainable economic growth in the global marketplace. Europeans and Americans certainly share an interest in extending prosperity through open markets». The stronger the bilateral agreement, the more seriously third party countries will respond and the more effort they will put into forging their economic future through moral values.

TTIP would impact almost every country in the world. Teresiński (2015), for example, comments on the effect that the TTIP would have on Russia. The economist believes that the transatlantic agreement would further isolate Russia, and even if Russian companies can improve their standards to Western levels across-the-board, this would take years. The fear, though, is that Russian economy may not be strong enough and will therefore fail to adapt to the new economic order that TTIP might bring. The only hope for Russia to benefit from TTIP would be if it focused more on economic diversification; in that case TTIP could offer concrete benefits to Russia. It remains to be seen if these lost trade opportunities are a powerful incentive, or if Russia will decide to ignore a possible source of trade which lies right under its nose.

On the other hand, Egan (2014) discusses the role of China within the whole framework. He believes that through TTIP there could be an increase of

rules able to push other countries to engage in domestic structural reforms to meet new trade commitments. The challenge is also to engage China on trade and investment rules in a productive manner, since trade agreements that marginalize China make no sense, given the fact that today it relies mainly on supply chains (Solis, 2013). While China has accelerated its own trade initiatives, there should be more engagement and strategic thinking to avoid the securitization of major trade negotiations. TTIP could be a great vehicle for encouraging compliance with product safety standards, and tackling issues such as intellectual property violations and anti-dumping measures to meet WTO commitments (Steinfeld, 2003 in Egan, 2014).

Creating such a new dynamic could be a major boost toward constructing a stronger and broader commitment to open markets. TTIP could be a win-win for all, working as a catalyst for the Russian economy and giving China the chance to improve its standards of production.

5. *Much ado about nothing?*

As we have seen, many issues still need to be tackled, and many more questions answered. For example: «Are the parties negotiating a regular FTA, or a new form of an economic partnership going beyond any existing precedent?» (Vastine, Jensen and Lee-Makiyama, 2015: 1). All evidence points to a 'partnership going beyond any existing precedent' but are the two parties aware of the compromises they will have to accept? The US and the EU should be aware of the level of ambition of the treaty, and each side should consider to what extent it is ready to step back.

Sensitive issues will remain insurmountable obstacles until either of the two parties consents to the conditions set by the other. But both the EU and the US, in regard to policies on public services, food and environments safety, banking regulations, privacy, jobs and democracy governments, cannot ignore the severe opposition from the public and the obstinacy of the press. Even more so now that European governments are administrated by such weak political coalitions, and especially with a newly elected American President who seems so reluctant to the project. Three years have passed since the beginning of the negotiations but it looks as though more regress than progress has taken place. In fact, another important aspect to consider is that politics and economics are interconnected, and a Free Trade Agreement of this dimension cannot go far without being

powerfully backed by strong political coalitions or willing presidents. The deadlock phase of TTIP is the direct result of the current political situation both in the US and in Europe. The two blocs must take stock of electoral results influenced by populism, which in turn has arisen from the financial crisis. These factors are all interconnected and they all will have to be solved together. The US and the EU should not forget that they have sought cross-regional bilateral free trade agreements as a means to promote exports and disseminate new trade and investment rules for global governance as expressed by Teresiński (2015) and Egan (2014).

Therefore, the conclusion that can be drawn is that the *ado* has risen so far from politicians and European and American citizens. Both the negative and positive criticisms can be constructive and form a stronger basis for the next round of negotiations. These past three years of negotiations have brought to the surface *sensitive issues* for governments and citizens on both sides of the Atlantic. When negotiations get over this hurdle the two parties will be able to put the partnership to work – to open markets, embrace enhance the economic growth of emerging countries, and strengthen global rules. The most important point is that the world is expecting TTIP. Global rule making solutions – 40% of the economy will be in their hands and it will be easy to apply sanctions on whoever does not comply. After all, the primary goal of TTIP has always been to work with US and EU government leaders and business communities to create a different transatlantic partnership that supports economic growth and job creation.¹⁶ As Donnan (2016) writes «centuries of history tell us that open economies do better than closed ones».

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Facing anxiety with irony: a look at neologisms in contemporary Europe

*Marina Niceforo**

Abstract

In the last few years, Europe as a Union has been dealing with dramatic political, economic and social changes, facing a period of confusion and instability whose consequences are nowadays affecting in several ways the citizens of each member country.

One of the consequences of this uncertainty is the appearance of many different neologisms that reflect people's anxieties and fears concerning present issues such as migrations, the persistent economic and job crisis, or Britain's exit from the EU. In particular, neologisms are often created by young people – who more than others experience the effects of these phenomena in Europe – and spread around through the Internet and social media; thus, neologisms are quickly and easily recognized by the speakers of the European languages.

The aim of this paper is to give an overview of some of the most successful neologisms that have emerged in the European context starting from the past few months. Their origin – including the event, cultural background and place that sparked their creation – will be examined, and considerations on their function as elements of linguistic innovation will be given.

Neologisms are a sign of contemporary Europe and are certainly worth considering within national and international linguistic policies endorsing article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, which claims: «[the European Union] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.»

* Università degli Studi di Napoli "Parthenope"

Introduction

Article 22 of the EU Fundamental Rights Charter – «The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity»¹ – is one of EU's guiding principles concerning linguistic policies and directives on the 24 official community languages. More specifically, article 3 of the Treaty on European Union claims: «[the European Union] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced».² In accordance with these regulations, the EU's multilingualism policy has developed in two complementary ways: one the one hand, it strives to protect Europe's rich linguistic diversity; on the other, it promotes language learning.³

The 26th of September, 2016 marked the 15th anniversary from the creation of the European Day of Languages, whose aims are nowadays more and more focused on the increase of plurilingualism and intercultural understanding, and on the promotion of lifelong language learning.⁴ In this last regard, Eurostat released a report on language learning in the EU's schools revealing that more than 80% of primary school pupils in the EU were studying a foreign language in 2014, with English as clearly dominant.⁵ English is preferred also at other levels of education and, in general, as Europe's *lingua franca*; it is the language of various domains such as economics or science, and is certainly the most used in social media.

The spread of English is a non-stopping phenomenon, as many scholars forecast in their linguistic theories; in Graddol's words, «no single language will occupy the monopolistic position in the 21st century which English has – almost – achieved by the end of the 20th century».⁶ In this sense, English seems to accomplish more than other European languages the EU's idea of serving «as a bridge to other people and open access to other countries and cultures, promoting mutual understanding».⁷ If mutual understanding is the common aspiration, then neologisms (and neologisms in English) may well be one of those bridges between countries and cultures.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12010P&-from=EN#page=8>.

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12008M003>.

³ https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/multilingualism_en.

⁴ <http://www.ecml.at/Resources/Newsletter/tabid/1385/Default.aspx>.

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7662394/3-23092016-AP-EN.pdf/f57d3442c-7250-4aae-8844-c2130eba8e0e>.

⁶ Graddol David, *The Future of English?*, London, The British Council, 1997, p. 58.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/linguistic-diversity/index_en.htm.

1. What are Neologisms

According to TermCoord:

«A neologism [...] is a new term which has entered common use, but has not yet been fully accepted into mainstream language. Neologisms appear due to developments in social life, culture or science, and are usually directly attributable to their specific era. [...] Some new words are closely tied to temporary phenomena, and fade into insignificance, while others, related to enduring aspects of society, remain, and become permanent features of our lexicon.⁸»

When a neologism is created, it enters a language and is tested by a limited audience. It then spreads to a wider number of speakers depending on its success and, once accepted, becomes part of dictionaries, language corpora and glossaries.⁹ There are many ways in which neologisms are formed. Following Pavel's typology taxonomy (2001), neologisms can be either morphological or semantic (that is, affecting the grammatical structure or the meaning respectively), and are produced through derivation, compounding, blending, acronymy or borrowing (morphological neologisms), expansion, metaphor, conversion of grammatical category, adoption from another field (semantic neologisms).¹⁰ Blending – the process through which parts of two or more words are combined into one new word – is perhaps the most effective process of formation of neologisms and one of the most creative, as it is extensively used in newspaper titles and social media (think of *hashtags* and *Twitter trends*).

In a study of 2015 conducted by linguists Constantine Lignos and Hilary Prichard,¹¹ participants were asked to rate 88 blended words on a five-point scale in order to understand why some neologisms work better and last longer than others. They noticed that there are 6 main factors that contribute to the success of a neologism: the probability to complete a word

⁸ <http://termcoord.eu/2016/08/neologisms-their-origin-and-how-they-reinvigorate-language/>.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Panahi Maryam, Shomoossi Nematullah, Samadi Mohsen, Mohammadian Seyyed Amir Reza, *Correspondence in Translating English Neologisms into Persian: an Example from Children's Fiction*, in "Life Science Journal", X, 9, 2013, pp. 352-360. <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>.

¹¹ Lignos Constantine, Prichard Hilary, *Quantifying cronuts: Predicting the quality of blends*, in "Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting", 2015. <http://lignos.org/blends/>.

(in the case of abbreviations); the association between words that are (semantically) related (as for “breakfast” and “lunch” resulting in “brunch”); the link to popular culture (“Sharknado” is the title of a movie and a blend between “shark” and “tornado”); the applicability of a neologism to different fields and situations; naturalness and understandability. These two last principles, in particular, are the most relevant: a blended word should sound as more natural as possible – its roots should be easily recognizable, as well as its meaning.¹²

Another fascinating feature of neologisms lies in the fact that virtually anyone could create one; of course there are some groups, categories or individuals – such as young people, highly-visible personalities from various fields, or journalists – that are more likely to produce a neologisms than others, but this possibility is open to every kind of person. For example, in 2016 an Italian 8-year-old student made up the adjective “petaloso” (from the noun *petalo* + adjective suffix *oso*) to describe a flower with many petals, and this case became popular on the Internet and the media for several weeks. The boy’s neologism was sent for evaluation to the Italian *Accademia della Crusca*, and the institution replied that the word was «nice and clear», although of course «it needs a lot of people to use and know a word for it to enter the Italian language».¹³

This study takes into account neologisms found on online databases (mostly TermCoord and WordSpy), grouping them into a small corpus built following some basic criteria:

- Date of origin: neologisms whose origin dates back to more than five years before 2016 were discarded.
- Place of origin: neologisms originated in Europe were preferred to those created outside Europe. As a consequence, not all subjects or domains are necessarily considered.
- Language: English neologisms were considered for the most part, although some Italian and Spanish neologisms are analysed.

¹² [https://atkinsbookshelf.wordpress.com/tag/how-many-words-enter-the-englishlanguage-each-year/](https://atkinsbookshelf.wordpress.com/tag/how-many-words-enter-the-english-language-each-year/).

¹³ Read the original letter in Italian from Accademia della Crusca at: http://www.corriere.it/scuola/16_febbraio_24/ferrara-copparo-piccolo-matteo-inventa-parola-petaloso-accademia-crusca-risponde-7296e148-dac9-11e5-956c-6f7e55711737.shtml?refresh_ce-cp.

2. A look at neologisms in the EU area

Included among the 8 words in the 2015's *Word of the Year shortlist* by the Oxford Dictionaries staff,¹⁴ *Brexit* is maybe the most relevant neologism of the last few years. It was coined in 2012 as *Brixit* (blending of *British* or *Britain* + *exit*), probably on the pattern of the earlier *Grexit* (*Greece* or *Greek* + *exit*),¹⁵ but it became used in 2015 during the political campaigns for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. After the results of June 2016 Referendum (in which 51,9% voted in favor of leaving the EU), a number of new portmanteau words appeared in the media, among them: *Bregret*, Britain's regret for the vote; *Breturn*, the possible Britain's return into the EU; *Bremorse*, Britain's remorse. All these words, though, did not find official recognition.¹⁶ After *Brexit*, the game was finding humorous neologisms also for the other member countries in the event of their exit from the EU. It is easy to see why blendings like *Frexit*, *Italiexit*, *Nexit* (The Netherlands), and the impossible *Dexit* (from German *Deutschland* + *exit*) and *Oexit* (from Austrian *Österreich* + *exit*), or the even more disastrous *Spexit*, *Pexit*, *Fixit*, *Polexit*, *Swexit*, *Czexit*¹⁷ remained almost unknown. Most of them, indeed, lacked those features of naturalness and understandability that make a new word work. Other attempts came from social media users or journalists and were more creative and funny, but eventually were forgotten because had no practical application over time. Among them: *Quitally* (quit + Italy), *Dumpmark* (dump + Denmark), *Swedone* (Sweden + done), *Departugal* (departure + Portugal), and *Czech-out* (Czech Republic + out).¹⁸

In this spirit of disillusion, the dream of a strong and united Europe is maybe a *Eutopia* (Europe + utopia), as the Italian speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Laura Boldrini defined it during a public speech in February 2016.¹⁹

¹⁴ <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2015/11/word-of-the-year-2015-emoji/>.

¹⁵ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/Brexit>.

¹⁶ Learn more at: http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2016/06/29/why_has_brexit_sparked_an_explosion_of_wordplay.html.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ <http://qz.com/713953/possible-names-for-eu-exits-for-all-members-of-the-eu/>.

¹⁹ <http://www.cronachemaceratesi.it/2016/02/01/laura-boldrini-a-macerata-tra-idee-e-neologismi-ecco-la-mia-eutopia/764116/>.



Image 1: Oxford Dictionaries' Word of the year shortlist, 2015.

Political, economic and social fears dominated the 2015 shortlist, as also the words *sharing economy* and *refugee* prove. The word *refugee*²⁰ is not new, but follows the emergence of expressions such as *death trafficker*, reported by TermCoord with reference to the «operators of inadequate vessels bringing migrants across the Mediterranean seeking to enter the EU, often ending in death».²¹ This expression was first used in 2013 after Lampedusa's migrant tragedy, and was unfortunately still topical in 2016.

In the case of *sharing economy*, this is a lexical neologism that refers to an economic system in which «assets or services are shared between private individuals, either for free or for a fee, typically by means of the Internet».²² The term is not of recent invention but it became widespread in Europe in 2015 after a study for the European Commission by PWC Con-

²⁰ Actually, refugee was chosen as Children's Word of the Year 2016 after prevailing in 2016 BBC Radio 2 500 WORDS competition for children aged 5-13. Discover more at: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2016/05/childrens-word-of-the-year-2016-refugee/>.

²¹ <http://termcoord.eu/termania/neology/neologism-database/>.

²² <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2015/11/word-of-the-year-2015-emoji/>.

sulting.²³ The study showed that activities in the field of sharing economy across Europe had accelerated over the previous two years, thus bringing the concept of *sharing economy* in the spotlight. In this period of limited economic possibilities, the idea of cooperation is something attracting: the reason behind the success of online providers of peer-to-peer and on-demand services like BlaBla Car or AirBnb lies in this. The field of economics and finance seem to be one of the most fruitful in terms of creation of new words, although not all present neologisms were born in Europe: *Emporio-phobia* is a witty definition by American economist Paul H. Rubin, who first used it in his 2013 paper "Emporiophobia (Fear of Markets): Cooperation or Competition?"²⁴ The same semantic concept of "phobia" (fear) appears in the neologism *Eurogeddon*, presenting the fear of a financial collapse in the Eurozone; a combination of *Euro* + *Armageddon* (from the famous sci-fi disaster movie), it appeared in the article "Debt crisis: In our competitive decadence, we face eurogeddon and dollargeddon" written in July 2011 by *The Guardian's* columnist Timothy Garton Ash.²⁵ The neologism has been in use ever since, and was again in the heading of an important article on the *Daily Mail* from September 2016.²⁶

Moving to the practical effects of the ongoing economic crisis on people, neologisms linked to social changes and new social phenomena bear the consequences of current trends in the job sector, including scarcity of jobs, job loss, unfair labour policies. The definition of *clipped wing generation* covers – in the words of the housing and homelessness UK charity *Shelter* – a range of «working adults between the ages of 20 and 34 now living with their parents».²⁷ According to Cambridge Dictionary, this lexical compound indicates «the generation of young adults who are unable to be independent from their parents because they cannot afford independent living costs».²⁸ This social phenomenon affects the whole European area in general, but hits severely in some countries more than others: the Italian *bamboccione* (grown-up baby) or the Spanish *nini* (a person who does not study neither work) and other local neologisms mirror these countries' sit-

²³ <http://www.pwc.co.uk/issues/megatrends/collisions/sharingeconomy/future-of-the-sharing-economy-in-europe-2016.html>.

²⁴ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2360674.

²⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jul/20/us-debt-crisis-europe-an-default>.

²⁶ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3771827/EUROGEDDON-Nobel-winner-warns-euro-doomed-political-elite-s-refusal-admit-misery-s-causing-means-s-far-worse-come.html>.

²⁷ <http://blog.shelter.org.uk/2014/07/clipped-wings-generation/>.

²⁸ <https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2016/05/09/new-words-9-may-2016/>.

uations. As a consequence, a number of new words or expressions were coined to describe and at the same time be ironic about young Europeans, who often have no choice but to go on a *genervacation* («a holiday taken by parents and their grown-up children which is paid for by the parents»), or to sadly accept the diffused *adulthood* («discrimination against young people») of our societies.²⁹

Sociology is also the domain for new words related to family or sexuality. These words are not always originally from Europe and their use is basically the same in all Western countries. As a matter of fact, the spread of new words inside the European countries follows the spread of the related social phenomena. This is the case of recent expressions like *blended family* or *jigsaw family* (other names for “stepfamily”), *cisgender* (someone who is at ease with his/her biological gender), *gender-fluid* (someone who does not identify with a fixed gender) among others.³⁰ Only the Italian *Gengle* – “**Gen**-itori **Single**”³¹ (single parents) – derives from an Italian social network of the same name and refers to a type of family that is more and more common in Italy. The same happens with the language used by young people, in which behaviors and trends are recurrent also outside Europe: this is why *text-walkers* (those who walk while texting) are everywhere these days, people *friendzone* aspiring lovers by putting their romance desires back into a safe friendship zone (the *friendzone*), there are male *bromances* (brotherly romances), *cat-fishes*³² (false identities on social media profiles) and *besties* (best friends). Not to mention the word *selfie* (a self-portrait photograph), already in use in Australia as a slang word since 2002 and then selected as Oxford Dictionary’s word of the year 2013. The circulation of this neologism tells a lot about the story of a word over time and space.³³

Technology is another field whose neologisms are shared also outside Europe for obvious reasons. More than neologisms, we talk about borrowings, loan words and calques from English that have entered other languages; if

²⁹ Find these two last examples at: <https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2016/05/09/new-words-9-may-2016/>.

³⁰ See more at: <http://termcoord.eu/termania/neology/neologism-database/>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3785896/Oxford-English-Dictionary-unveils-new-words-2016.html#ixzz4OHYCGWug>; <http://wordspy.com/index.php?word=jigsaw-family>.

³¹ <http://www.gengle.it/gengle>.

³² <http://it.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=catfish>.

³³ Read the story at: http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2013/11/22/selfie_etymology_an_australian_man_takes_a_photo_of_his_lip_after_falling.html; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/19/selfie-australian-slang-term-named-international-word-of-the-year>.

in countries like Spain or France the tendency to translate foreign words is still alive, in Italy the number of calques from English is impressive: *linkare* (to send a link), *taggare* (to tag someone in a picture or a post) *googlare*, *shazammare*, *whatsappare* (to use Google, Shazam, WhatsApp), *crashare* (when a computer crashes), *editare* (to edit a file) are just some examples.³⁴ All these words combine an English root and the Italian suffix for verbs *-are* in order to create new perfectly declinable verbs, and this is especially due to the English bare grammar allowing other languages to take linguistic elements from it and make them their own. This process of appropriation – resulting in a new form of English called “globish” – has positive and negative consequences for English itself, as will be analysed in the following closing paragraph.

3. Globish English: the other side of neologisms

Whether we like it or not, neologisms are one of the most visible ways through which a language changes and evolves. Despite TV host Conan O'Brien's caustic joke: «The Oxford Dictionary has named *selfie* the word of the year [2013], narrowly beating out *twerk*. In a related story, the funeral for the English language is this Saturday»,³⁵ the appearance of neologisms means everything but the death of a language. What could be feared instead, is the risk arising from the manipulation of English by non-native speakers: a sort of fragmentation that may result in the disappearance of English proper. Unlike Latin – which lost its native land and hence its native speakers throughout Europe – English is still a “pluricentric language”, as Kachru defined it,³⁶ and has many different mother countries. Nonetheless, just like Latin, “native English” may end up being understood in its written form, but adapted into simplified, easier spoken forms that are already emerging: International English, Basic English, and Globish English to mention a few.

Jean-Paul Nerriere is the French businessman who first coined the word (again a neologism) “Globish” (global + English) to define the kind of simplified, easier English spoken throughout the world by non-native speakers.

³⁴ <http://www.panorama.it/cultura/petaloso-googlare-10-parole-piu-segnalate-academia-crusca/#gallery-0=slide-7>.

<http://termcoord.eu/termania/neology/neologism-database/>.

³⁵ http://www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley/2013/11/22/selfie_etymology_an_australian_man_takes_a_photo_of_his_lip_after_falling.html.

³⁶ Kachru Braj B., *World Englishes: Agony and Ecstasy*, in “Journal of Aesthetic Education”, XXX, 2, pp. 135-155, 1996..

Nerriere codified a Globish vocabulary made up of only 1500 words, and wrote two handbooks in which the features of this kind of English are described.³⁷ Globish English has no grammatical rules, but only functioning lines that are generally observable in its spoken realizations (such as the lack of cultural-specific words, dialect, or idioms). In Nerriere's intentions, Globish will promote mutual understanding among different cultures and nations, but of course this would imply the decline of English as is traditionally taught/learned worldwide. In a certain sense, it is true that Globish could limit the influence of English over threatened European languages, reducing English to a service language and leaving more space to other languages' creativity.³⁸ On the other side, this would cause the separation from *real* English and the impoverishment of English itself. A perspective that sounds far worse than the changes envisioned with neologisms.

In the multifaceted context of the European Union, the circulation of neologisms is indicative of the economic, social and political problems and changes that each member country has been recently facing. The still stringent economic crisis, the crisis of migrants and refugees, Britain's exit from the EU are three of the most important phenomena involving all Europe, and Europe as a Union is called to face and provide answers to them. The neologisms here analysed summarize all these problems, and are a sure sign of the anxiety people are experiencing throughout Europe. At the same time, language creativity can be seen as a way of defusing fears and pessimism, and the playfulness of present neologisms leaves hope for the future. Irony may not be a practical attitude – indeed it could be also intended as a passive way of accepting the present situation, without doing anything to change it – but is a creative attitude towards Europe's issues, at least when it comes to *talk* about them.

What is amazing about neologisms around the EU is their immediateness in communicating shared ideas and concepts, as if the English language were one of the few places of real mutual understanding beyond all incomprehension, mismatching international policies, and countries' individual demands. A definite proof of the vitality of English, after all.

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³⁷ Nerriere's handbooks are: *Decouvrez le Globish* and *Don't Speak English, Parlez Globish*.

³⁸ Find out more about Nerriere's Globish English at: <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2006/dec/03/features.review37>; <http://public.oed.com/aspects-of-english/shapers-of-english/the-rise-of-global-english/>.

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Proverbs as an index of national identity. A cross-cultural study

Douglas Ponton*

Abstract

Proverbs appear to have always served the function, among all peoples, of conveying practical advice about life from the older, more experienced generation, for the benefit of successive generations (Hagopian, 2008). This is the domain of what is known as 'folk wisdom', or 'old wives' tales', and it has produced an enormous body of proverbs, many of which have more or less precise cross-cultural versions.

From a comparative perspective with the proverbs of other European countries, this paper describes a study of proverbs in the Sicilian dialect; proverbs which are handed down from a past which, in the early 21st century, has become a distant memory. In a political context which sees the European parliament adopting a policy of linguistic diversity, it asks what might be the role for regional dialects in this scenario. Sicilian, in this regard, is seen as the representative of Europe's many other regional dialects, each with their own traditions and body of proverbial wisdom.

From the perspective of identity studies, the paper suggests that the use of dialect proverbs may represent an important index by which the Sicilian character can be appreciated. The processes of identity construction involved may be under pressure, as is the dialect itself, from the passing of time and other transformations of the social landscape. It is generally accepted, in fact, that one of the central functions of language is to be the carrier of cultural knowledge and traditions (Everett, 2012; Gumperz, 1982; Hinton, Vera and Steele, 2002); the paper asks what relevance cultural knowledge from historical periods – from pre-industrial or pre-technological, or even pre-internet times – might have in the current social climate.

* Università degli Studi di Catania

Introduction: Europe and its linguistic scenario

While the United States of America have, in the English language, a tongue that is common across the breadth of the continent, the European Union has historically been characterised by linguistic diversity. This reflects, to a degree, to the languages of the member nations which constitute it; though if we consider that, within many of the member states are numerous regional dialects, the picture becomes more complex. The difficulties that have surrounded the language question within the evolving Union are well-known, and were perhaps inevitable, if it is remembered that some of the world's most widely spoken languages, each with long histories and strong traditions, are found on the European continent – French, German, Spanish and Italian, to name but a few of the most prominent. The situation was complicated further in 1973 by Britain's entry, which brought English, a language which was at that time rapidly acquiring the status of global lingua franca, to the negotiating table. One consequence of this complex picture has been the burgeoning costs, to the European Parliament, of translation and interpreting services within its bureaucracy, as documents produced by the parliament have to be translated from one language into another, simultaneous translation services are needed to accompany parliamentary debates, and so on. Among the provisions of the EU Language Policy, in fact, are the following:

In the European Parliament all EU languages are equally important: all parliamentary documents are translated into all the official languages of the EU and every Member of the European Parliament has the right to speak in the official language of his or her choice.¹

Among other objectives, we find that the EU recognises the priority role of language as the bearer of culture, and as an important index of personal and collective identity. We also find the EU expressing its commitment to linguistic diversity and the promotion of language learning:

In Europe linguistic diversity is a fact of life. In an EU founded on 'unity in diversity', the ability to communicate in several languages is a must for individuals, organisations and companies alike. The aim of EU language policy is to promote the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the EU and to create an environment that is friendly towards all Member State languages.

¹ "Language Policy | EU Fact Sheets | European Parliament." Language Policy | EU Fact Sheets | European Parliament. N.p., n.d. Web. 01 Nov. 2016. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuld=FTU_5.13.6.html.

However, in a political context whose defining characteristics have arguably been, over recent generations, centralisation and expansion, it is not clear what role Europe's many regional dialects may have in the future. Are they considered to be 'Member State languages', in the terms of this document, or is it not more probable that the diversity celebrated here regards the national tongues of the national states? In fact, when, in 2004, Europe expanded its number of working languages from 11 to 20, this was controversial among the speakers of many minority languages. It meant that Latvian and Estonian achieved official status, though the numbers of native speakers are far fewer than those speaking Catalan, which was not recognised, while speakers of Irish Gaelic were particularly incensed over recognition of Maltese, for the same reason (Craith, 2006: 44).

Besides Sicilian, Italy has a host of regional dialects - perhaps as many as it has regions (Tosi, 2008). Regrettably, though these dialects are indeed expressive of a rich cultural and linguistic heritage, they are currently in a state of decline, which the EU's language policy has done little to reverse. Sicilian, like other regional dialects in Italy, first came under pressure during the post-war period, when there was a deliberate effort, on the part of the Italian government, to establish Italian as the national tongue, in an attempt to eliminate parochialism and reinforce a sense of national unity. As Tosi (2008: 294) explains, this was not simply a feature of the Sicilian context, but was found throughout the peninsula:

Everywhere the dialects lost ground, not only because they were perceived as outdated in a modern industrial society (significantly, they were frequently ridiculed on TV) but also because parents tried to provide children with a strong basis in the national language, before they would be required to use it at school.

Yet, as Tosi's exhaustive study also makes clear, the many dialects survive because they act as sources of inspiration for Italians (*ibidem*: 274), who clearly find cultural, historical and social reasons motivating their continued attachment to the traditional tongue of their areas. Indeed, Tosi reminds us (*ibidem*: 274) that this situation is not a feature of Italy alone, but is found throughout Europe, especially in the lands where the major European languages are spoken. The situation may simply be more marked in Italy, which he calls unique in Europe, because Italian is the first language of only 50% of its speakers.

This paper explores these issues, taking the case of Sicilian as representative. It traces connections at the level of folk culture, specifically through proverbs, with other European traditions and languages that are facing the same socio-political challenges of the post-modern period.

1. *The social context*

The post-modern period has witnessed many upheavals and transformations, with Marshall McLuhan's global village becoming more than a virtual reality. Modern European societies have assumed some of the characteristics of what was once associated with the United States of America; they have mostly become 'melting pots' in which populations from different ethnic, religious and linguistic traditions attempt to forge new social ties, with inevitable tensions along the way (Levinson, 1999). Europe has opened its frontiers, to host waves of migrants either fleeing persecution or seeking to improve their living conditions. All these processes have had an impact at a linguistic level, with new idiolects emerging in situations of particular linguistic contiguity, new terms entering mainstream languages; and, on the social front, challenges to traditional patterns of adaptation to host cultures by certain immigrant groups that wish to retain their distinctive identities.

Against the backdrop of a globalised world apparently in frenetic evolution, in all directions, at every moment, the sense of self and of society come under special pressure, and the relevance of cultural notions from a remoter period may be called into question. It is generally accepted that one of the central functions of language is to be the carrier of cultural knowledge and traditions (Everett, 2012; Gumperz, 1982; Hinton, Vera and Steele, 2002); and yet, it may be asked what relevance cultural knowledge from historical periods – from pre-industrial or pre-technological, or even pre-internet times – might have in the current social climate. While Sicily's proverbs and other folk traditions are no less deeply felt than those of other countries (Ponton, 2016), it is not clear what their role might be, in the current rapidly evolving social and political landscape.

Proverbs from ancient times survive in the languages of all European nations: English people will still say, in certain contexts 'a stitch in time saves nine'. However, there is something anachronistic about the latter, with its image of a housewife with a darning needle, bent over a sock. It conjures a quaint picture, of a time when the housewife was more common than the career woman, and when it was worth her while to repair socks, rather than

buy new ones at the first sign of wear. Ironically, as far as proverbs are concerned, where once it was the prerogative of the older generation to pass on the wisdom of the ages to the young, nowadays roles are reversed, and it is the younger generations who have to inform their elders about the latest technological innovations, new social media platforms, and so on.

This paper describes a study of proverbs in the Sicilian dialect; proverbs which are handed down from a past which, in the early 21st century, has become a distant memory. It suggests that the use of such proverbs may represent an important index by which the Sicilian character can be appreciated; and that the processes of identity construction involved may be under pressure, as is the dialect itself, from the passing of time and other key transformations of the social landscape.

2. Proverbs

This paper assumes that much can be learnt about a nation's character and personality traits from a study of its proverbs and sayings (Shariati and Tayebi, 2012: 142), though this is easier to state and, perhaps, to agree with, than to illustrate with any precision. It is not a novel proposition; after all, as these authors point out, it was the Elizabethan philosopher, Sir Francis Bacon, who said that «the genius, wit and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs». Proverbs have also been seen in axiological terms, as encapsulating the shared beliefs and values of a society (Nippold and Haq, 1996). In this context, Arewa and Dundes (1964: 70) suggest that parents find it convenient to use proverbs for educational purposes, thereby shifting responsibility for the consequences of the advice onto 'the anonymous past'. In this way they evade direct association with the advice, since it comes, not from the parents themselves, but from the 'cultural past', the 'elders'. Against this, however, Honeck (1997: 104) comments that, whenever proverbs are used in parent-child communication of a didactic nature, a parental explanation or commentary tends to co-occur with the use of the proverb. He quotes Cram (1994: 90), who says that «proverbs are used as formulae to impose categories and meaning upon events, and their invocation carries the tacit gloss: 'that's just the way things are, and that's all there is to it'» (Honeck, 1997: 17). The proverb, therefore, has pretensions to represent the voice of truth, and this is reflected in the grammar, which generally avoids modality and uses either an imperative ('Look before you leap', or the degrees of zero epistemic modality represented by the use of the present tense, e.g. 'Handsome is as handsome does').

Meanwhile, Dundes says that proverbs, along with other types of folk culture, represent a society's 'self-image', providing the researcher with an insiders' perspective on their culture and sense of self (Dundes, 2007: 55). Though there do seem to be traces of the specific 'folk-wisdom' of each national/linguistic group present in its proverbs, to generalise about such matters is, arguably, to approach the realm of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis with its broad and diffuse speculations. There are many possible pitfalls in this area. Consider, for example, the following proverbs, from England and Italy:

Two's company, three's a crowd (England)

L'ospite è come il pesce; dopo tre giorni puzza (Italy)

The first apparently means that the English prefer to speak with one interlocutor rather than several; perhaps there are overtones here of the value the English set on privacy, a familiar national stereotype also found in the well-known saying 'An Englishman's home is his castle'. The second, however (the guest is like a fish; after three days it starts to stink) appears to clash with the widespread notion of the Italians as a hospitable people.

As Honeck (1997: 2-4) makes plain, the didactic function of the proverb, in context-bound situations of parent-child interaction, appears to be common across cultures. Proverbs appear to have always served the function, among all peoples, of conveying practical advice about life from the older, more experienced generation, for the benefit of successive generations (Hagopian, 2008). This is the domain of what is known as 'folk wisdom', or 'old wives' tales', and it has produced an enormous body of proverbs, many of which have more or less precise cross-cultural versions. This is true both within Europe and globally (Shariati and Tayebi, 2012: 146). It is worth examining some of these side by side, and reflecting upon the similarities and differences they evince:

- 1) A bad workman blames his tools (Britain)

Cha dooar rieuu drogh veaynee corran mie (tr. A bad reaper never got a good sickle) (Isle of Man)

- 2) One good turn deserves another (Britain)

Un service en vaut un autre (France)

- 3) Old birds are hard to pluck (Britain)

Gallina vecchia fa buon brodo (tr. An old hen makes good broth) (Italy)

4) One swallow doesn't make a summer (Britain)

Una rondine non fa primavera (One swallow doesn't make a spring) (Italy)

Одна ласточка весны не делает (tr. One swallow can make spring) (Russia)

5) 烧阮眷将臭/ yǎoyuì zhòng qiānjīn (tr. Friendship weighs more than gold) (China)

(Не имей сто рублей, а имей сто друзей (tr. Better to have 100 friends than 100 roubles) Russia)

Friendship canna stand a' on ae side (Scotland)

Freends are like fiddle strings, they maunna be screwed ower tight (Scotland)²

A friend in need is a friend indeed (Britain)

6) Man soll das Kind nicht mit dem Bade ausschütten (tr. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater) (Germany)

Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater (Britain)³

7) On n'est jamais si bien servi que par soi-meme (tr. One is never so well served as by oneself) (France)

Chi fa per sé fa per tre (Who does things for himself does so for three) (Italy)

8) Women's jars breed men's wars (Britain)

Women, priests and poultry never have enough (Britain)

Di lu mari nasci lu Sali, e `đi la fimmina ogni `māli! (Eve is mother of all that's ill, as salt the ocean wide doth fill) (Sicily)

² The Scottish proverbs come from the Wood's 1893 collection of quotations.

³ In Wolfgang Mieder's 1993 book, *Proverbs are never out of season*, we read that this apparently quintessential British proverb had German origins, and spread through the USA thanks to its use by Carlyle in a translation from a work of Goethe (Mieder, 1993: 196).

'A fimmina teni quattru `banneri: càrzara, malatia, furca e `galēri!
(Woman holds four banners high: prison and gaol, gallows and sick
to die!) (Sicily)⁴

9) Marry in haste, repent at leisure (Britain)

Ômūnu maritātu..ôçêddu 'ngağgiātu (A bridegroom, don't forget, is a
bird caught in a net) (Sicily)

Honeck (1997: 22) discusses, among other approaches to proverb classification, Norrick's (1985) system, which distinguishes four types of proverb, some instances of which are found among these samples: *synecdochic*, in which the literal and figurative meaning "stand in relation of microcosm to macrocosm" ('one swallow doesn't make a summer'); *metaphoric* ('An old hen makes good broth'), *metonymic* (not found here; the example Norrick gives is 'out of sight is out of mind'), and *hyperbolic* ('Eve is mother of all that's ill, as salt the ocean wide doth fill'). As he also points out, the most general of these categories is the first, since most, if not all proverbs, have a synecdochic function. In other words, in the instance given, the microcosmic significance concerns the appearance of an actual swallow, the macrocosmic generalises out towards the whole course of an individual's existence, cautioning him or her to beware of celebrating too soon, in order to avoid disappointment.

Though some of these proverbs (1, 2, 4, 6, 7) are apparent equivalents at the level of content and pragmatic sense, there are differences in most. For example, the English and Manx proverbs in (1) clearly have identical pragmatic significance, though the lexis is different. The proverbs in (2), again, are near equivalents, eventual nuances depending on the functional connotations associated with 'good turn' in English, and 'service' in French. Though the lexis in the Italian and English proverbs in (3) is very similar, and the topic, old age, is the same in both, there are significant differences in meaning. Both proverbs are of Norrick's metaphoric type: the Italian proverb insinuates the sexual attractiveness of elderly women, while the English seems to suggest that old people, because of their greater experience, are hard to deceive. Though the sense of English and Italian versions of (4) are identical, there is a difference of climatic context – swallows arrive in Italy in spring, in summer in England. However, the Russian version, though apparently similar in form, has quite a different meaning. Here one

⁴ The Sicilian proverbs are from my translation of Carbonaro (2014), *The Woman in Sicilian Proverbs*.

swallow does – or can – make spring. While the British and Italian proverbs warn against the dangers of raising future expectations based on one hopeful sign, the Russian proverb has a much lower threshold of optimism. The proverbs on friendship (5) show a certain affinity between Russia and China, in these hyperbolic proverbs with money metaphors. Both the Scottish proverbs are metaphoric and have a characteristically canny flavour. The hyperbolic proverbs in (6) are the closest in this sample set to perfect equivalents at lexical, semantic and pragmatic levels. Both proverbs in (7) are synecdochic: though they speak of serving oneself in a single instance, the application is wider, suggesting that self-reliance should be a guiding principle of one's entire life. All of the proverbs in (8) are hyperbolic. The vein of misogyny here, that characterises both the British proverbs and those of Sicily, also present in (9), might interest the social historian.⁵

Though there are subtle differences in these various takes on the same aspects of reality, it is no simple task to identify what these might signify in terms of collective or individual national identities. What follows is a deeper exploration of the proverbs of Sicily, one of Europe's minority cultural groups, with an extraordinarily rich and diverse heritage constituted by its dialect proverbs.

3. Historical and language background in Sicily

The historical background to the proverbs presented in this paper is encapsulated in to the following brief description of feudal Sicily. The author describes it as the situation in 'pre-18th century' Sicily, but makes it plain that the land ownership reforms enacted during the 19th century were not as successful as expected. In point of fact the feudal system lasted well into the twentieth century:

A feudal society is one that is characterized by a dominant stratification between two classes: a small elite minority that own almost all of the land in rural areas while living in urban areas; and a large peasant population that lives in small villages and works the land for minimal compensation while passively accepting its subservient role. In Sicily, the feudal structure consisted of land that was divided into

⁵ Carbonaro (2003) explores the great number of misogynistic Sicilian proverbs about women, and documents the oppressive social conditions in which women were compelled to live under the system of feuds, which only began to disappear after the Second World War.

large estates, or 'feudo', owned by barons or other nobility. These barons were granted their power by the foreign powers that historically ruled the island (e.g., the Spanish, the Austrian Hapsburgs, and the Bourbon kings of Naples), who relied on a few local noble families to manage public affairs. In return, these families were given control over lands encompassing three-quarters of the villages on the island (Sardell, 2009: 7-8).

Like many endangered languages with historical links to a particular region, Sicilian has been challenged by a dominant national language. Political unification in the nineteenth century led to the establishment of the Tuscan variety, in which Dante Alighieri wrote, as the national language throughout the Italian peninsula (Bonner, 2003: 29). In an article entitled 'Sicily', critic Lucio Zinna describes a familiar scenario of language erosion:

At the beginning of the [twentieth] century, Sicilian dialect could be considered the unofficial *language* of a people and territory. For the lower classes it represented virtually the only linguistic code in use, nor was the "Sicilian tongue" perceived as *diminutio*: the national language remained an expression of other realities, both geographic and social: it was the language of the rich (as diabetes was regarded a disease of the rich) and of the North: of people from the "continent."

During the twentieth century, the process of erosion gathered pace thanks to the impact of radio, cinema and television, all of which further reduced the status of local dialects throughout Italy. Sicilian also suffered because of its status as a primarily oral language; few of its greatest writers, among whom were Pirandello and Verga, chose to use it as their main vehicle for literary expression.

Sicily currently exhibits some of the characteristics of *diglossia*, as identified by Ferguson, a kind of «standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play» (Ferguson, 1959: 232). As Bloomer, Griffiths and Merrison (2005: 374) point out, the roles played by the competing languages tend to divide along lines of prestige, with the stronger variety used in formal contexts such as the courts, education and business, the less prestigious reserved for communication among friends and family. Sicilian, in fact, is not used in institutional contexts of public health, education, religion or the law, nor for official publications or other semiotic systems such as road signs. Advertisements only seldom include text in Sicilian, despite the

effectiveness of this technique, as studies on the use of Spanish dialects have shown (Williams, 2005: 142). The dialect is rarely heard on television or radio, where even the local channels prefer to broadcast in Italian. Although there have been some official moves to promote its use in schools, progress in this area has been slow (Cipolla, 2004).

Sicilian survives throughout the island, with many regional variations, in the street, the shop and the market place, where it is in daily use in familiar exchanges among locals, and in many homes, though here it is more used by the elderly. Arguably, in such contexts, it serves an important function as the transmitter of shared cultural values, especially through its use in proverbs, which once gave cohesion to the entire social group. The use of dialect, in fact, serves as the custodian of group values against erosion by those of a larger group (Gumperz, 1982: 66), and it is in such contexts that the proverbs discussed in this paper are mostly to be found. Sicilian is principally a spoken language, whose distinctive phonological features have been recorded by Mazzola (1976). The aim of this paper is to explore the proverbs that have been handed down across the generations, this being a context in which it still seems to serve an authentic function, providing a focus of identification and communal identity. The enormous body of proverbs provides a crucial focus for an authentic regional identity, tied to historical traditions and ways of feeling, encapsulated in the rhythms and forms of dialect speech.

4. Methodology

The project described in this paper is part of a wider investigation of the status of Sicilian proverbs and dialect use generally. Participants received a questionnaire (see appendix B), distributed through the internet, asking them to submit the proverbs they knew, together with some basic information about where and when the proverb was heard, and who they heard it from. They were also asked their age range and that of the person telling the proverb, and whether they currently lived in Sicily. These few simple questions provided a broad picture from which conclusions could already be drawn; as will be seen, most proverbs tended to be childhood reminiscences involving an older relative or friend.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 585) provide the following criteria for thinking about the relevance of linguistic data to the question of personal or collective identity:

- 2) identities encompass macro-level demographic categories, temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles, and local, ethnographically emergent cultural positions;
- 3) identities may be linguistically indexed through labels, implicatures, stances, styles, or linguistic structures and systems.

A Sicilian person will be considered such because they were born in Sicily, whether or not they speak the Sicilian dialect or use the proverbs (demographic category). However, a deeper dimension to a 'Sicilian identity' will be, in Bucholtz and Hall's terminology, 'linguistically indexed' through the use of proverbs and the Sicilian dialect, which are the relevant 'linguistic structures and systems'. What is of interest, in the terms of this study, in the findings, are the characteristic features of this particular linguistic system. Natural objects and animals loom large in these proverbs, which provide flashes of rural life in the feuds, for example:

(26) A jaddina fa l'uovu e o jaddu c'ha sbrusca u culu (The hen lays an egg and the cock has a sore arse).

This is a proverb of Norrick's synecdochic type. From the observation of animal behaviour, the cock and hen, the laying of eggs – important daily occurrences in rural life – the proverb advances its sardonic commentary on matrimonial relations, where the wife does all the work and the husband complains that he is feeling tired. A broader research question, hopefully to be followed up in future studies, regards the relevance, in our post-modern period, of identity cues such as these, which come from the remote past and a completely different social environment.

4.1 Data

A list of the proverbs returned by the survey will be found in appendix A. For reasons of space, I will discuss here only the following examples, in the terms outlined above (table one):

1	Cui pecura si fa, lu lupu si la mangia	Whoever behaves like a sheep is eaten by the wolf
2	Megghiu picca gòdiri, ca assai trivulàri	Better little enjoyment than great trouble

3	A megghiu parola è chidda ca nun si dici	The best word remains unpoken
4	A megghiu risposta e chidda ca nun si runa	The best answer is that not given
5	U rispettu è misuratu, cù ù porta l'avi purtatu	Respect is measured, whoever uses it will receive it
6	Ù focu unni cari abbrucia	Fire burns where it falls
7	Nun ti fari iabbu, cà tà ritorna	Refrain from criticizing, it will come back to you
8	Senza iabbu e mancu maravigghia, né a matri e mancu a figghia	Both mother and daughter are acceptable (but no more)
9	Fai beni a jatta ca ti ratta	Do good to the cat that scratches you
10	E veru ca l'amicu si n'affriggi ma tintu cu c'è n'ta li travagghi	It's true that your friend feels sorry for you, but it's worse to be the one in trouble

Table One: Sicilian proverbs

Some of these proverbs have European equivalents. For example, the first is also found in Germany (Wer sich zum Schaf macht, wird vom Wolf gefressen), and was also used by Benjamin Franklin (Lilly, 2014). The Sicilian character is not only found in the use of the dialect – this is to state a truism – but can also be seen in the use of words that are known throughout Italy as quintessentially Sicilian, such as ‘picca’ (little) (2), ‘unni’ (where) (6), ‘iabbu’ (criticism) (7, 8), ‘tintu’ (worthless) (10). Moreover, the proverbs contain nuances on the theme they treat that are not found in proverbs from other nations but seem typical of Sicily and its culture. Examples of this are:

A megghiu parola è chidda ca nun si dici
A megghiu risposta e chidda ca nun si runa

The first might be taken as implying that it is better to be ‘men of few words’, as in the Shakespearean phrase, which has passed into the English language.⁶ However, viewed in a more specific sense, it evokes the notion of ‘omertà’ (secrecy) which is associated with many southern European states, and especially with Sicily. Here it is worth reflecting for a moment about stereotyped images of Sicily that circulate in current media (Abbamonte and Cavaliere, 2016), and how closely they may or may not

⁶ The quotation comes from Henry V (3:2): «Men of few words are the best men».

correspond to actual or historical reality. What is true is that there were systems of authority linked to powerful local figures – landowning nobility, ecclesiastical dignitaries or politicians, and also criminals – and these figures loomed larger in the popular consciousness than the distant authorities in Rome, or their representatives in Palermo. Therefore, the classic response of the Sicilian under police interrogation would be to maintain silence, or deny having witnessed the fact, as Sciascia was to document in his novel *Il giorno della Civetta*.⁷ Thus, these proverbs advocating parsimony of speech make sense in a social context with specific historical, socio-economic features. Likewise, ‘respect’ (5) is stereotypically associated with Sicilian culture (Carbonaro, 2003: 308), and this proverb too evokes a context where it was important to maintain good relations with the powerful.

The cat is an animal that features in many European proverbs; in English, some of the best-known are: All cats look gray in the dark / A cat has nine lives / When the cat is away the mice will play, and so on. Here are some other examples from other European languages:

French: Le chat échaudé craint l'eau froide (the scalded cat fears cold water, in English ‘once bitten twice shy’);

German: Je mehr man die Katze streichelt, desto höher trägt sie den Schwanz (the more you stroke a cat, the higher it lifts its tail);

Spanish: Al ratón de un sólo agujero presto le pilla el gato (the mouse with only one hole is quickly caught by the cat);

Italian: Tanto ci va il gatto al lardo che ci lascia lo zampo (the cat went so often to the lard that it left its paw there).

Once more, the Sicilian social context needs to be invoked to appreciate the nuances of the cat proverb: do good to the cat that scratches you (9). The system of the feuds was one where everyone knew his place in the social ladder, where the overwhelming majority of the population lived on the land, and where no good could come from resenting slights received from the powerful. The rationale of this proverb was not simply a question of ‘turning the other cheek’, in some Christian gesture of submission. Rather, the idea was that by ‘doing good’ to this person he might one day be disposed not to scratch you anymore, but to help you or your family rise in the social

⁷ The phrase made famous by Sciascia is: «Niente so. Niente ho visto». (I know nothing. I saw nothing).

hierarchy. The same restricted social horizons are seen in (1) and (2), which warn against an excess of ambition. The first proverb about 'iabbu' (criticism) (7) is a Sicilian version of the biblical 'judge not that ye be not judged', while the second evokes the context of matrimony in the feudal times, where arranged marriages were frequent, and the dowry was of fundamental importance (Carbonaro, 2003). This proverb gives a blunt, possibly politically incorrect, assessment of the female in question as a potential marriage partner. The proverb about fire (6) is characteristic of the specifically rural setting where most Sicilians lived and worked, where this statement would be literally true, especially in the parched landscapes of the inland regions in summer. It would probably have been applied, metaphorically, to falling in love. Finally, there is a characteristically bitter taste to the worldly-wisdom of (10), which warns that your friend might feel very bad when he sees you suffering, but will do nothing to help you out of your trouble.

5. Conclusion

As we have seen, Sicilian proverbs afford glimpses of the vanished social context of rural life under a feudal system. In this, their origins are similar to those of many of the other European proverbs, cited above. Proverbs are the fruits of the folk-knowledge of a people and, as such, are necessarily long in ripening. Some of the questions raised at the beginning of this paper have not been answered, since they relate to a research project into proverbs, the Sicilian dialect and the question of regional and personal identity, which is ongoing. As we have seen, the historical context of the Sicilian feud can be usefully invoked to account for nuances in the meaning of the proverbs. The proverb, meanwhile, claims for itself the status of absolute truth, as we also saw above. It may not be true, today that, for example, *Ù focu unni cari abbrucia*. Modern fire-fighting techniques, and the urban social context in which the great mass of the population live today, have changed this. Yet if we think of the synecdochal force of the proverb, its application to the phenomenon of falling in love may still be as valid as ever, in the same way that 'a stitch in time' still 'saves nine', despite the fact that many of the people who use it may have no precise idea of the proverb's original meaning.

Of interest in the responses to the questionnaires, were the data regarding the circumstances in which the proverbs were heard, and this is another area for further investigation, possibly for an ethnographic survey. Here two things emerge; firstly, that the proverbs were mainly communicated

from an older person such as a family member, which is consistent with the picture of transmission, described above. Secondly, that most of the transmissions occurred a long time ago, which may suggest that this function of transmission is beginning to wane in importance, perhaps in response to the transformations of post-modern society outlined in this paper.

This then, is the sense in which this study of Sicilian proverbs may have wider applicability to the European context, since all major European languages – and their less prominent, related dialects – are carriers of an enormous wealth of cultural and linguistic knowledge, transmitted to a considerable degree by their proverbs. The question of what relevance these apparently old-fashioned sayings might have to modern man, what might their contribution be to a post-modern, European identity, is one I hope to follow up in a further study.

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Appendix A: List of proverbs

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
1	Cui pecura si fa, lu lupu si la mangia	Whoever behaves like a sheep is eaten by the wolf	Comitini (Agrigento)	As a boy	My grandmother
2	Megghiu picca gòdiri, ca assai tri-vulàri	Better little enjoyment than great trouble	Comitini (Agrigento)	As a boy	My mother
3	A megghiu parola è chidda ca nun si dici	The best word remains unpoken	Aragona (Agrigento)	As a boy	My mother
4	A megghiu risposta e chidda ca nun si runa	The best answer is that not given	Modica	70's-80's	My grandmother
5	U rispettu è misuratu, cù ù porta l'avi purtatu	Respect is measured, whoever uses it will receive it	Floridia	Still used	My mother
6	Ù focu unni cari abbrucia	Fire burns where it falls	Floridia	Still used	My grandmother

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
7	Nun ti fari iabbu, cà tà ritorna	Refrain from criticizing, it will come back to you	Floridia	Still used	My mother
8	Senza iabbu e mancu maravigghia, né a matri e mancu a figghia	Both mother and daughter are acceptable (but no more)	Flordia	Still used	My mother
9	Fai beni a jatta ca ti ratta	Do good to the cat that scratches you	Portopalo di CP	2010	My mother
10	E veru ca l'amicu si n' affriggi ma tintu cu c'è n'ta li travagghi	It's true that your friend feels sorry for you, but it's worse to be the one in trouble	Portopalo di CP	The 70's	My father
11	Tantu a quartara va a l'acqua o sa rumpi o si ciacca	The water pot goes so often to the water that it will either split or break	Pachino	The 70's	My grandfather

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
12	A riggina jappi bisu- gnu ra vici- na	The queen bee still needs her neighbours	Pachino	In 2010	My mother
13	Cu è n'ta mannira mancia ri- cotta	Whoever lives on a farm will eat ricotta	Pachino	In 2010	My mother
14	I vai râ pi- gniàta i sapi sulu a cuc- ciàra c'arru- mína	Only the wooden spoon knows the troubles of the pot	Modica	In 2010	Proverb book
15	Acqua e fuócu ràcci luócu	Watch out for fire and water	Modica	In 1950	My mother
16	Cu picca spenni assai spenni	You spend most when you want to spend least	Modica	In 1990	My mother
17	Cu ti vo bbeni ti fa- cciànciri e- ccu ti vo- mmàli ti fa rrídiri	Those who love you make you cry, those who hate you make you laugh	Giarratana	In 1950	My mother
18	Quannu amuri voli trova luócu	When love wants to, it finds space	Ragusa	In 2010	Proverb book

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
19	U liétu è na ggran cosa, si nun- zi rormi s'arripósa	Bed is a wonderful thing: if you don't sleep you rest there	Ragusa	In 1950	My father
20	N'arbi- ru nun-zi tàgghia a-pprímu cuórpu	You don't cut a tree down with one stroke	Modica	In 2010	Proverb book
21	u immulutu ammienzu a via u immu suou nun su talia	The hun- chback who walks in the street sees only the humps of others	Pachino	September 2010	My mother
22	Pani ruru e cutieddu ca nun tagghia	Hard bread and a knife that won't cut	Pachino	September 2010	My mother
23	Cu lassa a veccia pa nova sapi chi lassa e nun sapi chi trova	Whoever leaves the old way for the new knows what he is leaving but not what he will find	Pachino	In 2010	My mother

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
24	Sugnu ap- pujatu n'ta sta cantu- nera rimmi chi sugnu e nun mi riri cu era	I'm here now, judge me for who I am not for who I was	Pachino	In 2010	Family and friends
25	Cu ri sceccu ciana a ca- vaddu u pri- mu cauciu l'avi jddu	Whoever teaches a donkey to be a horse will get the first kick	Pachino	In 2010	Work colle- agues
26	A jaddina fa l'uovu e o jaddu c'ha sbrusca u culu	The hen lays an egg and the cock has a sore arse	Pachino	In 2010	My mother
27	L'erba tinta nun mori mai	Bad weeds never die	Ispica	Recently	Colleague
28	Mangiari e ben vistiri Ognunu u sa pariri	To eat and dress well are things everyone will do in their own way	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
29	Quannu l'a-muri c'è nun varda scuru e mancu lu viàgghiu s'è curtu o luntanu	When you're in love, you don't mind the darkness, nor if the journey is long or short	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
30	Luna 'mpunenti acqua nenti	Moon in the west; it won't rain	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
31	Ccu pratici assimigghi	You resemble those you frequent	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
32	Ra testa feti u pisci	The fish rots from the head	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
33	Scusa nun richiesta curpa manifesta	Not to ask for pardon is an admission of guilt	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
34	Piru maturu cari sulu	A ripe pear falls by itself	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
35	Sièri sièri ca la ta vintura veni, ciù ssai aspiètti miégghiu ti veni	Wait, good things are on their way, the longer you wait the better they will be	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
36	Cu pati pp'amuri nun senti lururi	Whoever suffers for love feels no pain	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
37	Ci vò sorti a friri l'ova	You need luck to fry an egg	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
38	Falla comi vuoi ma sempri cucizza è.	No matter how you cook it, it is still a courgette	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
39	A miégghiu acqua sa vùvunu i puorci.	The pigs get the best water	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
40	Pensa la cosa accanza ca fai: la cosa pinsata è miégghiu assai	Think of things before you do them: much better to think things over	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
41	Cani e but- tani quànnu su viécchi anà morri i fami	Dogs and prostitutes, when old, will die of hunger	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
42	U tàciri è virtù u fing- iri è rispo- sta!	To be silent is a virtue and to pre- tend is an answer!	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
43	Cu cu- mànnu nùnnu stànca.	Whoever is in command will never tire of it	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
44	U munnù è a crirrénza Cu finisci e cu cuménza	You get the world on credit: some arrive, others leave	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
45	U pruvàtu nun lu stàri a pruvàri ca ciù ssai u pruòvi ciù béstia u truòvi.	Don't keep trying things out, because the more you try them out the worse they get	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
46	Quànnu canta a tartaruga ciéntu vagna e ùnu astùta	When the tortoise sings, a hundred get wet and one is put out	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
47	I curti cini ri sintimiéntu e i luòngghi cini ri viéntu	The short are full of feeling and the tall of wind	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
48	Nun sùnu li bbillizzi ca ti fànu amari Sùnu li tràtti e l'arùci paròli.	It is not beauty that will make you be loved, but manners and sweet words	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
49	Cunti mali ffatti si puònu sempre rifàri	It's always possible to recount, where this was badly done at first	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
50	Sògghira e nora nun fa mai farina bbona	Mother and daughter in law will never make good flour	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
51	Nun si movi foglia se Diu nun vòglia.	Not a leaf will move unless it's God's will	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
52	Se tu puor- ti la tua cavalla a beri in ogni funtana e la tua moglie in ogni fe- sta all'annu a cavalla bosa e a mugghièri buttana	If you take your horse to drink at every foun- tain and your wife to every party, the horse will be full and your wife a whore	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
53	Miègg- hiu essiri mmiriàti ca essiri cum- patuti.	Better to be admired than pitied	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
54	A prima ac- qua r'àustu fa scappari a ucièddu ro uòscu.	The first rains of au- gust make the birds flee the wo- ods	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady

	The proverb	Translation	Where	When heard last	Who used it
55	Quannu unu nun pussèri nen- ti nunn'ha paura re bricanti.	If you possess nothing, you have nothing to fear from thieves	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
56	Sunu quattru li così ùnni unu nun ci ha viri firi: amuri ri ronna, carità ri frati, sulì d'immièrnu e nuvuli ri stati.	There are four things you should not trust: a woman's love, a priest's cha- rity, the sun in winter and clouds in summer	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
57	Vali cciù ssài n'àsinu vivu can u dduttùri muòrtu	A live don- key is worth much more than a dead doctor	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady
58	Quannu la fami c'è lu pani cala, e quannu la siti c'è l'acqua sa bbona	When you're hun- gry bread is tasty, and when you're thirsty the water is nice	Ispica	70s/80s	Old lady

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Gentile Lettore,

Per partecipare nello studio “La lingua Siciliana nel 2010-11”, per cortesia rispondere alle seguenti domande:

Conosci qualche proverbio Siciliano, soprattutto quelli detti in ambienti famigliari? Se la risposta è sì, sarebbe molto utile fornire le seguenti informazioni al riguardo, come nel esempio:

Il proverbio:	luogo di uso:	Quando sentito per l'ultima volta:	Da chi sentito:
Cui pecura si fa, lu lupu si la mangia	Comitini (Agrigento)	Da ragazzo	Da mia nonna

Poi sarebbe utile sapere:

	Età vostra	Età di chi usava il proverbio
0-10		
10-25		
25-45		
45-70		
70-		

Abiti in Sicilia?

SI	NO

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Ideas Worth Subtitling: Ted Talks on the Cognitive Map of Europe

*Eleonora Sasso**

Abstract

This paper takes as its starting point such conceptual metaphors as “Europe is a blended space” and “Europe is a possible world” as exemplified by a series of subtitled conferences on Europe freely available at the website TED.com in order to advance a new reading of subtitling, one which sees this medium as a co-creational and cognitive practice.

Such Ted conferences as “Our Refugee System if Failing. Here’s How We Can Fix It” by Alexander Betts, “Two Nameless Bodies Washed Up On The Beach. Here Are Their Stories” by Anders Fjellberg and the TED interview with António Guterres not only examine their own detailed blueprints of the refugee crisis in Europe, but are also audio-visual narratives examining the relationship between ideas and media. I intend to track through these references and look at the issues – the role of media in the spreading of ideas, subtitling strategies for producing a positive cognitive effect in the viewers, ecc. – which they raise.

But my central purpose will be to re-read the aforementioned series of TED conferences on Europe from a cognitive perspective. I will analyse the cognitive map of Europe as a community unprepared to welcome millions of desperate refugees fleeing war zones. Through blending, parabolic mapping, and conceptual metaphors I suggest, subtitling TED conferences acquires a cultural valence in the sharing of worthy ideas in the contemporary audio-visual Europe.

Introduction

Digital technologies are transforming traditional processes of media production, consumption and distribution. These transformations are changing the relationships between the consumers and the producers as aptly exemplified by the TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) organization, a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talk, founded in 1984 by Ricky Wurman and Harry Marks. World renowned as conference series employing a non-linear model of media distribution and consumption, TED is mainly based on “co-creational practices” (Banks and Deuze, 2009: 214) according to which the viewers and media consumers are involved in the process of translation.

More than 24,732 volunteer translators actively contribute to the success of TED Talks by subtitling and indexing online video content. As members of the TED Open Translation Project, the aforementioned volunteers, who range from well-organized groups working together in their own language, to lone translators working individually, seem to increase what Banks and Deuze define as the «phenomenon of consumers increasingly participating in the process of making and circulating media content and experiences» (*ibidem*).

As aptly investigated by Luis Pérez-González in *Audiovisual Translation. Theories, Methods and Issues*, TED, in line with EU, and Al Jazeera, appears to be maximizing the spread of crowdsourcing¹ as a model of the translation of corporate online content as well as democratizing potential of collaborative media technology (Pérez-González, 2014: 71). In this democratization of technology (Foucault, 1982) aimed at sharing the power of knowledge and technology among volunteer translators, it is worth mentioning a collection of sixteen TED Talks (and more)² on the topic of Europe revealing the multi-faceted nature of Europe.

Cognitively speaking, TED Talks may be defined as an imaginative container in which all conceptual metaphors associated with Europe flourish in the viewer's mind. As suggested by Lakoff (1993), the often referred to conceptual metaphor EUROPE IS A COMMUNITY, is simply one specialisation of what he calls the Event Structure Metaphor, an interlocking set of very general metaphors such as STATES ARE LOCATIONS, CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS, PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS and MEANS ARE PATHS. To put it into Grady's words (Grady, Oakley and Coulson, 1999),

¹ On such a kind of translation see Ray and Kelly, 2011.

² <https://www.ted.com/topics/europe>.

there exists an underlying level of such a very general metaphor as EUROPE IS A COMMUNITY which is called *primary metaphor*. As exemplified by the sixteen TED talks on Europe, the primary metaphor defining the very essence of Europe is grounded in correlations of basic experience.

More than others, Alexander Betts (social scientist), António Guterres (politician and diplomat) and Anders Fjellberg (journalist) project through their talks and interviews the conceptual metaphor EUROPE IS NOT A COMMUNITY shedding light on the new migration phenomenon in the early twentieth century when more than a million people arrived in Europe as political refugees.

1. *Europe as a Blended Space in Alexander Betts' TED Talk*

The first speech by Alexander Betts entitled "Our Refugee System if Failing. Here's How We Can Fix It" (posted on March 2016) appears to be the quintessential representation of TED Talks which are a mixture of education, entertainment and education. The social scientist's talk not only does focus on an idea worth spreading, i.e. how to offer better conditions to immigrated people in Europe, but it also tells stories of refugee people by projecting emotions with the help of inspiring slides. In terms of conceptual metaphor theory, Betts blends together multiple mental spaces, one for each domain, which can be integrated into a single conceptual network through the construction of Europe as a blended space. Betts' talk is based on a sense of fusion between different conceptual domains: humanitarianism, politics, and economy.

In terms of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), Betts combines three different mappings. Firstly, there is a mapping from a refugee (Amira) whose village has been destroyed onto the modern refugee regime; secondly, there is a mapping from a Congolese refugee running a digital music exchange business onto a politics of globalization and thirdly, there is a mapping from a refugee camp in Jordan to the idea of matching markets. From this perspective, it all comes together in a single image since three mappings are fused together in the image of Europe as a failing system.

According to Betts, from the perspective of a refugee EUROPE IS SALVATION, EUROPE IS FOOD, and EUROPE IS SHELTER but from the perspective of a European citizen, EUROPE IS A CAMP OF REFUGEES who have survived a dangerous journey and who are doomed to urban destitution.

In order to share such ideas with a world-wide audience, each of the TED talks has a time-coded, interactive transcript, in English and all available languages. In this way, users can follow any talk reading the multilingual subtitles whose ins and outs are highlighted in the interactive transcript showing the duration of subtitles. To ensure viewers can read subtitles with ease, volunteer translators have to apply the following guidelines:

- When a subtitle is longer than 42 characters, break it into two lines;
- Never use more than two lines per subtitle;
- Keep broken lines as close in length as possible;
- Keep 'linguistic wholes' together when breaking lines;
- Keep the subtitle reading speed at a maximum of 21 characters/second;
- Compress subtitles over 21 characters/second. Try to preserve as much meaning as possible.

As a multimodal and interlingual form of communication, defined by Gottlieb as a type of "oblique translation" (Gottlieb, 1994: 101), subtitling must respect semantic, stylistic, and linguistic rules aimed at facilitating the strenuous reading activity of the viewer. From this perspective, the subtitles created for Betts' talk on «Our Refugee System if Failing. Here's How We Can Fix It» appear to be a faithful rendering of the original speech. There are no differences between the original text and the audiovisual translation revealing a strategy which applies no text reduction shifts, i.e. departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the source language to the target language» (Catford, 1965: 73).

If it is true that subtitles should never anticipate, or be ahead of visual narration on screen, then it is equally true that Betts' talk is characterized by an approximate synchrony between image and subtitle. Such a synchronous delivery is obtained through one-line subtitles which are easier to read since they "elicit proportionally less viewing time" (D'Ydewalle, Van Rensbergen and Pollet, 1987: 317). The use of 157 one-liners out of 266 subtitles in Betts' talk confirms ("to be a European", "In the last year", "There are just so many contradictions", "We mourn the tragic death", "of two-year-old Alan Kurdi", "We have international treaties" and so forth) Sylfest Lomheim's conviction that the overall reading time in one-liner seems to offer the viewer more reading comfort.

But Betts' subtitled talk is also characterised by the use of two-liners which aesthetically speaking, as suggested by Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael, should «keep the top line shorter whenever possible in order not to pollute the image» (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007: 87). However, subtitles in Betts' TED talk appear to be alternating shorter and longer top lines following the rules of sense blocks and readability. This is also confirmed by the third and fourth guidelines elaborated by TED Talks, i.e. "keep broken lines as close in length as possible" and "keep 'linguistic wholes' together when breaking lines". The committed and emotionally-charged talk on political refugees is subtitled with utmost care in order to secure line-breaks which are syntactically appropriate, respecting and reflecting the logic of the sentence.

Example 1

But today, that system is failing.
In theory, refugees have a right to seek asylum.
In practice, our immigration policies block the path to safety.
In theory, refugees have a right to a pathway to integration.
or return to the country they've come from.
But in practice, they get stuck in almost indefinite limbo.
In theory, refugees are a shared global responsibility.
In practice, geography means that countries proximate the conflict.
take the overwhelming majority of the world's refugees.
The system isn't broken because the rules are wrong.
It's that we're not applying them adequately to a changing world.
and that's what we need to reconsider.

From timecode 00:03:10 to timecode 00:03:54, longer top lines are more numerous (7 out of 12) than shorter top lines but this is only due to semantic and syntactic reasons. The subtitler's strategy appears to be creating semantically and syntactically self-contained subtitles which have a clear structure and avoid ambiguities. It is highly significant that subtitles nos. 2 and 7 whose sentence structure is symmetrically constructed are segmented forcing the brain to pause on the noun phrase "refugees". This is a strategy aimed at sensitizing the viewers toward the rights of political refugees since the segmentation is arranged to coincide with the highest syntactic node possible. Such a segmenting strategy is also confirmed by Karamitroglou (1998) who defines subtitling segmentation as follows:

Subtitled text should appear segmented at the highest syntactic nodes possible. This means that each subtitle flash should ideally contain one complete sentence. In cases where the sentence cannot fit in a single line subtitle and has to continue over a second line or even over a new subtitle flash, the segmentation on each of the lines should be arranged to coincide with the highest syntactic node possible.

From this perspective, the subtitler's strategy is aimed at indicating and suggesting that the sentence continues in the next subtitle creating a suspension bridge which separates and connects noun and verb phrases at the same time: "In theory, refugees / have a right to seek asylum"; "In theory, refugees / are a shared global responsibility." To put it into more simplified terms, the subtitler employs what Helen Reid calls "rhetorical segmentation" (Gottlieb, 1994: 109) which is guided by the rhythm of speech thereby reflecting the dialogue's dynamics. This rhetorical strategy is applied throughout the speech and it is paramountly exemplified by the following subtitles:

Example 2

The system isn't broken because the rules are wrong.
It's that we're not applying them adequately to a changing world.

The subtitler demonstrates to employ good rhetorical segmentation conveying surprise, suspense, and hesitation. These prosodic features of the

spoken language serve a communicative purpose in supporting and qualifying the humanitarian and socio-political messages conveyed in Betts' talk in which, actually, syntactic-semantic and rhetorical segmentation overlap to some extent since the linguistic and paralinguistic features of speech usually collaborate.

2. Subtitling António Guterres' TED Interview on Europe As A Possible World

Likewise, albeit in a different way, the TED interview with António Guterres, elected by the UN General Assembly to become the 10th High Commissioner for Refugees in 2005, projects the conceptual metaphors EUROPE IS DIVISION, EUROPE IS CLOSURE, and EUROPE IS FEAR.

By enumerating all the problems related with political refugees – war, health, food, school, and so forth – Guterres maintains that «Europe is divided because there is no solidarity in the European project». The Commissioner's words, which seem to echo Betts' speech («[...] we're not applying [the rules] adequately to a changing world»), are aimed at creating an alternate possible world in which all European borders are open to political refugees. According to possible worlds theory, Guterres' possible worlds of logic are concrete, complete and consistent sets of states of affairs conceived for the purpose of logical operations.

This is clearly exemplified by the interview to Guterres whose textual universe is a dynamic combination of a text actual world on the one hand, and a different type of an alternate possible world provided by the policy called "people to people" applied by Ethiopia according to which every refugee should be received.

Guterres describes this alternate possible world as an upside down Wish world in which all nations join their efforts through bilateral and multilateral cooperations. By projecting the wish of a long-term project, a development perspective and not only an emergency humanitarian aid perspective, Guterres creates a conflict between the Wish world on the one hand, and, on the other, the European fear to be invaded. The following extract of the interview between Bruno Giussani and António Guterres provides a paramount example of Guterres' alternate possible world:

11:57 BG: Who should be providing this support? Country by country, international organizations, the European Union? Who should be com-

ing up with this support?

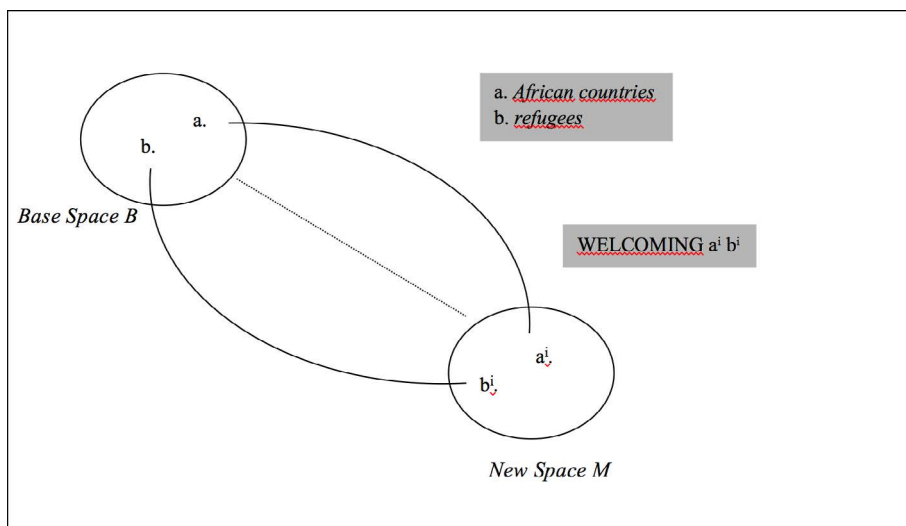
12:04 AG: We need to join all efforts. It's clear that bilateral cooperation is essential. It's clear that multilateral cooperation is essential. It's clear that international financial institutions should have flexibility in order to be able to invest more massively in support to these countries. We need to combine all the instruments and to understand that today, in protracted situations, at a certain moment, that it doesn't make sense anymore to make a distinction between humanitarian aid and development aid or development processes. Because you are talking about children in school, you are talking about health, you are talking about infrastructure that is overcrowded. You are talking about things that require a long-term perspective, a development perspective and not only an emergency humanitarian aid perspective.

In order to introduce the mechanics of mental space analysis, I will briefly outline Gilles Fauconnier's account (1997: 42-43) of the comprehension of the following sentence:

In general, African countries are extremely welcoming of refugees coming

Fauconnier's diagrammatic representation of the mental space configuration relevant to this sentence is reproduced as the following Figure:

Figure 1



The comprehension of this sentence, according to Fauconnier, involves the construction of two mental spaces. The first mental space, the 'Base' (B), includes two elements 'a' and 'b', which are accessed by the names 'African countries' and 'refugees'. This space is linked with information about the two entities which is part of background knowledge or has been derived from the preceding co-text. The Base is the space that functions as the starting point of each network of spaces, and is always accessible for the addition of further material or for the construction of new spaces.

The second mental space is derived from the Base via the idiomatic expression "in general", which functions as a 'space builder'. Space builders are linguistic expressions which trigger the construction of new spaces and indicate the nature of the connection between each new space and the one from which it is constructed. The idiomatic expression "in general" sets up the new space as a "possibility" space, i.e. as corresponding to a state of affairs that may or may not be true in relation to the Base. The possibility space contains two entities 'a' and 'b', which are counterparts of 'a' and 'b' in the Base, and are accessed by means of the same names. This is in virtue of what Fauconnier calls the "Access Principle". In the possibility space, a^i is welcoming b^i . This space is also structured by background knowledge triggered by the expression "are extremely welcoming". While B is the Base space of the structure, M is the "Focus" space, i.e. the space to which material is being added by the sentence. The space builder is marked for temporal distance from the Base, making what Fauconnier calls "reality within fiction" (1997: 50).

3. Mini-Max and Cognitive-Positive Effects in Subtitling Guterres' TED Interview

Unlike Betts' TED Talk, Guterres' subtitled interview is a paramount example of the subtitling process involving the basic steps of elimination, and condensation. If the first strategy is aimed at reducing elements that do not change the meaning of the source dialogue such as false starts, repetitions, and hesitations, then the latter involves the simplification of original syntax in order to render the subs more easily readable. Apart from various examples of omissions at word level of repetitions ("It is a comment, a statement made by the current front-runner for the Republican nomination for US President" > "It is a statement made by the current front-runner for the Republican nomination for US President"),

false starts (“And here we have, there is a basic review of the criteria” > “And here we have a basic review of the criteria”) and discourse markers (*so, and, here, I mean, sure* and *I would say*), the subtitler uses simple rather than compound verbal tenses (“we have seen” “we saw”; “conflicts never to die” > “conflicts never died”) since simple tenses obviously take up less space than compound forms.

By applying Irena Kovačič’s theory of relevance in subtitling, (Kovačič, 1994) according to which there are indispensable, partly dispensable and dispensable elements of discourse in subtitling, the volunteer subtitler is able to use the target language’s intrinsic possibilities to the full. As opposed to the indispensable elements, i.e. all the semantically meaningful elements of a discourse without which the viewers would not be able to follow the logic development of a ideas, the dispensable elements have been deleted by the subtitler for spatio-temporal constraints. This is known as the ‘mini-max effect’, that is to say achieving a maximum effect with a minimum effort as exemplified by the condensation of the aforementioned partly dispensable elements.

Cognitively speaking, the subtitling strategies employed in Guterres’ interview produce in Colm Caffrey’s words a “positive cognitive effect” (Pérez-González, 2014: 154) with reference to subtitle viewing behaviour. All the condensations and omissions applied in the subtitled interview are aimed at facilitating comprehension and enjoyment thereby producing a positive cognitive effect. See the following example in which the subtitler, who is always trying to condense Guterres’ interview at word and sentence levels, uses a short form for the noun phrase “someone” turning a singular indefinite pronoun into a plural noun (“people”).

Example 3

source text	target subtitles
because they see refugees as someone that should be with the caliphate and is fleeing to the crusaders.	because they see refugees as people that should be with the caliphate and are fleeing to the crusaders.

The change in subject in the first subtitle is the natural result of the change in verb from singular to plural (“is fleeing” > “are fleeing”) in the second

subtitle. Such a text reduction shift is not only due to space constraints but it also the result of the editing work that subtitlers are required to do. TED volunteer subtitlers are also translators who are able to carry on both practices (subtitling and translation), thereby ensuring a high-quality audiovisual rendering. This is aptly summarised by Luyken who maintains that: «Ideally the translation and subtitling functions should be combined in one person which will reduce the risk of error due to the inaccurate communication of concepts» (Luyken and Herbst, 1991: 57).

4. *Subtitling a Parable of Life and Death in Europe by Anders Fjellberg*

Another meaningful TED talk on Europe which is worth mentioning is entitled “Two Nameless Bodies Washed Up On The Beach. Here Are Their Stories” by Anders Fjellberg who projects the conceptual metaphor REFUGEES ARE NAMELESS GHOSTS. Through the cognitive process of parable, Fjellberg employs the stories of two Syrian refugees to project a parable of death in Europe. The story of Mouaz Al Balkhi and Shadi Kataf, two young men who die by drowning in the freezing waters of the English Channel in the desperate attempt to reach Britain and find a better life in safety and dignity, is magnified by the notion of narrative projection since one story helps to make sense of other stories. This projection, of one story onto another, is thus what is commonly known as parable and it is the basic cognitive ability that helps us to understand the broad range of communication. Fjellberg’s narrative projection of Mouaz and Shadi’s story is based on blending, i.e. a cognitive notion whose operation is central to how parable works. A blending is a kind of meeting point between two conceptual structures, known as input spaces which get mapped into generic spaces, where shared information become evident.

The following conceptual blending well illustrates the parable of death of two young refugees who desperately seek asylum in Europe:

Figure 2

Generic Space Refugees struggle for life, desperation, and death	
Specific source Mouaz Al Balkhi A young man who flees Syria in order to reach Britain to find a better life but he dies in his journey to Britain Shadi Kataf A young man who flees Damascus to find a better life, in safety and dignity but he dies in his journey to Britain	General target People who flee a war zone in search of asylum suffer the most painful conditions and die in their attempt to reach Europe as refugees
Blend Refugees are like Mouaz and Shadi A class member is the prototype	

Information from the generic space of refugees includes struggle for life, desperation and death. The generic background informs the construction of both Mouaz and Shadi’s story which is of utmost importance for conceptualizing the parable of death. Indeed, we can see the blending of the generic with the specific if we consider Mouaz and Shadi as members of the refugees category. In other words, the parable demands conceptually integrating the Syrian refugees in the general category of desperate people among whom Mouaz and Shadi become the prototypes.

Fjellberg concludes his TED Talk by defining Mouaz and Shadi’s story as an exemplary story posing two questions: what is a better life, and what I am willing to do to achieve it? For a refugee, like Mouaz or Shadi, who is fleeing a war zone, a better life, in Fjellberg’s words, means:

not having your house bombed, not fearing being kidnapped. It means being able to send your children to school, go to university, or just find work to be able to provide for yourself and the ones you love. A better life would be a future of some possibilities compared to nearly

none, and that's a strong motivation. And I have no trouble imagining that after spending weeks or even months as a second-grade citizen, living on the streets or in a horrible makeshift camp with a stupid, racist name like "The Jungle," most of us would be willing to do just about anything (Timecodes 00:11:35 – 00:12:13).

In such a presentation of refugees in Europe, Fjellberg's narrative force is made up of two intersecting planes: discourse and story. By constructing story content for the viewer's mind through his TED discourse, Fjellberg makes the mind generate predictions and evaluations which are confirmed by his narrational discourse. Thus, Fjellberg's suggestive discourse gives rise to specific narrative states of mind – such as suspense, surprise, empathy, pity, and horror. Insofar as these triggers prompt viewers to hypothesise about the narrated world, they play an essential role in the reception of the story which becomes a parable of life and death in contemporary Europe.

5. Subtitling Para-Verbal Means of Speech in Fjellberg's TED Talk

Subtitling such a powerful story imbued with parables of life and death is not an easy task but the volunteer subtitler seems to have respected all rhetorical segmentations and semantic nodes since the process of condensation is reduced to a minimum. Only at the beginning of the talk, some filler words (*then*, and *like*) and dispensable adverbs (*probably*, and *actually*) are omitted in order to respect the reading speed and the time a subtitle can stay on screen. But throughout the talk, there is no other text reduction shift in the subtitles because every single word spoken by Fjellberg appears to be relevant for the comprehension of the message.

The movement and positioning of Fjellberg in the TED talk arena is a challenge for the subtitler who has to find the subtle coherence between movement, closeness, intonation, and word choice. Kinesically speaking, the way in which Fjellberg's body movements and gestures convey meaning non-vocally has been rendered by an accurate timing of subtitles which mirrors the performance of the speaker, and is mindful of pauses and such other para-verbal means of speech as intonation, voice quality, rhythm, and speed. If the speaker's voice is, in Bosseaux's words, "the semiotic fabric" (2008) of the talk, then Fjellberg's voice, like Betts' and Guterres' ones, is central to perceptions of speech performance.

As a matter of fact, English-speaking Fjellberg of Norwegian origin has a clear voice, somewhat flat with very few modulations, i.e. limited rise and fall in the voice pitch. His speech pattern is characterized by a very fast pace with hardly any variations aimed at summarizing quickly his feelings and thoughts about what it's like to be a refugee in Europe today which are subtitled trying to respect the six-second rule according to which an average viewer can comfortably read in six seconds the text written on two full subtitle lines. The time a subtitle remains on screen depends therefore on the delivery of the original speech and the assumed reading speed of the target viewers.

To conclude, the three subtitled TED Talks on the new migration phenomenon in the early twentieth century create a cognitive map of Europe as a community unprepared to welcome millions of desperate refugees fleeing war zones. If a cognitive map is a personal representation of the familiar environment that we all experience, then Betts', Guterres' and Fjellberg's cognitive maps of Europe are deeply marked by the presence of refugees who start their perilous journeys across the Mediterranean sea only to reach a node, the coasts of Europe, a major point where their behaviour is focused, that is to say where they can find a better life in safety and dignity.

Subtitling the aforementioned TED Talks contributes to achieving the mission of sharing humanitarian, political and economic ideas, ideas meant at saving millions of lives. As a globalized community in which the fusions of cultures produce hybrid cultural artefacts, Europe is now comprised by immigrants whose continuous movement has an influence on all the language of the one-time European centre. The function of subtitling in TED Talks is aimed at preserving the alterity of the source text, avoiding any form of ethnocentric violence and thereby maintaining all the peculiarities of foreign cultures, because as Fjellberg suggests, «everybody has a name, everybody has a story, everybody is someone».

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Multilinguismo e plurilinguismo nella UE: una realtà in trasformazione, una opportunità per tutti

Amelia Bandini

Abstract

European Motto 'Unity in diversity' means that Europeans are united in working together for common goals, and enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages. For this reason EU officially preserves cultural and linguistic diversity and promotes language learning. But European language policies are also affected by the 'State of the art' of Europeans' linguistic knowledge that seems to be addressed toward English as a language that can overcome difficulties in communications and assumes the role of 'Lingua Franca'. The purpose of this paper is to analyse European policies on language diversity preservation and on plurilingualism promotion under several points of view: (i) the EU as multilingual international body, (ii) the preservation and promotion of plurilingualism, (iii) implementation of plurilingualism.

1. In varietate concordia

Come è noto, il motto dell'Unione Europea, usato per la prima volta nel 2000, è 'In varietate concordia'. Esso riunisce due concetti che sono alla base della concezione europea: la diversificazione e l'unità. L'UE è infatti un insieme di stati sovrani ognuno con le proprie peculiarità politiche, economiche, culturali e sociali - uniti dalla volontà di perseguire scopi comuni. Le istituzioni ed i cittadini europei devono comunicare fra loro, usando ognuno la propria lingua o adottandone una comune. Le lingue nazionali sono comunemente considerate un emblema culturale, un tratto distintivo e peculiare di ogni nazione, e per questa ragione l'Unione Europea, in quanto federazione di stati sovrani, riconosce le 24 lingue ufficiali degli Stati che ne fanno parte e le circa 60 lingue regionali/minoritarie in essi ammesse. Per quanto il rispetto di questa molteplicità aggravi il funzionamento degli organi della UE, in quanto «impone vincoli, pesa sul funzionamento delle istituzioni europee ed ha un costo in termini di denaro e di

tempo»¹ esso è riconosciuto come «uno dei valori fondamentali dell'UE, al pari del rispetto per la persona e dell'apertura nei confronti delle altre culture».² Per questa ragione

la conoscenza delle lingue straniere è considerata una delle competenze di base che ogni cittadino europeo dell'UE deve acquisire per migliorare le proprie opportunità di istruzione e impiego all'interno della società dell'apprendimento europea, in particolare esercitando il diritto alla libera circolazione delle persone.³

2. La UE come realtà multilingue

La realtà linguistica europea, in effetti, è ancora più variegata di quanto appare nei documenti ufficiali, basti pensare che il numero delle lingue minoritarie aumenta sensibilmente se si considerano anche quelle lingue che non vengono riconosciute ufficialmente ma che pure vengono usate, nonché le molte altre lingue, spesso non europee, parlate dagli immigrati che ogni anno arrivano a migliaia sul nostro continente. Il multilinguismo è dunque contemporaneamente una peculiarità dell'Europa come continente e dell'UE come federazione di Stati Sovrani, ma anche una sfida, poiché *«the intriguing challenge when considering the process of European Integration is that Europe, in its own understanding, is both culturally rich and diverse, and dependent on a certain degree of unity. In this respect, Europe has to find its balance between preservation and promotion of cultural diversity and the development of a common communicative sphere»* (Breibach, 2003: 7).

Ufficialmente, dunque, l'UE tutela la diversità linguistica e promuove il multilinguismo.

Sul sito ufficiale dell'Unione Europea, nella sezione dedicata al tema del multilinguismo, sono riportate le motivazioni che sono alla base delle politiche che promuovono l'apprendimento (pluri)linguistico:

- migliori conoscenze linguistiche consentono a un maggior numero di persone di studiare e/o lavorare all'estero, e di migliorare le

¹ Cfr. Una sfida salutare. Come la molteplicità delle lingue potrebbe rafforzare l'Europa, 2008, p.4.

² Cfr. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/it/displayFtu.html?ftu-id=FTU_5.13.6.html visitato ad ottobre 2016

³ Ibid.

loro prospettive occupazionali

- parlare altre lingue aiuta le persone provenienti da culture diverse a capirsi, un elemento essenziale in un'Europa multilingue e multiculturale
- per operare in modo efficace in Europa, le imprese hanno bisogno di personale plurilingue
- quello linguistico - traduzioni e interpretazione, insegnamento delle lingue, tecnologie per le lingue, ecc. - è uno dei settori economici che crescono più rapidamente⁴.

Nella tabella 1 si riporta una sintesi delle politiche linguistiche adottate dalla UE dal 1980 al 2007, tratta dalla pubblicazione del British Council *Language Rich Europe* (2013).

TABLE - Some key elements of Europea language policy

European Union		Council of Europe	
1980s Incentive measures for multilingualism	- European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages - Erasmus - Lingua	1950s-1990s Supporting languages for all (democratic citizenship)	- Unit credit scheme - Guidance on Communicative Language Teaching - Workshops – ICT, Autonomy, exchanges - Establishment of ECML in Graz
1990s Co-operation and support for mobility	- Maastricht Treaty (1992)	1990s Regional and minority languages	- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) - Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995)
1995-2004 Supporting the 'knowledge society'	- White Paper – Towards the Learning Society - Lisbon Strategy - Barcelona Council	1995-2004 Intercultural communication Plurilingualism	- Development of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)
2001 Coherence, awareness raising, information European year of languages	- European Language Label - Eurobarometer	2001 Coherence, awareness raising, information European year of languages	- CEFR - European Language Portfolio
2000s Promoting mobility as a right Supporting quality in language learning	- Action Plan (2003) - Increased support through funded programmes	2000s Planning, curricular development, assessment	- CEFR - European Language Portfolio development
2005 Growth/social cohesion/ individual fulfilment	- Framework Strategy for Multilingualism - Action Plan	2003-11 Language policies	- Language Education Policy Profiles in 15 countries or regions
2007 Diversity an asset	- Multilingualism Commissioner - Lifelong Learning Programme - Communication – an 'Asset and shared commitment' (2008)	2005 Languages of schooling	- Conferences and Reports

⁴ https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/multilingualism_it.

Numerosi sono anche i progetti di ricerca, i rapporti, le raccomandazioni, le comunicazioni a favore della diversità linguistica sviluppati direttamente dalle istituzioni europee o sotto la loro egida. In essi il riconoscimento dell'Unione Europea come realtà multilingue e la conseguente tutela di tutte le lingue, nonché la promozione del plurilinguismo, coinvolge non solo le lingue nazionali – tutelate dal loro stato giuridico – ma anche e soprattutto le lingue minoritarie. Esse rischiano infatti di essere schiacciate fra due forze contrapposte, da una parte le lingue nazionali, da un'altra le lingue internazionali della comunicazione, prima fra tutte la lingua inglese. *«The European institutions need [therefore] to adopt a positive and proactive common language policy, based on the promotion of linguistic diversity at the level of the European Union, the Member States and the regions. The goal should be to achieve a balanced multilingualism which includes the revitalization and normalization of regional and minority languages, and the development of a harmonious coexistence between languages».*⁵

3. La tutela del plurilinguismo

Fra le iniziative messe in atto dal 2000 in poi si ricordano in questa sede

- *The New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism* (2005) nel quale si sottolinea come il *respect for linguistic diversity is a core value of EU*;
- *From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, del 2007, nella quale viene presentata una doppia accezione del plurilinguismo: *«Plurilingualism should be understood as: (i) the intrinsic capacity of all speakers to use and learn, alone or through teaching, more than one language, (ii) an educational value that is the basis of linguistic tolerance»* (p.17);
- *Una sfida salutare. Come la molteplicità delle lingue potrebbe rafforzare l'Europa* del 2008, nel quale si legge, fra l'altro: «Non può aderire pienamente alla costruzione europea chi non ha la sensazione che la propria cultura, e in primo luogo la propria lingua, sia pienamente rispettata» (p.12);
- *The European Roadmap for linguistic diversity* (2015) la cui finalità è *«to reaffirm the European Union's commitment to linguistic diversity so that languages are seen as a common asset, which need to have the practical support of the European Union»* (p.11).

⁵ The European Roadmap for language diversity, p.12.

- ed infine *The Learnme white paper on linguistic diversity* del 2016, il cui fulcro di indagine è

mapping and identifying different interpretations of linguistic diversity according to language context, historical approaches, political landscape and language policies [and clarifying] how the different levels of implementation of international agreements and national policies have developed (p. 10).

Questi documenti e progetti di ricerca, così come la politica linguistica dell'Unione Europea, si articolano intorno a due concetti principali: la tutela delle piccole comunità linguistiche e la promozione del plurilinguismo come chiave di accesso alla cittadinanza attiva. Le lingue minoritarie vanno preservato soprattutto promuovendone l'uso perché è solo grazie alla sua caratteristica di essere 'codice di comunicazione' che una lingua rimane 'viva'. Per questa ragione l'aspetto pragmatico della competenza linguistica, la capacità cioè di portare a termini precisi task comunicativi, viene per lo più indicata come obiettivo formativo principale dell'acquisizione di competenze linguistiche: «*by acquiring a foreign language they [children] are developing the skill to do in a foreign language what they are already able to do in their first language*» (Fleming, 2010: 4). Accanto all'aspetto comunicativo non va però sminuito il valore metalinguistico e metacognitivo di ogni acquisizione linguistica, infatti: «*there are other benefits of foreign language learning that also go beyond simply giving children a tool for communicating through a different language. They include, for example, enhanced awareness of and improved competence in their first language, increased potential for enriching cultural experiences, development of cognitive processes, increased self confidence and self awareness*» (ibid. p.5), l'acquisizione cioè della capacità di penetrare altre culture e conseguentemente di aprirsi verso 'l'altro da sé'.

Le competenze comunicative vengono inoltre considerate indissolubilmente connesse con quelle sociali relative alla padronanza dei contesti comunicativi. Possedere competenze plurilinguistiche significa avere accesso ad una varietà di contesti sociali e culturali: in una realtà multilingue come quella dell'Unione Europea, significa poter partecipare alla vita democratica nelle modalità previste dalle istituzioni degli stati sovrani. Il plurilinguismo diventa in questo modo non solo una ricchezza culturale individuale, ma la chiave per accedere ad una cittadinanza attiva e partecipativa: «*Hence, language education policies gain importance not only with reference to education in general, rather they are politically relevant on a larger*

scale. Competence in language(s) is a characteristic of democratic citizenship in Europe both as its prerequisite and its practice» (Breidbach, 2003:7).

Promuovere l'acquisizione di competenze plurilinguistiche diventa quindi sempre di più una priorità nell'ambito delle azioni politiche finalizzate ad implementare la costruzione di nuovi percorsi formativi, sia come opportunità di accesso al mercato globale, che per la promozione dell'integrazione e della cittadinanza europea.

3.1 La tavola rotonda Multilingualism in a changing Europe

La discussione sul multilinguismo e plurilinguismo è entrata a pieno titolo nel dibattito scientifico internazionale. Proprio su questi temi, nell'ambito del '49th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europae' organizzato dall'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II dal 31 agosto al 3 settembre 2016, si è svolta una interessante tavola rotonda incentrata su 'Multilingualism in a changing Europe'.

La discussione, moderata dalla Professoressa Barbara Turchetta, dell'Università per stranieri di Perugia — Delegata MIUR per la costituzione di un Portale della Lingua Italiana nel mondo e per la valutazione della qualità dei corsi di lingua italiana all'estero —, ha riunito tre prospettive di ricerca, illustrate da 3 fra gli studiosi più autorevoli del mondo di queste tematiche ed è stata animata da numerosi interventi. Antonella Sorace, dell'Università di Edimburgo, impegnata nel campo degli studi sul bilinguismo e sull'acquisizione del linguaggio, ha fondato il network *Bilingualism Matters*,⁶ con 15 filiali, anche in America, e recenti espansioni in Asia. Il contributo della studiosa ha evidenziato i vantaggi del bilinguismo sia infantile che tardivo. Per quanto riguarda il bilinguismo infantile la Sorace ha sottolineato come la ricerca abbia dimostrato che, contrariamente a quanto comunemente si ritiene, esso non è un impedimento allo sviluppo dell'acquisizione della lingua madre, ma piuttosto apre naturalmente i bambini a culture diverse e favorisce lo sviluppo di abilità multitasking; mentre nel caso degli adulti, lo sviluppo di competenze plurilinguistiche segue un approccio maggiormente cognitivo, cosa che *«allows successful late bilinguals to efficiently handle cross-language competition»*.⁷ Suzanne Romaine, insigne linguista e, fra le altre cose, membro nel 2003 del Gruppo di Esperti UNESCO che ha prodot-

⁶ <http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/> (visitato ad ottobre 2016).

⁷ Sle 2016 Book of abstract <http://sle2016.eu/downloads/BoA%20SLE%202016.pdf> (visitato ottobre 2016).

to il "Position Paper" *Education in a Multilingual World* (Paris, 2003) ha portato al centro del dibattito la discrepanza fra il sostegno al multilinguismo ufficialmente espresso dalle istituzioni europee e la sua reale applicazione nelle dinamiche istituzionali. La Romaine ha sottolineato come

the challenges to creating an inclusive multilingualism policy are arguably greater than they have ever been before. New forms of minoritization arising from linguistic 'superdiversity' demand a coordinated and unified policy response, but instead threaten to lead to increasing political and cultural fragmentation and disintegration.⁸

La studiosa ha inoltre evidenziato come esista già una gerarchizzazione istituzionale delle lingue europee, che emerge chiaramente anche sul sito della UE nel quale troviamo emblematicamente affermato che «L'Unione Europea pubblica le principali informazioni di carattere generale sulle sue politiche in tutte le lingue ufficiali, mentre gli altri contenuti sono disponibili nelle lingue dell'UE più diffuse».⁹

L'intervento di Durk Gorter, dell'Università dei Paesi Baschi, ha evidenziato come la questione del multilinguismo si articoli a livello europeo intorno a tre cardini: (i) la percezione dell'inglese come lingua globale e la sua conseguente adozione come codice di comunicazione a tutti i livelli, (ii) l'idea dell'Unione Europea come conglomerato di Stati, ognuno con la sua lingua ufficiale da intendersi come principale mezzo di comunicazione all'interno dei confini statali, (iii) l'idea che tutte le lingue, anche quelle minoritarie, hanno uguali diritti e vanno tutelate. In questo panorama, secondo lo studioso, «*multilingual practices in Europe [...] are a sort of awkward middle way of policies based on those three frames, but lacking a clear sense of direction or rationale*».¹⁰ Dalla discussione che si è svolta fra i partecipanti alla tavola rotonda sono emerse preoccupazioni in merito al processo di vera e propria 'gerarchizzazione' linguistica che vede alcuni codici linguistici leader – primo fra tutti l'inglese – mentre altri condannati ad un sempre maggiore isolamento, quale risultato di precise politiche linguistiche a livello nazionale e sovranazionale europeo, che sembrano negare una effettiva volontà di implementare il plurilinguismo.

⁸ *Ibidem* p. 11.

⁹ https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/multilingualism_it.

¹⁰ Gorter D. *Multilingual speakers of European minority languages* in Cfr. SLE 2016 Book of abstract, p. 9.

3.2 First European Survey on Language competences

Le problematiche sollevate nella tavola rotonda erano emerse anche da una precedente inchiesta sulle competenze linguistiche dei cittadini degli Stati Membri della UE condotta nel 2012 da Eurobarometro.¹¹ Il 54% degli intervistati ha dichiarato di essere in grado di sostenere una conversazione in una lingua diversa dalla lingua madre: in inglese nel 38% dei casi, in francese nel 12%, in tedesco nell'11%, in spagnolo nel 7%, in russo nel 5%. In 19 dei 25 Stati membri (esclusi il Regno Unito e l'Irlanda) la lingua straniera più diffusa è l'inglese, sia per quanto riguarda le abilità produttive che quelle ricettive, che la comunicazione on-line. Dall'inchiesta sembra affiorare inoltre un atteggiamento ambiguo riguardo la questione del multilinguismo e del plurilinguismo in quanto emerge da una parte il diritto di ogni stato membro di conservare la propria lingua nazionale – l'81% del campione attribuiva infatti pari importanza a tutte le lingue nazionali – mentre da un'altra il 69% degli intervistati auspica un futuro nel quale tutti i cittadini europei siano competenti in una lingua comune (53%). Sembra inoltre evidente che l'acquisizione di ulteriori competenze linguistiche sia percepita come collegata alla possibilità di entrare in contatto con un maggior numero di individui e di accrescere le opportunità di lavoro. In questo senso va interpretato, a mio parere, il desiderio di possedere un codice comune che aiuti a superare le barriere linguistiche e che sia spendibile in diversi contesti nazionali: lo schiacciante predominio dell'inglese come lingua straniera, risultato evidente di politiche linguistiche unidirezionali da parte degli stati nazionali, sembra dare una risposta a questa esigenza.

4. Implementare competenze plurilinguistiche?

Alla luce quindi della comprovata esistenza di una gerarchia linguistica all'interno della UE, ma anche in considerazione dello 'stato dell'arte' delle competenze linguistiche dei cittadini europei emerso dall'indagine di 'Eurobarometro', sembra che la questione centrale possa essere formulata in questi termini: è opportuno che a livello nazionale e sovranazionale venga promosso un bilinguismo che prevede la lingua madre + l'inglese, oppure un plurilinguismo inteso come una competenza linguistica articolata che coinvolga il possesso di diversi codici e registri linguistici da applicare in diversi contesti comunicativi? Una prima chiave interpretativa la si può già trovare nella *General Conference Resolution* del 1999 dell'UNESCO nel-

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/strategic-framework/documents/language-survey-final-report_en.pdf (sito visitato ad ottobre 2016).

la quale il termine *multilingual education* viene adottato in riferimento alla mediazione di almeno 3 lingue nei contesti formativi: la lingua madre, la lingua ufficiale dello stato nel quale si vive ed una lingua adottata a livello internazionale. Questa scelta «*supports the view that the requirements of global and national participation, and the specific needs of particular, culturally and linguistically distinct communities can only be addressed by multilingual education*». ¹² La risoluzione dell'UNESCO è stata in qualche modo accolta anche in seno agli organi istituzionali europei. Il documento *Una sfida salutare. Come la molteplicità delle lingue potrebbe rafforzare l'Europa* al quale si è fatto riferimento in precedenza, ad esempio, si esprime negativamente riguardo all'adozione di una unica lingua di comunicazione internazionale, peraltro spesso adoperata in modo approssimativo, e suggerisce che, accanto a questa, si approfondisca una seconda lingua – lingua adottiva. Questa politica eviterebbe la decadenza delle lingue nazionali/minoritarie, espressioni di diverse culture, e favorirebbe la comprensione e l'accettazione reciproca fra popoli diversi:

la conoscenza di una lingua personale adottiva e lo stretto contatto con l'universo dei suoi locutori dovrebbero favorire una visione del mondo più aperta agli altri e rafforzare il senso d'appartenenza all'Europa; non a scapito dell'appartenenza al paese natale o alla cultura d'origine, ma accanto a quest'appartenenza, dato che, nelle sue relazioni con i locutori della sua lingua personale adottiva, il cittadino europeo sarebbe naturalmente portato a far loro conoscere il suo paese e la sua cultura. ¹³

Occorre però considerare anche che dalla metà del secolo scorso si è assistito ad una enorme diffusione dell'inglese come lingua di comunicazione globale, fenomeno supportato soprattutto dalla espansione dell'economia statunitense, come sottolineato da Suzanne Romaine nella tavola rotonda della quale si è precedentemente parlato. Ma «non si tratta della lingua ricca e completa parlata dai discendenti di Shakespeare, ma di un nuovo fenomeno, etichettato oramai da più parti come 'globish'» (Bandini, 2010: 103). L'enorme diffusione dell'inglese ha determinato infatti sia un suo impoverimento strutturale e lessicale, che la contaminazione con le lingue locali con le quali è entrato in contatto che ha dato luogo a nuovi idiomi come l'Indish, lo Spanglish, ecc. Tutto ciò ha determinato un deterioramento della lingua, come testimoniato da David Graddol (2007) che ha voluto dare

¹² Cfr. *Education in a multilingual world*, UNESCO Position Paper, 2003, p.18.

¹³ *Una sfida salutare. Come la molteplicità delle lingue potrebbe rafforzare l'Europa*, (2008). p. 14.

al suo volume *'English next'* un sottotitolo emblematico *'Why global English may means the end of English as a foreign language'*.

Breidbach, nel lavoro precedentemente citato, evidenzia che il ruolo assunto oggi dall'inglese come lingua di comunicazione globale non può essere ignorato, soprattutto nell'ambito delle politiche per la formazione: *«Language education policies for plurilingualism should include considerations about the role of English against the backdrop of Europe as a polity in which citizenship means both a multitude of (linguistic) identities and the capacity to enter public discourse on various levels of the communicative sphere»*. (Breidbach, 2003: 18). Lo studioso si sofferma in particolare sul ruolo dell'inglese in una società multilingue, in riferimento non solo all'Unione Europea come realtà sovranazionale, ma anche alle diverse realtà nazionali, il cui monolinguismo viene sempre più messo in crisi sia dai fenomeni migratori, che dall'inevitabile processo di globalizzazione supportato da continui avanzamenti nella tecnologia delle (tele)comunicazioni. In risposta alla sempre maggiore diffusione di una competenza superficiale della lingua inglese che non permette una comunicazione approfondita, egli argomenta che *the competent use of the English language* garantisce invece il perfetto controllo di qualsiasi tipo di comunicazione fra madrelingua di paesi diversi e permette quindi la realizzazione di una cittadinanza attiva e che *«English itself may function as a direct mediator between participants in a discourse who would otherwise have to rely on translation or a third party. Furthermore, English has already become the very linguistic means to give speakers, especially of lesser-used languages, their voice within a European public discourse»* (Breidbach, 2003: 20).

5. Conclusioni

Per quanto in questa sede si concordi con il punto di vista di Breidbach, secondo il quale solo un alto livello di competenza della lingua inglese può garantire la reale padronanza di molti contesti comunicativi e conseguentemente l'accesso alla cittadinanza attiva, non sembra possibile rinunciare alla difesa delle altre lingue in quanto, citando ancora una volta lo studioso: *«(i)language rights are human rights, (ii)the exercise of democracy and social inclusion depends on language education policy, (iii)individual plurilingualism has a significant influence on the evolution of an European identity»* (Breidbach, 2003: 8). Se infatti per un verso le politiche linguistiche degli stati nazionali perseguono l'obiettivo del bilinguismo – lingua nazionale + inglese – per un altro esse pongono la competenza linguistica nella lingua nazionale come

prerequisito per la richiesta di cittadinanza.¹⁴

Alla luce di queste considerazioni si conclude quindi che, in via ottimale, ogni persona dovrebbe aspirare ad essere plurilingue e possedere competenze, oltre che nella propria lingua madre, in «una lingua di comunicazione internazionale» e una «lingua personale adottiva», l'una finalizzata a soddisfare i bisogni della comunicazione più ampia, «l'altra orientata da un complesso di motivazioni personali legate al percorso individuale o familiare, ai legami affettivi, all'interesse professionale, alle preferenze culturali, alla curiosità intellettuale, ecc».¹⁵ Sarebbe inoltre opportuno intendere il plurilinguismo come una competenza variegata e mutevole che si arricchisce e varia continuamente rispondendo in tal modo ai cambiamenti nella vita di ogni individuo.

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¹⁵ *Una sfida salutare. Come la molteplicità delle lingue potrebbe rafforzare l'Europa*, 2008, p. 11

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Mirrored aims, methods, materials and assessment in teaching English for political science as reflected in two Italian and Romanian higher educational environments

Cristina Pennarola & Silvia Osman***

Abstract

In the same way in which English has become the language of science and technology after World War II, so it has also turned into a lingua franca with yet undisputed supremacy in the language of diplomacy, international relations, political science, and politics in general. Since the early sixties, English for Specific Purposes, a relatively new field within the well-established ELT tradition, has attracted a wealth of publications concerned with the very practical aspects of teaching and learning language combined with a specialized disciplinary framework and content. Helping students and novice scholars to respond to the demands of scientific exposition and effective communication in the increasingly English-dominated international environments becomes, therefore, an undeniable priority.

Our paper approaches crucial aspects in the structure and evaluation design of the English language courses we carry out in two well-known European universities (University Federico II in Naples and National School for Political Science and Public Administration in Bucharest) where TESOL/ESP centers around the needs of Political Science students increasingly grappling with the sheer amount of top-quality English-medium reference materials. The paper analyses the course designs, as well as the underlying educational framework influencing the teachers' decisions in the delivery of the course. At times overlapping, most of

* Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

** SNSPA Bucharest - The National School for Political Studies and Public Administration

the times interconnecting, due to different educational, cultural and national contexts, our teaching paradigms greatly influence the learning experience of Italian and Romanian students, becoming instrumental not only in the language acquisition processes, but also in the development of lifelong learning skills. In conclusion, the in-depth study of two higher education environments in Italy and in Romania has shown that, even within the multifaceted landscape of the Euromosaic, «far more unites us than divides us».

1. The Italian Experience in Teaching ESP to Undergraduate Students: Descriptors

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as a relatively new field within the well-established tradition of English Language Teaching (ELT) has attracted, since the early sixties, a wealth of publications concerned with the very practical aspects of teaching and learning language combined with a specialized disciplinary framework and content (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). The discursive features of academic and professional genres relevant to the disciplines have been investigated with a view to helping students and novice scholars to respond to the demands of scientific exposition in the increasingly English-dominated academic domains (Hyland 2002, Swales, 1990). However, to date, few studies have dealt with the specificities of English for Political Science and have addressed the issues of teaching English in a university environment deeply sensitive to sociopolitical change (Bandini and Pennarola, 2012; Jottini, 1980; Kareva, 2013; Osman, 2011).

1.1 Educational Background of Political Science Students

Teaching English at a Department of Political Science in Italy must take into account a number of factors: the intermediate level of proficiency of the students, mostly B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR); their rather unrealistic expectations to improve their knowledge and use of English within the short time span of an academic term (approximately 60 hours over three months); the need for the students to study specialized materials in English in accordance with the general objectives of the degree course and the syllabuses of many disciplines such as statistics, international relations and finance; the appeal of authentic, multimodal, contemporary texts and their relevance in the English language classroom both as samples of the target language and stimuli for discussion on sensitive global issues.

Additionally, when designing the syllabus and setting the objectives of the course, it is essential to consider the extended duration of English language learning in the school curriculum over a period which may even last more than a decade, from primary to secondary education. Although such an extended period of time, one could reasonably assume, should contribute to the English proficiency of Italian students, the opposite is true: the students often feel demotivated and uninterested in one more English language course after their many years of English at school have not significantly developed their language proficiency, due to many factors among which the lack of a consistent language development programme and the repetition of the same grammar points over the years.

Taking into account both the requirements of the University degree course and the assumed knowledge of the students, the overall aim of the course is to develop students' awareness of stylistic variation in different genres (e.g., news articles, advertisements, political speeches, ecc.) as well as to develop their ability to use English more appropriately according to the communicative context. Jakobson's classic scheme outlining the main components and the related functions of a communicative act (from a telephone conversation to a piece of poetry) can be a valuable tool in the classroom when explaining the "back scenes" of a spoken exchange or a published text (Jakobson, 1963) but a simple language activity can bring home subtle concepts such as connotative meaning and communicative competence even more effectively:

LANGUAGE ACTIVITY: You are bored. Think of as many as possible ways to express your boredom.

The students rarely come up with something more sophisticated than "I feel really tired" or "It's such a bore", but they respond very well to possible scenarios:

1. Your dad has been preaching that "you should study harder" and you feel bored. What do you say to him?
2. Your teacher has been lecturing for more than one hour and you feel bored. What do you say to her?

This activity proves very useful to sensitize them to the value of appropriateness in human interaction as well as to widen their range of lexical choices.

1.2 Course Framework and Reference Materials

The course's primary aim is to develop the students' critical thinking skills and their ability to analyze a wide variety of authentic English texts mostly sourced from the media and institutional websites on the basis of their content, communicative structure, rhetorical organization and stylistic features. Text insights can only be gathered when the language and the content are made completely clear to the students through a series of language activities and comprehension questions. Texts as complex as political speeches, advertisements or news articles obviously require more than one level of analysis – the literal, the figurative, the ideological – and also offer students the opportunity to discuss many topical issues such as the value of democracy, cultural and cross-cultural landscapes, migration and citizenship, material and immaterial commodities among others. Text analysis is preceded by language noticing activities which help the students to further explore some aspects of the English language system, e.g. modals, tense, nominalization, finite and non-finite clauses. Additionally, students practice the main receptive skills, reading and listening, and activate top down and bottom-up processing skills: that is, either they activate their world knowledge and schemata (the mental and operational frameworks associated with concepts and actions) so as to get the gist of the message; or they focus on the little bricks which make up the whole (for example, morphemes or individual words) to make sense of a larger stretch of text. After comprehension comes interpretation: through a series of questions and activities students are sensitized to the underlying and implicit meanings encoded in texts, to the many functions performed by language (persuasive; informative; narrative; ecc.); and to the strategies of effective communication.

Let us take a conveniently concise language sample as a way of exemplifying the kind of simple text analysis that students are asked to perform. Given the two sentences below,

I respect the views opposite to mine.

I do not disrespect the views of those in opposition to mine.

Answer the following questions:

- Do they mean the same?
- In what ways do they differ?
- Which sentence sounds clearer?

- Which one would you use?

After the students agree that the former is shorter, simpler and more comprehensible than the latter and that they would definitely use the former, the source is revealed and the quotation is supplied again in its wider context:

And again I say: I do not disrespect the views of those in opposition to mine. This is a tough choice. But it is also a stark one: to stand British troops down and turn back; or to hold firm to the course we have set. I believe we must hold firm.¹

After giving an overview of the Iraqi crisis during Saddam Hussein's regime in the early 2000s, the students are asked to summarize Tony Blair's motion and to comment on the "tough choice" he is discussing: in fact, the two options open to Parliament do not carry the same moral obligation and are certainly presented as opposite courses of action, the cowardly one of "stand[ing] British troops down" and the brave one of "hold[ing firm]". In the sequence of affirmative sentences, the double negation "*I do not disrespect*" stands out and suggests that the ideas in opposition to mine are such that they could indeed be disrespected.

1.3 Teaching Paradigms: the Communicative Approach within the Academy

The approach implemented in class is mostly based on the communicative approach whose main tenets posit:

- a. the use of authentic materials on contemporary global issues exploited for their relevance in real life and in the students' experience;
- b. the students' authentic wish and need to communicate in English for some real-life purpose ranging from socializing to specialized interaction for academic or professional purposes.

Another important principle of my teaching is based on the constructivist belief that learners must be actively engaged in their learning process and

¹ The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair), *House of Commons Debates*, 18 March 2003: Column 760. During that debate, the Prime Minister begged the motion to send British troops to Iraq and managed to convince Parliament despite the resistance of some MPs as well as the declared hostility of the public opinion (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030318/debtext/30318-06.htm>).

even contribute to their own learning by doing activities, asking questions, analyzing and interpreting texts, challenging current or mainstream views. To this end, the students are constantly encouraged to take a critical stance and contribute their opinions and reflections on the topics covered. The relatively low number of students attending the English language course (around 50 out of more than one hundred students) allows for better interaction and more lively discussions, especially considering that lessons only take place in a traditional face-to-face format.

The lesson usually follows a three-stage format with an introduction or presentation of the topic at hand, the development of the topic through some controlled practice or guided discovery activity, and finally a general discussion where aspects of language, culture and society are focused upon. This sequencing ensures a gradual progression in the students' grasp of new language and of the topic, leading them from general understanding to critical stance (Haarman, Murray, Bollettieri Bosinelli, Thomas, 1995).

The topics covered in the course are both related to language use (for example, the differences between formal and informal register; genres and genre conventions; varieties of English) and to culture and society (for example, democracy and policy-making; migration and integration; educational standards). Students are sensitized to these issues through the exposure to written and multimedia texts and are invited to volunteer their opinion before, and after the reading, listening or viewing has taken place. So, for example, a BBC news article dealing with "Promoting British Values in schools" (Sellgren, 2014) has given the opportunity for the students to compare the Italian and the British society in terms of both the leading mainstream values and the schools system requirements. Quite interestingly, the students highlighted restraint and independence as typically British features while at the same time recognizing that some values such as knowledgeability, respectfulness, solidarity, are universally shared across countries and cultures, especially in a developmental context such as the educational environment. In addition to the examination and discussion of the main themes (educational issues and enhancement of the school curriculum in the United Kingdom), the news article provided some valuable skills activities on how to infer unknown vocabulary from context and how to identify genre features of the news, e.g. by noticing all the verbs of saying and quotation marks within the article.

Although during group-work and pair-work the students often revert to their mother tongue, text analysis and discussion are carried out in English to widen the students' vocabulary and to exercise their ability to express

themselves using some interactional strategies such as paraphrases and discourse marking. The main purpose is the development of the student's analytical abilities and their communicative skills; this means that accuracy is to some extent overlooked, especially as there is not enough time for the kind of massed and distributed practice and for the recycling of relevant grammar structures and vocabulary which would enable the students to better assimilate the new and old language (Kirkley, 2012). To compensate for the lack of controlled practice activities aimed at better accuracy, the students are constantly encouraged to autonomously revise the language covered in the lesson and refresh any aspect of grammar and vocabulary they do not remember. As a credit stands for several hours of independent study (around 15 hours), this revision should be a crucial part of their university course, even though there is no way of checking on them and each student manages his or her self-study in an entirely independent way.

1.4 Formative and Summative Assessment

At the end of the course the students take a written and oral examination which is based on all the language and content points covered during the course. While the written test includes a series of exercises on reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar, which only measures their English competence indirectly, the oral examination, which entails the exposition of the topics covered, tests both their oral production and their analytical skills. Summative assessment is, however, combined with formative assessment, whose aim is more directly related to the students' language progression. In fact, the final mark also takes into account course participation in addition to the individual marks achieved in the various part of the written and oral examination.

2. *The Romanian Insight*

2.1 ESP Environment in Romania: Descriptors

The Romanian Political Science students come from a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and from different walks of life. Since the National School for Political Science and Public Administration (SNSPA) in Bucharest is one of the top universities at national level, all of them have strived to be accepted as students, building hope to reach high in a career in this field.

The majority of the undergraduate students has recently finished high school and only few are residents of the capital city of Romania. Some are young adults who search for answers or wish to extend their career choices, and/or look for continuous education as a means for personal development.

After the 1989 revolution, teaching English in schools became a national standard. From kindergarten throughout high school, English classes are weekly subject matters and many Romanian youngsters are English proficient. Despite this consistent and continuous wave of Anglophone thriving at national level, Political Science students in SNSPA are a heterogeneous group in terms of English proficiency levels. Nevertheless, they are abundantly exposed to a multitude of bibliographical resources and Political Studies research materials produced, written and disseminated in the English language. In this vein, the need to acquire ESP vocabulary becomes for them, therefore, not only a requirement, but an obvious necessity.

2.2 Course Framework and Reference Materials

On the one hand, the ESP course for the first year students in SNSPA is built around their needs to cope with English-medium reference materials and the increasing demands of scientific exposition and effective communication in the English-dominated international environments. Secondly, the course framework emphasizes the method of the Controlled Linguistic Immersion (CLI) (Osman, 2013: 343) in the context of acquiring specialized vocabulary, along with improving general English skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Consequently, all descriptive content texts are written by natives of English and the vocabulary is presented into clear, explicit English to English definitions.² Oral communication skills are encouraged in debating weekly portfolio issues, detailed in every chapter, and accompany a sum of theoretical basic concepts introduced during class. Writing weekly assignments such as papers/essays/portfolio issues encourages the development of creative writing skills within the academic environment.

2.3 Teaching for Information vs. Teaching for Relationships – CLI and SI

Teaching for information emphasizes vocabulary acquisition within classical teaching and pedagogical methods while teaching for relationships

² Osman Silvia, *Basic English for Communication and Political Science*, Bucharest, Editura Universitara Publishing House, 2011.

accentuates a learning environment where student-teacher interaction is vital on multiple levels. The students are stimulated to express needs, opinions, and views and encouraged to become co-creators of the teaching environment through implication into the educational process within and beyond classroom walls. Various teaching paradigms overlap and interconnect: the use of IT communication means in teaching ESP, blended learning and flipped classroom methods become instrumental in implementing teaching strategies.

When the student becomes the center of the teaching process, the pedagogical interaction brings about a whole new perspective and teaching for relationships becomes fundamental. The student's involvement in the classroom activity and beyond it is encouraged, supported, incentivized and the importance of this interaction is centered on the partnership established between the teacher as *education facilitator* (rather than recipient of all knowledge) and the student. The paradigm shift from teaching for information (textbook based approach and classical evaluation methods i.e. oral/written, partial/final exams) to teaching for relationships becomes instrumental in a century in which one can find answers to all possible questions at only a mouse click away on the World Wide Web. Emphasizing the societal need for transformational studies nowadays and inviting students to partner in the educational framework of reference we establish and set up as teachers, we invite them to be co-creators of this sensitive environment and observers of the learning-language acquisition processes. Their motivation builds up, their interest peaks and their involvement reaches the expectations of the most exigent of teachers.

Within the framework of this open partnership relationship, students are familiarized with the teaching techniques devised to ease the language acquisition process and facilitate almost effortless learning. The concept of *Controlled Linguistic Immersion* (CLI) is thoroughly explained to them and they are invited to ask questions, to enforce the observer's perspective of the method. The CLI method I developed, used and experimented with for the past ten years is based on the physiology of the brain, discoveries of neuroscience and Noam Chomsky's LAD³ (Language Acquisition Device) theory. Since Chomsky's research, it is clear by now that all humans are endowed with all the structures of all languages on earth, born and unborn yet. CLI builds on this concept and once introduced and successfully implemented, CLI brings up for use the native structure of the (English) lan-

³ <http://study.com/academy/lesson/chomskys-language-acquisition-device-definition-lesson-quizz.html>.

guage (or of any other language someone decides one day to learn), innately, naturally embedded in our brains. CLI involves daily routine of reading, listening and writing (copying) continuously for 15-20 minutes of a text written/spoken/produced by a native. In three weeks (this is how long research psychologists say it takes an individual to develop a habit), the subject exposed to this type of *linguistic immersion* surfaces the structure of the language in question, by triggering the areas of the brain responsible with the respective skills used in implementing CLI: reading, listening and writing. Providing the brain with the necessary visual, auditive and hand-eye coordination stimuli induced by CLI, a native speaking immersion environment is being created, implemented, induced and controlled through the daily routine imposed by the method.

Specialists in neuroscience and psychology strongly affirm and reaffirm that our brains can learn and unlearn patterns of behavior, fire, wire and rewire itself by creating new neuronal circuits (Dispenza, 2013). It is proven that our bodies are precognitive and our brains are endowed with neuroplasticity.⁴ Neuroplasticity is a topic of enormous practical importance (Begley, 2007). The increasing evidence that the brain is a highly adaptable structure that undergoes constant change throughout life opposes the idea that we are simply the product of our genes or our environment. It simply confirms that we all have an amazing latent potential of learning and processing information, reviving, wiring and rewiring neuronal patterns, creating new neuronal connections during the process of knowledge acquisition ecc.

The question becomes then *how much can we develop our own brain and mind and how and to what extent can we induce that development to others?* It becomes clearer and clearer that the way in which we convey information/data/knowledge to a class full of students in the 21st century cannot ignore this newly discovered latent potential or disregard these new strides in neuroscience and quantum physics.

Understanding the extraordinary physiological capacity of the brain and its remarkable plasticity can be essential and lead to the development of a large array of teaching techniques, part of an innovative *quantum learning process* (i.e. the data acquisition learning process which considers instrumental the perspective of the subject/observer and neuroplasticity of the brain) (Osman, 2016), yet awaiting exploration and charting. The information conveyed to a subject is an integral part of an ever changing, fluctuat-

⁴ Dr. Norman Doidge, a research psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst who has interviewed many experts in the field.

ing learning environment and the way in which the student perceives the data offered within the lecture format and views the entire process become essential. The *perspective of the observer* is described as instrumental in quantum physics and quantum psychology and therefore it should also be central to the quantum learning process as a whole.

The use of multiple intelligence types emphasized through *focus* and interconnectivity of *perspectives* (educator/sender-education facilitator -> student/receiver) leads to a wholeness of being in which knowledge (IQ) and belief (EQ) integrate the faith to succeed (SQ), within the right physical body environment and proper nutrition conditions (PQ), for optimal learning results, completing the cycle of summative intelligence in quantum learning.

Traditionally, schools have been used as an instrument to transmit knowledge; however, Noam Chomsky opines that the skills and knowledge taught are often not worthwhile. «The goal of education», according to Noam Chomsky,⁵ «is to produce human beings whose values are not accumulation and domination, but instead are free association on equal terms.»

2.4 Language Acquisition – A Continuous Learning Experience

«Imagination», Albert Einstein used to say «is more important than knowledge» since «knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand». His words were never truer. The elements of knowledge revealed to specialists in neuroscience quantify the invisible and the insufficiently explored power of the human mind puzzles researchers in the field.

Neuroscience, quantum physics and quantum psychology build a new understanding around classical concepts describing human brain/mind activity, physiology and interaction with the other body systems, bringing a new vision on what humans can achieve through learning, focusing, creativity, and determination.

The intelligence of the brain matter is so wonderful due to but not limited to its plasticity. This amazing intelligence/capacity of the brain to perform tasks which escape consciousness I called *summative intelligence*. It encom-

⁵ <https://chomsky.info/>.

passes all known types of intelligence,⁶ defined and undefined yet by human conscious genius. This unbelievable capacity of the brain to create, generate, wire and rewire constantly neuronal networks and complex circuits makes possible any behavioral data acquisition when the right path is induced through *focus*. Concentration on the information acquisition process is not new as a concept, but the way in which the data is being placed into focus becomes relevant here, considering the perspective of the observer/subject mentioned when I previously attempted to define *quantum learning*. The newness comes from the way in which the learning environment becomes the *immersion medium* prone to the creation of new neuronal networks/circuits that facilitate the memorization and utilization of the data presented for acquisition in class.

More on the practical side, students are first accustomed with the concept of *Summative Intelligence* and Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences and then invited to ponder upon the type of intelligence they mostly use while they study. They understand that the ones among them focused mainly on data acquisition function primarily on their cognitive intelligence, the ones who like talking and sharing information use mainly their emotional intelligence ecc. The *transformational interactive model* they are invited to partner into brings about a sum of activities that implicitly trigger multiple types of intelligences in the learning processes making the acquisition of ESP smoother, and more long-lasting, while stimulating the student's interest and motivation.

2.5 Evaluation Design: Continuous Evaluation vs. Formal Exams

Students are introduced and later on assigned roles within four main groups and interaction possibilities on the Moodle platform, after registering as users and participants in the on-line English course for undergraduate students of Political Science and invited to participate in the process of assigning their own final grades at the end of the academic year. Each group can interact on the IT platform only with the teacher and the peers registered in the same group, and view on-line activities in real time.

The weekly evaluation sessions open on Monday and deadlines for posting comments, links and uploading papers is Sunday. The weekly session for interactions once closed, students are provided with feedback and their

⁶ See Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, <http://www.tecweb.org/styles/gardner.html>.

work is being evaluated and graded automatically on the interactive platform. The final grade is established as the sum of the continuous evaluation grades they obtained/received throughout the semester(s) as a result of complying with the requirements of their own group. In this way, students are directly involved in the evaluation of their own proficiency level at the beginning of the academic year (deciding individually what group suits better their English proficiency skills and their educational needs) and in the grading process (the grade being directly linked to and dependent on their attendance to class and directly proportional to their personal, outside the classroom interaction with the Moodle platform).

3. Group Descriptors

Group 1, TWAU (The World around Us) – (with emphasis on developing SQ)

Students who join this TWAU group are basically aware of their language proficiency level, they are comfortable expressing themselves freely in English and decide to improve their creative writing skills. We meet in a separate working group once every three weeks, to talk about writing techniques, to clarify topics of the week, to exchange ideas and brainstorm on the themes at hand. The following are the requirements of the TWAU group:

- Weekly writing assignments to upload on the platform – writing topics assigned individually
- List with ESP vocabulary studied during class and used in the TWAU paper
- Post weekly two on-line resources on the topic assigned (books, papers, articles, speeches)

Group 2, Portfolios – (with emphasis on developing IQ)

Students who join this group are study oriented, are reluctant to use English in writing and would like to improve their writing skills, use newly acquired vocabulary in given contexts and produce clear, coherent, harmonious texts highlighting a subjective stance on issues at hand. Full attendance is mandatory. Their weekly tasks include:

- Writing weekly portfolios (topics included in the textbook) and uploading them on the Moodle platform respecting deadlines

- To post a word list weekly with vocabulary used in the paper
- To post two links to articles on the topic assigned for the Portfolios

Group 3, Talkies – (with emphasis on developing EQ)

This group is favored by students who have difficulties expressing themselves in writing in English and favor oral communication as a way of learning. Their research abilities are encouraged and reinforced throughout the year. They are periodically tested in their knowledge of vocabulary and asked to answer questions using newly acquired ESP vocabulary. Attendance is mandatory. Their interaction with the Moodle platform includes the following weekly tasks:

- Upload word lists and English to English definitions of ESP vocabulary learned in class (at least 5 ESP words a week)
- Post at least one comment a week on the Portfolio topic assigned or on the Trivia issue discussed in class

Group 4, General Academic– (with emphasis on developing PQ)

Students with lower English proficiency levels are encouraged to register into this group. Their general English proficiency is developed through exercises based on the study of synonyms, and ESP vocabulary clarified in clear English to English definitions for memorization. Self study is enforced, research skills developed and encouraged, and individual progress assessed and rewarded periodically. Full attendance is mandatory. Here are some of their weekly tasks:

- Upload word lists and English to English definitions of ESP vocabulary learned in class (at least 5 ESP words a week)
- Upload word lists with general English vocabulary acquired in class (at least 10 words) with their Romanian translation

More than two hundred students have registered on the Moodle platform and do their weekly assignments:

- 63 students in group 1 TWAU
- 101 students in Group 2 Portfolios

- 45 students in Group 3 – Talkies
- 45 students in General Academic.

4. Lifelong Learning Skills

The summative intelligence's wheel makes the world go round and keeps it in its hinges. Maybe one day we will face an era in which *quantum learning* will emerge out of this *symbiosis and synergy of sciences* and teachers will discover new missions, goals and perspectives on teaching. Knowing much more now about the limitless capacities of the human brain and facing every year generations of students who expect more and better information, delivered to them in attractive, interesting formats and creative concepts to help them progress faster (at the speed of light, if possible and with the least effort), we need to adapt to this ever changing environment and produce ways, methods, techniques and learning formats to respond to the needs of a generation seemingly glued to technology and virtual realities. Applying *Controlled Linguistic Immersion* brings good feedback and positive outcome every year. The *Summative Intelligence Concept* applied to teaching ESP to young adults brings about teaching techniques that take into account the predominant type of intelligence students use during the process of data/concept acquisition, while working on developing the other less accessed types of intelligence and explaining the importance of summative intelligence (perspective of the observer and focus). It also incentivizes teachers to discover along the way new means and methods of presenting, (re)enforcing, using, reviewing and (re)visiting information introduced in class, bearing in mind efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching act, while aiming towards achieving quantum learning.

5. Concluding Remarks

The two ESP courses implemented at University Federico II of Napoli and the National School for Political Science and Public Administration in Bucharest show interesting similarities and differences related to the educational paradigms adopted in the language classrooms: on the one hand Silvia Osman's insights into the neurolinguistic factors influencing people's learning is not only fascinating but also extremely valuable as it prompts the students to produce better and more complex language; on the other hand Cristina Pennarola's constructivist framework gives the students the opportunity to take responsibility for their critical thinking and learning. Despite differences in the theoretical and methodological assumptions and the different role played by digital technology, both courses aim at

developing the students' language knowledge as well as their life skills such as observing, analyzing, reading between the lines, discussing, arguing, summarizing. Both courses use authentic English-medium materials and a variety of text-based activities to stimulate curiosity and enhance accuracy and communicative ability in written and spoken English. Last but not least, both courses take a very positive view of learning as a collaborative and life-long process based on teacher-student interaction and a mutual exchange of gifts and natural endowments. The in-depth study of two higher education environments in Italy and in Romania has shown that, even within the multifaceted landscape of the Euromosaic, «far more unites us than divides us.»

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Multimodality and Digital Literacy in the English Language Syllabi across Europe

Sandra Petroni* & Maria Grazia Sindoni***

Abstract

This paper presents a discussion on the main issues and challenges brought about by the needs of digitalisation, such as the digital divide, in Europe. It focuses explicitly on the formal introduction of digital and multimodal literacy, or literacies, in European syllabi and curricula with the aim of expanding on current academic and professional programmes, that traditionally are based on the development of technical skills in learners, thus overlooking socio-semiotic and critical competence that is today more than needed in the labour market. To do so, we will first address the notion of multimodal and digital literacy tracing back its origins to traditional notions of literacy in the Western context, then we will review the European agenda on digital literacy after a brief overview of the position of Italy within the World Economic Forum (2014-2015) in terms of global competitiveness, quality of education, ICT use and other digital-related indexes. We will then focus on the educational domain by describing how joint syllabi and curricula in the European context can and indeed should be designed by taking into due account how collaborative learning can improve learning processes when it comes to incorporating English language classes in digital environments. The next sections will be respectively devoted to a more thorough discussion on the role of multimodal approaches to communication, especially in the context of foreign language teaching and learning, subsequently focusing on peer-learning practices. In the last section, we will give an example for the construction of a joint syllabus. We will end our discussion by arguing the case for

* Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

** Università degli Studi di Messina

*** The authors designed and discussed this paper together. However, the Introduction, sections 1 and 4 were written by Maria Grazia Sindoni, whereas sections 2, 3, and 6 were written by Sandra Petroni.

an integrated approach that blends all the notions and components that are in our view useful for the development of syllabi that encourage the enhancement of transversal skills in the European context.

Introduction: preliminary remarks on digital literacy

Literacy is traditionally considered as one of the main goals of the so-called “developed countries” and fundamentally associated with education and success in life. As literacy used to be exclusively associated with reading, writing, and arithmetic, controversies may ensue as regards the primacy of reading and writing in literate societies *vis-à-vis* the mode of speaking in oral societies (Sindoni, 2012). As well as with the mode of writing and reading, literacy has always been attached to other Western-centred values, such as formal instruction in education and the crucial role played by institutions such as schools, universities, ecc. However, the notion of literacy has embraced other skills and abilities in the digital era (James, 2013).

As recent research literature attests, the more recent notion of digital literacy or, to put it in more precise terms, *multimodal literacies*, has broadened the previous and somewhat outdated concept of literacy *tout court*, thus including the mastery of skills other than reading and writing. Jones and Hafner, for example, argue that digital literacy cannot be merely defined as the ability to master a set of operational and technical skills, but is more complex and includes «the ability to creatively engage in particular *social practices*, to assume appropriate *social identities*, and to form or maintain various *social relationships*» (Jones and Hafner 2012: 12).

Digital and multimodal literacies also encapsulate a wide range of semi-otic resources that users need to learn to recognize and discern, beyond the preliminary acquisition of a set of operational and technical strategies, such as surfing the net, logging in to a social platform or email account, or searching the web for specific information. What is needed for a European citizen to be fully functional in digital environments cannot be limited to being able to perform basic “technical” operations, but encompasses an individual’s sociosemiotic skills, in particular being able to participate in social practices, develop social identities and engage in social relationships. Hence, sociality and sociability are connected to notions of literacy. Both are changing constantly and further broaden previous views on education that were more focused on solitary activities or skills, such as reading or writing (Lankshear and Knobel 2008).

Furthermore, the social practices involved imply communication, relationships and reflection that can be interpreted as central in any process of development, such as learning processes. Communication and reflection (*meaning* and *understanding* in Halliday's terms 1978) are central in this approach. Being involved with *digital literacies* means being involved with practices of intercultural communication, socio-cultural exchange, self- and peer learning. Strategies are necessary to learn how to use tools and their initial technical affordances to new environments or new needs. For example, reading a textbook is different from reading a *Twitter* thread. The latter is an operation that requires particular skills, such as understanding remediation and knowing *Twitter* syntax, thus implying a different deployment and use of the semiotic resources involved in the two reading processes. Conversely, writing a status update on *Facebook* using a keyboard is different from writing it using a smartphone. The semiotic affordances involved in this last example are the same, but what changes is the technical difference in operating the writing process on a PC or on a smartphone (Hartley, 2010).

All these skills and abilities cannot be taken for granted. People usually learn how to search the web on their own, without formal instruction. The so-called "digital natives" were born in the digital age, so they are automatically believed to be able to perform technical and operational actions in appropriate and effective ways: for example, they can search the web, use a web page for their purposes, fill in an online registration form, ecc. However, this cannot be equated with the idea that these people, especially if they are young people, are able to engage with the more subtle communicative and social practices that are embedded in digital experiences. Children or young people may encounter many different kinds of risks, some of which can seriously threaten their safety, for example in terms of privacy violations, cyberbullying, identity theft, ecc. (Edgington, 2011; Mitchell, 2011).

Reading and writing are literacy skills that are most typically learnt at an early age and in formal instruction contexts, such as schools, so they are unambiguously taught and learnt. Digital literacies, as this section has briefly outlined, are more complex, cannot be described in mere technical terms and imply a range of social abilities that cannot be taken for granted, and especially so because they need to be put into practice outside monitored environments, such as school (Unsworth, 2006). The overarching goal of this paper is to provide guidance and direction to different stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, caretakers, children, institutions, society at large)

in terms of potentialities, affordances, dangers and learning advantages (Marsh, 2004) of digital and multimodal literacies in terms of their incorporation in European syllabi and curricula.

1. *European agenda on digital literacy*

Before a more detailed discussion on the position of Italy within European language and digital policies, it is useful to provide some context at a global level. At the time of writing this paper, the *World Economic Forum* has ranked Italy 49th in terms of global competitiveness (after Turkey, Oman, Malta and Panama), 35th for tertiary education enrolment rate (after Bulgaria), 67th for quality of education system (after Senegal). These and other rankings for Italy, based on the 5th pillar, dealing with “Higher Education and Training” (5.02-5.07 on Table 1), the 7th pillar “Labour market efficiency” (7.0-7.8 on Table 1), and the 9th pillar of Technological readiness”, are reported below:

Index	Position	Two countries immediately preceding Italy
Global competitiveness (general)	49/144	Malta (47), Panama (48)
5.02 Tertiary education enrolment rate	35/144	Uruguay (33), Bulgaria (34)
5.03 Quality of education system	67/144	Latvia (65), Senegal (66)
5.06 Internet access in schools	91/144	Pakistan (89), Cape Verde (90)
5.07 On-the-job training	75/144	Colombia (73), Oman (74)
7.0 Labour market efficiency	136/144	Uruguay (134), Sri Lanka (135)
7.8 Country capacity to retain talent	121/144	Lithuania (119), Zimbabwe (120)
9.1 Technological adoption	100/144	Madagascar (98), El Salvador (99)
9.2. ICT use	26/144	Japan (24), New Zealand (25)

Table 1. Competitiveness rankings (WEF 2014-2015)

Table 1 provides some interesting insights, especially if we compare differ-

ent data sets. In particular, if we compare the rather good tertiary education enrolment rate, that is a quantitative index, with the general quality of the education system (a qualitative index including other sub-indexes of performance for different areas, such as maths, science, management and Internet access in schools), the position of Italy dramatically drops down. In other words, a relative good rate in enrolment in higher education does not correspond to equally good services provided in qualitative terms. Furthermore, if we relate technological adoption (an index that incorporates availability of latest technologies, firm-level technology absorption, FDI and technology transfer) to ICT use (an index that includes Internet users, fixed-broadband Internet subscriptions, Internet bandwidth, and mobile-broadband subscriptions), data are even more revealing. Italy ranks 100th for technological adoption, that can be broadly defined as the inclusion of technology on the macro-levels of society, for example in terms of technology transfer, thus performing very badly, whereas, not surprisingly, it ranks 26th for the Internet personal use.

If we narrow down our point of observation, we find other significant data for the present discussion in the *Digital Economy & Society Index* (DESI, 2016). DESI is a multidimensional index that reports on some indexes with reference to Europe's digital performance, also tracing the evolution of EU member states in digital competitiveness. The five main dimensions included are: 1) *connectivity* (deployment and quality of broadband infrastructure); 2) *human capital* (skills needed to take advantage of the chances offered by a digital society); 3) *use of Internet* (a range of activities, e.g. consuming digital texts, such as videos, blogs, ecc., and using e-commerce, online banking and other digital services); 4) *integration of digital technology* (digitisation of business and their exploitation of the online sales channel); 5) *digital public services* (digitisation of public services, e.g. e-government).

Italy's performance is particularly poor, as it ranks 25th out of 28 European Member States in 2016, losing one position since 2015, in which it ranked 24th. As the Country profile for Italy (DESI, 2016) illustrates, when discussing the poor performance in the "human capital" dimension:

The major cause of this lack of digital skills is to be found in the low level of education (the two are highly correlated) of the Italian population (only 42% of the population has an education level above lower secondary – ISCED 2 – the fourth lowest value in the EU28), and in the important share of aged population (Country profile, 2016: 3).

The factors identified as detrimental to the lack of digital skills in Italy that will not presumably increase in the short-medium run, are the low level of education of the Italian population and the significant share of aged population. When it comes to Internet use, Italians engage in online activities less than average European users. Only the consumption of digital texts, such as videos and games is higher (52%) than EU average, whereas e-banking (43%) and shopping online (39%) are less common. Reading online news is significantly lower than in all other European countries (57%) and is even decreasing in 2016, maybe due to an increase of content on demand (DESI, 2016).

Even though Italy's performance in the context of digital economy and society performance is so poor, all other European Member States have serious issues with the integration of digitality into education. Between 50% and 80% of students in EU countries never use digital textbooks, exercise software, broadcasts/podcasts, simulations or learning games (European Commission, 2013a). Most teachers at primary and secondary level do not consider themselves as “digitally confident” or able to teach digital skills effectively, and 70% would like more training in using ICTs. Pupils in Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic are the most likely to have Internet access at school (more than 90%), twice as much as in Greece, Italy and Croatia (around 45%, see European Commission, 2013a). Teachers do not use regularly ICT-based activities at all grades, and the lowest frequencies are reported in Greece and Italy (European Commission, 2013b: 77). In Lithuania around 70% and in Romania around 65% of students at all grades are taught by teachers for whom it is compulsory to participate in ICT training, while only 13% or less of students are taught by such teachers in Luxembourg, Austria and Italy (European Commission, 2013b: 89).

In response to all these issues, and consistently with the findings of the “Digital Agenda for Europe 2010-2020” (see European Commission, 2010), which reported on a dramatic gap in the best and worst performances of digital technologies use among EU Member States, the European Commission has launched the “Opening Up Education” action plan in 2013. It is a plan designed to address a wide range of issues in the area of digital literacy in educational domains, at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. As 90% of jobs will require digital skills by 2020, schools and universities have to be fully equipped to tackle these market needs. The “Opening up Education” action plan, in particular, is addressed to three main areas:

1. Creating opportunities for organisations, teachers and learners to

innovate;

2. Increased use of Open Educational Resources (OER), ensuring that educational materials produced with public funding are available to all; and

3. Better ICT infrastructure and connectivity in schools (European Commission, 2013a).

On the press release, Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, claimed that:

The education landscape is changing dramatically, from school to university and beyond: open technology-based education will soon be a ‘must have’, not just a ‘good-to-have’, for all ages. We need to do more to ensure that young people especially are equipped with the digital skills they need for their future. It’s not enough to understand how to use an app or program; we need youngsters who can create their own programs. Opening up Education is about opening minds to new learning methods so that our people are more employable, creative, innovative and entrepreneurial (Vassiliou in European Commission, 2013a).

Initiatives linked to “Opening up Education” are funded within Erasmus+ schemes, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, and Horizon 2020, the research and innovation programme, as well as the EU structural funds. In particular, Erasmus+ offers funding to education providers and institutions to ensure business models are adapted to technological change and to support teachers’ development through open online courses (see European Commission, 2013a). All educational materials supported by Erasmus+ are freely available to the public under open licences (see European Commission, 2013a).

2. Joint syllabi and collaborative learning in higher education

Along with the “Opening up Education” initiative, there is another essential facet of the new European education and training programmes, that is, fostering joint curricula, and this action is inevitably interconnected with the endorsement of digital skills. The reasons for both providing and participating in a joint study programme are numerous. According to the Erasmus Mundus programme, this was traditionally seen as a means to

integrate and internationalise curricula, develop international academic collaboration and provide a unique study experience to students, keen to learn from different education systems (European Commission, 2016). Of course, the launch of the Bologna Process (1999) played a pivotal role in this initiative, as can be read in the Prague Declaration (2000):

In order to further strengthen the important European dimensions of higher education and graduate employability, Ministers called upon the higher education sector to increase the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with 'European' content, orientation or organisation. This concerns particularly modules, courses and degree curricula offered in partnership by institutions from different countries and leading to a recognised joint degree.¹

With the inclusion of the Erasmus Mundus programme in that of Erasmus+, where mobility and employability are key criteria on which higher education applicants are evaluated and on which selected projects subsequently need to report, more attention has been paid to the link between joint curricula initiatives and their impact on the labour market. The development of joint programmes, in fact, entails:

1. Quality enhancement (both of academic content and of the potential mobility experience embedded in the programme)
2. Convergence and compatibility of degree systems
3. Improvement of graduates' employability (European Commission, 2016).

In the light of what the European Commission wishes for and invests on the future of European Higher Education stakeholders, designing joint syllabi represents another facet of the European agenda on joint curricula. What has been theorised for universally designed curricula by means of the Universal Design Learning (UDL) approach (Meyer and Rose, 1998, 2000, 2005; Rose and Meyer, 2002) is perfectly applicable to any single syllabus aimed at providing scaled competence concerning all topics and subjects with the support of both digital technologies and *English as a Lingua Franca*. A syllabus design entails reflections on instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that are flexible enough to accommodate learner differences and needs. Similarly, when a curriculum and/or a syllabus are designed to enable all kinds of learners to access and progress in their programme, all students,

¹ http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/PRAGUE_COMMUNIQUE.pdf.

including those with disabilities, will take advantages from having more flexible learning environments. As Meo (2008: 23) claims,

UDL is a means of identifying and removing barriers in the curriculum while building scaffolds, supports, and alternatives that meet the learning needs of a wide range of students. Specifically, a UDL curriculum is characterized by the provision of:

1. multiple or flexible representations of information and concepts (the “what” of learning),
2. multiple or flexible options in expression and performance (the “how” of learning),
3. multiple or flexible ways to engage learners in the curriculum (the “why” of learning; Rose and Meyer, 2002: 6).

Furthermore, a joint syllabus can be used in different learning contexts simultaneously, shared by different learning groups, who participate actively in knowledge building and in many other learning practices, such as, designing collaboratively materials and reflecting metalinguistically on their productions. Thus, planning joint syllabi means to foster community building, support social interactions (teachers-teachers, teachers-students, students-students), cooperation and collaboration for learning and knowledge construction, and the presence of digital technology and computer-mediated exchanges transform these processes in good practices.

The emerging paradigm of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) (Koschmann, 1996; Lipponen, Hakkarainen and Paavola, 2004; O'Malley and Scanlon, 1989) is developing as a dynamic, interdisciplinary, and international field of investigation, focused on how technology can facilitate the sharing and creation of knowledge and expertise via peer interaction and group learning processes, as can be realized through a joint syllabus. The CSCL approach draws on a range of situations in which interactions occur among students using digital tools to improve the learning environment. It implies the use of technology to endorse both asynchronous and synchronous exchanges between students on-site as well as students who are geographically distributed. Resta and La Ferrière (2007) identify four instructional reasons for the use of technology in support of collaborative learning:

1. To prepare students for the knowledge society (collaboration skills and knowledge creation) [...]
2. To enhance student cognitive performance or foster deep understanding [...]
3. To add flexibility of time and space for cooperative/collaborative learning [...]
4. To foster student engagement and keep track of student cooperative/collaborative work (online written discourse) (2007: 69-70).

The first motive follows UNESCO directives which claim that higher education has to respond to the social demands of a highly diverse, interdependent, and technologically rich workplace that has undergone an explosive development of knowledge in many fields that calls for teamwork (UNESCO, 2005). As Schrage (1990: 40) highlights, in fact, collaboration is «the process of shared creation».

Besides, the new learning environments become virtual and work is carried out by individuals who are situated differently in place and time. Due to this trend, teachers need to create opportunities for their students to learn to work independently of place and time.

Collaborative tasks are linked to student engagement in knowledge building. Moreover, teachers who use CSCL can observe student understanding and achievement in collaborative learning activities (Holliman and Scanlon, 2006). Additionally, learners can assess what they wrote or what their peers wrote, and teachers can evaluate the discourse of community members using computational data monitoring procedures (e.g., open access e-platform) for facilitation, moderation, or grading purposes.

In line with the mission of European initiatives and programmes for higher education where the transdisciplinarity between digital skills acquisition and any fields of knowledge is the baseline through which joint programmes and/or syllabi can be realised, Resta and La Ferrière's concluding remarks strongly recommend this claiming that:

The last 20 years have been highly productive for CSCL. The advances of the learning sciences, combined with the needs of the knowledge society, have heightened the requirements for flexible (time and space) and challenging (problem-solving and knowledge building)

learning environments. New analytical frameworks, derived from a number of theoretical perspectives (e.g., activity theory), offer new directions for research on collaborative learning (2007: 77).

3. *A multimodal approach for designing an English language syllabus*

Multimodality is another pivotal issue in any form of educational practices and, in particular, in the field of foreign language learning and teaching (FLLT). It is undeniable that, by nature, any pedagogical and instructional practices used in this domain have always been represented within a multimodal dimension and by means of multimodal resources, although probably not acknowledged as how we understand multimodality today.

As Farias, Obilinovic and Orrego state (2011: available online), if viewed from a sociosemiotic perspective (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006),

the multimodal input the foreign language learner is exposed to triggers cognitive responses and processes that are both mental and social in that they are influenced by the individual's background knowledge and, at the same time, conditioned by the social context. For these authors visual representations are socially constructed out of the affordances made available by particular cultures. [...] It is actually from this sociosemiotic view that FLLT can establish a stronger dialog with multimodal theories to the extent that the very setting in which learning takes place, which includes the classroom, the teacher, other learners, the textbook and the teaching materials, can be looked at not as mere linguistic objects but as cultural artifacts whose architecture, designs, affordances and learning potential are not neutrally constructed.

The inclusion of multimedia and digital technologies in these practices should push scholars and teachers to consider any forms and modalities of language interactions as a simultaneous ensemble of semiotic resources that together contribute to produce meaning (Bezemer and Jewitt, 2010; Bezemer and Kress, 2008; Kress, 2010). However, over the last decades, this inclusion has favoured only the strong presence of technology in teaching and learning practices without exploiting their real affordances in meaning making but, above all, without raising a full "multimodal" awareness about how meaning construction works. Multimediality and multimodality are two separate domains and if there is a need to train skilled learn-

ers in terms of digital literacy and foreign/second language competences at the same time multimodal communicative competences (Royce, 2007) need to be part of these syllabi. Learner's goals are no longer those only linked to written and oral skills, but also to those target skills described by multimodal markers such as layout, colour, font, image, multimodal orchestration (i.e. if the combined use of all modal resources of a text are coherent and suitable to its communicative purpose), multimodal discursive practice (i.e. if the different modes are used and combined according to the practices of the most relevant discourse community), informativity (i.e. how informativity is fully achieved through salience, information value and framing), ecc.

This approach is also supported by the inevitable reflection on the uses of technologies in education as cognitive tools (defined also as cognitive technology, technologies of the mind, mind tools) that can help students to cope with cognitive processes that would be inaccessible otherwise (Harper *et al.* 2000). According to Paivio's Dual-Channel Theory (DCT), human beings use different channels to process visual and auditory information (Paivio 1971; Sadoski and Paivio 2001). The pivotal assumption of this theory states that cognition consists of two separate coding systems of mental representations that are organized hierarchically, one system focused on language and the other focused on nonverbal objects and events, if applied, for instance, to reading and writing. In the verbal system information is processed sequentially, whereas in the nonverbal system information is organized nonsequentially (e.g., spatially). The integration of multimodality and Second/Foreign Language Acquisition (S/FLA) is, then, theoretically motivated by the following common practices (Farias *et al.* 2011):

1. exposing the learner to more than just one "encounter" with new item through more than just one mode in order to contribute to its retention. 'Remembering' is only an elementary cognitive skill. However, it is pivotal for the use of higher-order cognitive skills such as application or analysis.
2. Asking the learner to produce meaning by representing the item through more than just one mode.
3. Transforming declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge. For example, for the language rules to become automatic in use, media and technologies may be useful as a means to convey formal rules of the foreign language by presenting this explicit linguistic knowledge in combination with multimodal productions (e.g. digital artefacts).

When learners study a second language they tend to elicit a special type of attention called “noticing” (Schmidt, 2010), independently whether the learning is intentional or incidental. If they are stimulated to pay attention constantly and selectively they become more active and motivated and multimodality plays a crucial role in this mechanism (Farias, Obilinovic and Orrego, 2011; Petroni, 2011). Paying attention develops noticing, «and motivated learners may also try harder and more persistently to understand the significance of noticed language, achieving higher levels of awareness and enhanced learning as a result» (Schmidt, 2010: 734). According to Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis, «input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered.» (idem: 721). He offers a further insight into the concept of awareness in relation to noticing by arguing that awareness can be constructed on two levels: a low level that is noticing, «the conscious registration of attended specific instances of language» (idem: 724), and understanding, a higher level of awareness that includes generalizations across instances, knowledge of rules and metalinguistic awareness. His proposal is that noticing is as necessary as understanding, or rather it is the primary stimulus for Second Language Acquisition, both for explicit and implicit instruction (Petroni, 2014).

4. Peer assessment

In the last two decades, research literature has explored a range of different teaching, learning and assessment orientations and procedures. The transfer-of-knowledge model has shifted to new models placing students at the core of the learning experience (Anderson and North, 1991; Boud and Falchikov, 2007; Falchikov, 2001; Falchikov and Goldfinch, 2000).

Different theoretical and applicative theories have developed models for the implementation of self-learning, self-assessment, peer monitoring, peer pairing and peer assessment. They all go hand in hand with digital literacy skills and with the expanding notions of what learning and teaching materials are, for example shifting from an almost total reliance on textbooks with “ready-made” activities and tasks with little or no meaningful context to the gradual use of authentic materials and texts taken from the Internet. Overall, literature provides evidence that contributions of peers in learning contexts enhance the conceptual, emotive, intellectual, cognitive and metacognitive development of their partners, encouraging student-centred experiences of learning (Stiggins, 1994). Methods for peer

learning range from cooperative learning (Johnson and Johnson, 1987) to collaborative learning (Brown and Campione, 1994) and peer tutoring (Cohen, Kulik and Kulik, 1982; Greenwood, 1997). These methods vary in the application of peer learning, but they generally agree about its usefulness and positive effects in learning outcomes and educational success, and general improved conditions of learning. However, as O'Donnell and Topping claim (1998: 259), research literature on the use of peers for assessment is "quite sparse". To address the problems discussed in the previous sections, we have wondered why, if peer learning is commonly agreed to have beneficial results in class and outside class, a lamentable lack of experimentation can be observed in the context of peer assessment, especially in terms of its formal inclusion in the syllabus and curriculum.

A central issue concerning the partial or total lack of experimentation on peer assessment in educational contexts can be detected in a possible misunderstanding of the distinction between formative and summative peer assessment. The former deals with the process of learning and may be better defined as peer monitoring, that is, helping the partner/s with critical feedback and providing support in terms of *in itinere* group's feedback. In other words, formative peer assessment is more concerned with the *process* of learning: students thus have the opportunity to edit their assignments before the final and formal submission. Summative peer assessment is instead concerned with the final outcome, i.e. the *product* of learning after a period of instruction. Summative peer assessment is typically designed as a way to grade peer work (e.g., essays, presentations) and is typically measured against student's performance and final achievement. Conversely, summative peer assessment is not based on formal and "objective" assessment (e.g., univocal answer cloze questions or correcting grids), hence students may not feel ready to grade their peers or willing to have their assignments graded by their peers.

To make the picture even more complex, teachers may be cagey about the adoption of peer assessment, assuming their students' lack of expertise, training and other more covert issues, such as giving up their institutional power and handing it down to students. A partial reversal of institutionalized roles is perhaps what makes teachers (and curriculum planners) so resistant to formalized summative peer assessment. Educational planners in general are cagey about formalizing peer assessment, whereas self and peer learning constitute a common ground of investigation and experimentation, for example in language planning, and have been thoroughly institutionalized at European level (see the European Language Portfolio).

If students become evaluators, the traditional “good assessment” ingredients of reliability and validity may be hampered. Pond, Ul-Haq and Wade (1995) listed many controversial issues, such as *friendship grading* (i.e. students assigning high grades to peers because of friendship), *collusive grading* (i.e. lack of differentiation between peers, especially frequent with high-stake assessment tests/exams), *decibel grading* (i.e. students assigning the highest grades to the most active peers). Other potential criticalities include competitive environment, consequent misunderstanding on the role of peer assessment, scarce or non-existent experience in peer assessment. All of these issues could be countered by tasks and activities that make the process and goals transparent for students, who, especially in undergraduate and postgraduate university contexts, should also work on the development of their critical skills when it comes to their learning (e.g., *metalearning*).

Experimentation needs to be carried out further, especially at university, where students are required to improve their negotiating and evaluating skills in English, particularly in the Humanities, for students interested in future teaching careers. In Italy, many teachers complain about the poor quality and virtual lack of practical teacher training at postgraduate level. Experimentation and research into peer assessment within English and digital skills are thus needed to enhance university students’ learning and *metalearning* experience and to equip them with practical tools to become assessors in (future) real life educational contexts that, as discussed in the previous section, will and should be more digitally equipped, and not only in technical terms.

Another crucial factor in designing the course is how to measure the success of the experiment. The usual measurement of success in similar experiments was the degree of agreement between teacher and student ratings (Falchikov, 2001). However, as Falchikov (2001: 272) claims on the matter, «agreement between student and teacher marks may not be the most important aspect of successful self- or peer assessment. Real success should follow from the enhancement of student learning that results from participation in the process». Measurement of success cannot be exclusively measured against the agreement of grading between students and teacher, and for a number of reasons, such as the consideration that no grading may be believed as a pure or neutral procedure. Teachers’ grading is more subjective and evanescent than we, as teachers, are willing to admit, and especially so when it comes to marking via complex and non-univocal criteria (e.g., essays, presentations, oral exams). Another reason for the need to expand our notion of success in peer assessment experimentation lies in the ideological consideration that empowering students and fostering

their reflective skills with regard to the complex arena of English and digital skill in the context of assessment is very important.

5. MoM project as a prototype of a joint syllabus

Project overview

The MoM (Multimodality on the Move) research project aims at rethinking the curriculum of the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language within Degrees in Modern Languages, Media, Communication and others, in the light of the contemporary role that English is playing at global level in the changed digital media landscape. It builds on a pilot project developed at the University of Messina in 2010 in a course of English Linguistics for postgraduate students in which systemic-functional and cross-cultural sociosemiotic approaches to multimodal studies were the major focus of the syllabus (Sindoni, 2013).

English was the core of the syllabus and, more in detail, the project explores collaborative teaching and learning practices in academic contexts, focusing on the ground-breaking role that multimodal studies are currently playing in the (re)shaping of the fields of linguistics, communication and, broadly speaking, the social sciences, especially in the analysis of digital texts for cross-cultural communication.

Description of the method

MoM was developed within four universities in Italy, i.e. University of Chieti-Pescara, University of Firenze, University of Messina, and University of Roma “Tor Vergata”, in the academic year 2014-2015. Four different cohorts of students were formed in the four academic contexts on a voluntary basis. Students from English Language and Linguistics classes participated in the project by joining a specific syllabus which was focused on the study of multimodality and digital textuality, and specifically on the creation, design, and study of four genres of digital texts, namely videochats (Maria Grazia Sindoni, University of Messina), fanvids (Ilaria Moschini, University of Florence), blogs (Elisabetta Adami, University of Chieti-Pescara) and “about us” webpages (Sandra Petroni, University of Rome, Tor Vergata) and English was used as a Lingua Franca. The project involved the scheduling of three workshops that each researcher organized and administered in the other three universities. All workshops focused on the interpreta-

tion of the four above mentioned digital text types in a cross-cultural perspective and students were invited to produce their own, motivating their design and rhetorical choices. After attending the workshops, then, students were asked to 1) produce their own texts, 2) write a short academic paper discussing their linguistic and semiotic choices in text production, and finally 3) evaluate one of their fellow students from another university on a common peer-assessment grid.

The main goals were to define standardized teaching, learning and assessing procedures at a national level, experimenting on a common syllabus and common assessment and peer-assessment procedures. Standardization was made possible by exchanging researchers *in praesentia* and (peer-) assessors *in absentia* (i.e. students) in different academic contexts in Italy. Multimodality was adopted as a general framework of analysis with a specific focus on digital textualities. Assessment of the students' learning outcomes had to include evaluation of the digital texts produced and their related analyses, as well as the work peer-assessed by students from the other universities.

Preliminary results

The data sets demonstrated the validity of the approach since the students involved in the project increased their skills in 1) using English as a Lingua Franca, and in 2) creating, analysing, evaluating digital texts which are extremely useful in international and cross-cultural communication. All this thanks to the integration of English language, digital literacy and multimodality, the creation of a common syllabus and the use of assessment and peer assessment procedures.

These pivots pushed the students to 1) reflect critically on their production, distribution and evaluation of multimodal texts in English; 2) use meta-descriptive terminology and analytical tools of contemporary textualities in English, and 3) exploit critically the functionalities and affordances of digital technologies. Additionally, this format can be perfectly exportable to European contexts, in tune with the envisaged cross-cultural dimension, and customised according to the different learning needs and contexts.

6. Final remarks

Digital literacy and proficiency in English for international communication are essential requirements for graduates' access to today's European la-

bour market. While the two are often held separate in higher education curricula, there is a strong need to design courses that integrate abilities for the creation and critical interpretation of multimodal digital texts in English, such as blogs, websites, CVs, professional profiles, corporate and user-generated videos, and video-based interactions in connection with the new requirements of the job market.

The theoretical studies here put forward suggest that there are plenty of motivations for the adoption of a transdisciplinary approach to the study of foreign/second languages in as much as language itself cannot exist isolated from the other nonverbal semiotic resources. Planning syllabi and curricula thus needs a transdisciplinary perspective, and this is what scholars, teachers, students and any stakeholder involved in building knowledge are trying to do in compliance with European demands.

However, it is not only Europe who claims this. In support of the European Commission and in order to develop robust policies in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and higher education, UNESCO also declares that the use of new learning technologies has opened up meaningful possibilities for informal and continuing literacy learning in adult and youth basic education programmes. ICT can enhance skills development, stimulate use of learner-generated materials, strengthen awareness-raising and learner motivation, encourage and endorse the distribution and updating of materials and information to resource centres and collect feedback from individual and collective learners.

On a global scale, knowledge, education and training are moving towards wide-scale innovations and higher education institutions have to cope with this change by applying pedagogical policies aimed at providing all potential learner with equal opportunities, inclusion, open access to learning and quality improvement,

ICT in higher education is being used for developing course material; delivering content and sharing content; communication between learners, teachers and the outside world; creation and delivery of presentations and lectures; academic research; administrative support, student enrolment(UNESCO, 2016).²

ICT and digital skills can shape policies for education and their role is both normative and informative, with information being widely available. Open

² <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/icts/lifelong-learning/higher-education/>.

Educational Resources (OER) offer a crucial chance to upgrade the quality of education as well as promote policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

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