

# Linguistic Diversity, Global Paradigms and Taken-for-Grantedness

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## ABSTRACT

*In the first part of this paper taken-for-granted hypotheses in linguistic diversity are presented. In the second part the two constellations of globalized ideologies are described constituting paradigms that these hypotheses illustrate: competition and solidarity. In the third part, a condensed version of emerging globalized concerns is given. Sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics are disciplines that increasingly theorize and analyze within the solidarity paradigm. It is suggested that a systematic uprooting of competition as taken-for-granted grounding of scientific research should allow for the development of theorization and successful applications of solidarity ideologies. In short, in this paper, our multifaceted taken-for-grantedness is challenged in many ways: (1) competition is ideological and many social movements are unmasking it by articulating solidarity as a basis for ideologies, (2) difference is not necessarily divisive but it is so in pervasive competition, (3) proponents of the Nation-State as a model of social organization have vested interests in competition, (4) competition has not favored the articulation of common human grounds but globalization helps to raise concerns and articulate commonness / solidarity in difference.*

**Key words:** *linguistic diversity, globalization, competition, solidarity*

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## Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century is a time of articulated distress and questioning, and this not only in the domain of languages where their disappearance is a major concern for language communities and humanitarians alike.

Distress and questioning are particularly keen when we think of our general way of being in the world as human beings. Many thinkers and activists are now calling, in one way or another, for radically different ways of thinking and acting, world

wide. They attempt to shake the very foundations of our taken-for-granted way-of-being-in-the-world as indicates Amin<sup>1</sup>:

*The historical drama of our epoch is situated precisely here [period of turmoil, acute humanitarian crises, and disillusion], and has its roots in the failure of social consciousness to imagine positive and progressive alternatives.*

Language, of course, is not separate from our way of being in the world although scientific conventions and specialization have encouraged sectioning into disciplines, leaving the linguistic filters as opaque zones of comprehension. But languages are, in fact, an essential part of this being in the world; they are the main interface through thoughts and discourse in contact with the material and the social worlds. Sectioning into disciplines largely prevented a fusion of interests between linguistic concerns and our overall being in the world. And the initiative to work as sociolinguists, psycholinguists, applied linguists with anthropology is a way of shattering disciplinary boundaries and focusing on humanness as point of departure.

We could then, at this point of our historical times, review our basic modes of humane consciousness within language as an effort to eradicate roots of distress, in particular, violence and non-communication. It is with this ethical point of departure – with which readers may not agree, but a critical methodology encourages the »explicitation« of basic premises of our academic discourse – that I first present a taken-for-granted hypothesis in linguistic diversity. In the second part I describe two constellations of globalized ideologies constituting paradigms: competition and solidarity. In the third part, I present a condensed version of what I see as emerging globalized concerns. I conclude that sociolinguistics and anthropo-

logical linguistics are disciplines that increasingly theorize and analyze within the solidarity paradigm. I suggest that a systematic uprooting of competition as taken-for-granted grounding of scientific research should allow for the development of theorization and successful applications of solidarity ideologies.

### **Taken-for-Granted Division: Linguistic and Geographical**

Let us consider the taken-for-granted bases of the concept of linguistic diversity: the contiguous notions of linguistic division co-terminus with geographical divisions through the Nation-State.

In her book on the evolution of Spanish as a global language, Mar-Molinero<sup>2</sup> traces a portrait of the issues linking language and nationalism. She explores the historical and theoretical construction of the edifice that grounds, as she sees it, contemporary thinking on these two constructs. Part One of the book, launching the writing in a clear direction, postulates that language, as a symbol of identity, is a factor of difference and division. Nationalism and its political representation, the Nation-State, develop and cultivate this division:

*Not only does language have an instrumental role as a means of communication, it also has an extremely important symbolic role as marker of identity. How else can we explain the fact that although humans communicate through language, they have allowed the creation of endless barriers by sustaining thousands of mutually incomprehensible modes of communication? Why has one lingua franca not emerged as the only normal way that humankind communicates? The answer must lie in an innate need and desire to protect difference across groups and communities. In this way language is inextricably bound up with defining this difference.<sup>2</sup>*

Such communities are described in many different ways – ethnic groups, tribes, regions, nations, states, etc. – but, over the past two hundred years at least, the most common unit into which the globe is divided is that of »nation«, »state« or »nation-sate«. The formation and construction of these is often the result or object of nationalism. It is hardly surprising then, that the relationship between language, on the one hand, and nationalism and the construction of national identity, on the other hand, is so important.

This modern version of the »theory of Babel« (linguistic difference is division) and of its national consequences (nations are borders) is a remnant of the linguistic theories found the *Book of Genesis* where the sons (race) of Japheth are divided: »By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations«.\*

In essence, there is a collapsing of difference with division because the linguistic difference, that many languages seem to create is collapsed with current thinking on geographical organization of territories that have become Nation-States. However, his paradigm collapsing/continuation is not seen as »natural« by Mar-Molinaro who makes us realize the deep-rootedness and the original confusions of some of our scientific postulates. To point this out helps to question the affectionate stand in favor of the Nation-State which has, in reality, nothing of a divine right to existence, were such a thing to exist. On the contrary, Nation-State is a Eurocentric political construction exported along with colonization. It also helps to question the pervasive notions linked to difference as division.

The foundations of the modern Nation-State are neither pluralistic nor di-

versified. In effect, the elaboration of the stato-national model, its global exportation and its generalization did not have such objectives, at its origin as indicate Badie<sup>3</sup> and Lapierre<sup>4</sup>. This model imposes itself as apparently universal as a self-proclaimed model that attempts to construct a common space beyond particularisms. This is a modern version of the same thinking as the one found in the *Book of Genesis*. But the real issue is that each Nation-State is in competition with other Nation-States for access to all and any resources.

On a linguistic basis, as indicate Nichols<sup>5</sup> and Lapierre<sup>4</sup>, the celebration of the stato-national model as the model of contemporary sociopolitical organization, has contributed to the decrease of the number of languages spoken in the world. Languages have increasingly been caught in officialization games that often consolidate the power of class and/or linguistic majorities and their bureaucracies. Thus, the choice of an official language becomes a determinant issue in the construction and the evolution of a Nation-State. Non-recognized languages, minority languages, indigenous languages, varieties of official languages are relegated to civil society, to private domains or oblivion as shown by Martel<sup>6</sup>. Languages are, in this manner, in a constant state of competition with languages having access to an advance in this matter, be it symbolic or practical. In this organization, difference is division within competition.

Demographically, however, there are no homogeneous Nation-States; but there are many States that have instigated monolingualism and homogeneist policies and regulations in an attempt to eradicate difference/diversity within their own boundaries. That is the case of centraliz-

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\* Genesis, 10, 5. See <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=KjvGene.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=10&division=div1>

ing States. Of the approximate 200 Nation-States in the world today, the vast majority is officially monolingual. Approximately 40 States are officially bilingual or monolingual. And an analysis of language policies made by Baggioni<sup>7</sup> shows that bilingual or multilingual States are the exception; the tendency is towards, and an accentuation of, the practice that a Nation-State is the geographically co-terminus with one official language population.

Linguistic diversity then, as based on a modern theory of the Tower of Babel in the *Book of Genesis*, is reflective of a wide-spread taken-for-grantedness that our societies and languages are linguistically and geographically different and therefore divided in an inevitable competition.

I challenge this multifaceted taken-for-grantedness in many ways: (1) competition is ideological and many social movements are unmasking it by articulating solidarity as a basis for ideologies, (2) difference is not necessarily divisive but it is so in pervasive competition, (3) proponents of the Nation-State as a model of social organization have vested interests in competition, (4) competition has not favored the articulation of common human grounds but globalization helps to raise concerns and articulate commonness/solidarity in difference.

### **Globalized Ideologies**

Before analyzing the concept of linguistic diversity, let us look at the taken-for-grantedness of competition and its challenging ideologies of solidarity.

There are, historically, two value-based constellations of ideologies that collide on a global scale, be it in discourses or in social practices. These constellations of ideologies form paradigms made up of multiple alternatives, according to cultures and historical moments.

I use, as detailed elsewhere<sup>8</sup>, the concept of ideology in a broad sense, refuting the Marxist meaning of false-consciousness. Ideologies are a body of received ideas, of representations of the world, of systems of more or less coherent ideas, of value-laden principles that orient action and regulate relations between individuals and groups. Ideologies are not static. They are born, they develop, interact with other ideologies. In so doing, they are transformed, lose their meaning and are reborn. Ideologies, indicates Tollefson<sup>9</sup>, are associated with power in the sense that they become instituted in social structures. Paradigms, on the other hand, extending Khun's<sup>11</sup> definition, are fields of ideological activities where scientists and human beings in general, (1) engage in activities, including thinking, that are based on previous bodies of knowledge, and (2) are engaged in the creation and advance of these bodies of knowledge and structures.

Our academic discourse and research is impregnated, most of the times unarticulated, by these paradigms that act as basic filters of interpretation of our work; as if we were to see the scientific lenses »through a glass, darkly«. But if we take to task to deconstruct these filtering paradigms, we can strip them of their unacceptability in science as a value-laden influence and face squarely their impact on our own thinking and on our observing/describing of the world.

### *Ideologies of competition*

Unequally positioned, current ideological constellations confront each other; but they also inter-influence and interpenetrate each other. Sometimes, one is disguised and masked so that it largely resembles the other. They are thus not pure, neither in their constructions, nor in their institutions, nor in their effects. These ideologies constitute vast primary influences and frame discourses, ideas,

actions and cultures. Today, the ideologies of competition are very largely majoritarian whereas those of solidarity are minoritised and often seem inefficient.

On a hierarchical (vertical) axis, dominant ideologies cluster around relations of competition with current globalization of market economies and societies. The leadership of Western civilization intensifies competition into »competitiveness« where competition, instead of being sometimes a source of creativity through difference, is intensified and becomes an end in itself rather than a means to another end. This phenomenon is analyzed by the *Groupe de Lisbonne*<sup>12</sup>.

These ideologies rest on (at least) four poles:

- on a Darwinian conclusion, inspired by natural and primitive survival conditions in the physical and animal world, that the *strongest* survives better;
- on the notion of *freedom* as a privileged instrument of human development;
- on the idea that *profit*, as an extension of the economic framework, is a legitimate and desirable reward (the Good) for human activities; and
- on the thought that *money*, as an instrument of universality, governs the need for positioning and can provide a desired »object«.

Privileged positioning in power struggles is provided by profits. Action has instrumental ends. Technique and reason are effective means for impersonal objectives. Money, for example, is originally a symbol used to represent material objects, so that they can be exchanged. But in a market economy of competition, this representation becomes an end in itself, shouldering aside the substantive things which it symbolizes and dominating the global economy of the postmodern world. It moves further and further away from any grounding in reality, becoming pro-

gressively more abstract as it takes the form of precious metals, banknotes, figures on computer screens, credit, interest and investor »confidence«. At the same time, money becomes an active or subjective power, so that the minutest fluctuations in the relationships between the various forms of money have profound effects on the material lives of human beings throughout the world. We can say that the postmodern economy is characterized by the autonomy of representation.

Numerous experiences can attest to the strength of ideologies of competition. The most obvious is the generalized pricing and merchandising of words, languages, ideas, cultures, individuals, nature, objects, etc. Competitiveness has profound effects on socio-political structures, changing the West, changing other civilizations. States, whose conduct is determined by power and wealth, align their objectives on market logic and position themselves against each other, form strategic alliances against other large blocks. Mafia organizations rival each other and dominate societies and governments. Cultures are colonized, namely through the influence of Western – primarily American – media and entertainment industry. Millions of children and women work in semi-slavery conditions when multinationals seek to reduce production costs. Ecosystems essential to life (soils, oceans, animals, etc.) are exploited to depletion. Small, autochthonous, minority languages are disappearing at a rate faster than ever in history, to the benefit of international and/or dominant languages.

In short, competitiveness reinforces conditions of oppression / submission / conflict / rivalry / control / authority / imperialism / centralization / monopoly in capital-oriented actions.

Overall though, the paradigm of competition rests on a theory, yet unmasked and unarticulated, of penury, mostly economic penury, in such a way that compe-

tion is a seemingly normal result of vying for all too scarce resources. But money and economic scarcity are social conventions that make no sense unless they are enmeshed in a manufacture of consent that makes its basis seem irreversible. The greatest challenge of the ascending paradigm of solidarity is to unmask this seemingly unbreakable premise. Let us see how.

### *Ideologies of solidarity*

On an egalitarian (horizontal) axis, clusters of ideologies based on solidarity and complementarity are attempting to deflect the power axis, seeking to resist to, and counteract, parasitic and predatory socio-political organizations favored by competitiveness. They too are a product of globalisation through intercultural communication and inter-civilisational exchanges. Enlarging this cluster of ideologies could be called the »true progress of humanity«.

They also rest on (at least) four poles:

- on a challenge to the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest substituting the notion of *responsibility* of the stronger towards the weaker;
- on *complementarity with »Others«* as a privileged instrument of human development;
- on constant *resistance* to (absolute) power, authority and domination through new actors who share the podium : individuals (activists, intellectuals), non-profit organizations, gender, ethnic and linguistic communities;
- on qualitative goals (the Good) of *individual wellness* through collective development as support.

This constellation of ideologies is a people to people, a person to person movement through horizontal networks. Of importance are lived identities and personal logic (vs. rationality). And exchan-

ge, particularly intercultural exchanges, is valued to replace parasitic symbiosis and predatory behavior. This cluster legitimates and values diversity, be it linguistic, cultural, racial, sexual, geographical, etc. In so doing, it recognizes equality to peoples, communities and individuals and favors a non-violent ethos in revolutionary politics and social interactions. Diversity then is not marginal to the center. On the contrary, diversity is a community of individuals. The notion of »inter-actant« could be used to name the actors in this paradigm.

Although successes are mitigated by the domination of oppressive power structures, forces attest to the widening radiation of the solidarity ideologies. Democracies, although not actually providing free and democratic life possibilities, are rising, particularly since the 1970's, defining themselves as structures of emancipation from totalitarianisms (and not only in opposition to communism). Paradoxically, it is under the leadership of the West, whose efforts to contain its own violence attempt to establish principles of coexistence, that national constitutional dispositions and international covenants for the protection of the weaker communities and individuals are increasingly promulgated. Numerous non-governmental associations, be they community-based, national or international, are founded in defense of, solidarity with, help for the weak/poor/less-powerful. Social and civil movements are bonding through activism and critical resistance. Dictators are beginning to be held accountable for their crimes.

Minorities are increasingly given the means to develop their community and their language, in particular through education. The words of people at the margins of power, at the margins of cultures are being published and made accessible worldwide. Intercultural associations and academic work is gaining salience.

In short, complementarity/solidarity reinforces individual and collective actions of emancipation / empowerment / liberation / negotiation autonomy / independence / self-determination / decentralization / self-management.

The paradigm of solidarity has to build itself on a theory of abundance, yet to be elaborated: abundance of emotional care, abundance of exchanges, abundance of natural resources, abundance of possibilities, abundance of geographical space, abundance of languages, abundance of ideas and creations, abundance of »gray matter«, etc.

### **Linguistic Diversity as an Attempt to Break Away from Competition into Solidarity**

In the evolution of linguistic thought, the taken-for-grantedness bases of competition are also challenged although it rarely identifies the competition/solidarity dichotomy that the new thinking brings. This is what I try to bring to limpidity in this section.

The concept of »linguistic diversity« shows the intimacy between the social and the domains of life. Through its origins in liberation movements, this concept belongs, in principle, to intercultural values but its implementation finds limitations in the territorial references to the Nation-State which are often opposed by social movements and globalization.

Firstly, as indicates Jucquois<sup>13</sup>, the concept of diversity emerged as an integral part of the public and political discourses of the 70's while Occidental societies were feeling the brunt of decolonization and national identities. In sciences, the concept of diversity had already made its appearance during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in human geography and biology. The development of diversity as a scientific construct descriptive of all human, social and natural sciences is, however, still missing

and, as noted Jucquois, few reflections ask »what is diversity« in our contemporary societies, under what form and conditions is it possible, what are the objective, etc.

Other constructs are affiliated to linguistic diversity: multilingualism, plurilingualism, multiculturalism, language contact, etc. Among these constructs, linguistic diversity attempts to inspire through its intention: it values of interculturality. First, it describes situations in which more than one or two groups cohabit and interact. In this manner, it describes the relationship between languages and is thus different from concepts that describe geographically. Furthermore, it operates from a perspective that values difference, implicitly or explicitly, instead of considering it as a problem.

Linguistic diversity is also an inspiration as it opposes homogeneity and the eradication of difference in three different fields, internationally: (1) national languages in the construction of multilingual superstructures, be they economic and/or sociopolitical, (2) the geopolitical overlapping of official and community languages (regional, minority, majority, immigration) within a Nation-State and (3) teaching/learning languages with an integrated intercultural component.

In short, the concept of linguistic diversity partakes of a much larger ideological evolution from competition to solidarity. How can we continue and theorize more clearly this inspiration? I posit that we can do so by inserting our linguistic theorizing within three global concerns that the ideologies of solidarity have helped raise.

### **Globalized Concerns**

In this section, I first posit as a hypothesis that the vast majority of human beings today aspire to a being-in-the-world-of-solidarity and that they feel im-

prisoned by competition. To concretize this aspiration, I see three globalized concerns that need to be analyzed and linked to linguistic sciences: (1) the deficit model of the vertical axis; (2) the breakdown of the authority model; (3) the reconciliation with a holistic perspective.

#### *The deficit model of the vertical axis*

There is a sense today that ideas, institutions, and political structures resting on the vertical axis represent a deficit model of human organization. Largely products and constructs of the Western world and of its political culture, like the Nation-State, products exported with Western Europe's historical world-wide displacement of its internal competitions, wars and triumphalism, they are not adapted to meet the budding axial shift. They are not structures based on peace and sharing. On the contrary, they are based on competition and warfare.

All advances in the human condition have involved challenging institutions and practices that were treated as necessary and inevitable. A paradox is that Western civilizations call for a neutralizing of its own (Eurocentric) concepts and structures based on competition. At the same time, we attempt to build structures on solidarity/complementarity modes that are inclusive of the voices, the languages and experiences of Other/s, including other civilizations and communities. But in competition, all individuals are not supported by protective environments. Instead, the system serves the powerful few and disadvantages most whose interests are marginalized.

For inter-actants, there is an order of solidity of languages: transnational and multinational, national and official, regional and community. Linguistic diversity does not seem particularly favored by this order of solidity if it is left to the law of the strongest. To construct structures that demystify power towards »power to

power«, in solidarity is then the challenge. Beyond the self-legitimizing discourse of the importance of the rule of law lays the pedagogical role of its principles. The law, in the form of linguistic human right and of constitutional rights, reveal power structures and are more and more oriented toward protection of the weak/poor/marginalized. The pedagogy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a witness to this. Although most, if not all, of the States of the world do not entrench and live by the letter of its law, the principles are widely accepted and adopted. Violations are denounced, at least by opposing-aligned States. And academics play a role in documenting and describing oppression and the processes of liberation of minority linguistic communities through the pedagogy of constitutional dispositions.

A caveat, however, is that the West can no longer claim a monopoly on the principles of law. Intercultural exchanges must be established between civilizations to articulate conditions of solidarity/complementarity, as they are lived each in their own way, in particular spheres – family, friendships, community solidarities, etc. – across communities of the world. But the construction of a new solidarity paradigm can only be possible through a shift to modes of human interaction based on exchange. Most will object that we cannot today achieve human organizations based on solidarity and complementarity. That competition will always prevail; that competition is a basic mode of human relations. Based on the past of humanity, it is quite true that examples of harmonious cohabitation are little known mostly because we have not specifically looked for them. Intercultural exchanges facilitate this understanding.

#### *The breakdown of the authority model*

In the context of the paradigm of competition, there are numerous ways to determine authority and hierarchy: faith in



traditional cultures, physical and legal coercion, organization of closed environments, law as a system of rules and practices, censure, hierarchical delegation, etc.

The authority model also has to be contested as a discourse phenomenon, in the tradition of Foucault<sup>14</sup> and Bourdieu<sup>15</sup>. To treat authority as an aspect of discourse and to be more attentive to the labile dynamics than to its institutional incarnations is an interesting way to transform ideological competition:

- Who is speaking with authority?
- How can this speech have authority?
- What are the interests of the speakers?
- What responses are anticipated and desired?
- What responses are allowed?
- What are the conditions for maintenance of authority?

And to replace authority, through budding notions of governance, we have to elaborate structures to favor »reflections« from (and not faith through) traditional cultures, creation of collective environments for resources, representation as response-ability, law as a basis for justice, sanctions and isolation of unjust practices, etc.

#### *The reconciliation with a holistic perspective*

A movement calling for solidarity does not only rest on social solidarity. And the highest political levels of global governance also call for a holistic perspective. It is in terms of »humane governance«, reports Falk<sup>12</sup>, that the World Order Models Project, five study groups through the United Nations, encourages to plan in a context of total comprehension which includes not only the social and cultural world but also the material and natural world:

*The distinctive challenge in the establishment of humane governance is to connect*

*development with the stewardship of nature in a manner that realizes economic and social rights for all peoples, adjusting for unevenness of circumstance (correcting what has been identified in this report as »global apartheid«). At the same time, the enjoyment of the beauty of nature is the foundation of spirituality and creativity, and thus stewardship cannot be conceived of merely in materialist terms.*

A paradigm of solidarity therefore cannot be without a radical adhesion to biocentrism for it makes no sense to act with solidarity in the social world if we do not act also with solidarity with the material world and nature. In linguistic terms, this means that our science has interests in ecological inspirations of the biocentric trend (as opposed to the anthropocentric trends).

These concerns have been extended into a grid to analyze paradigmatic allegiances of language policies and intercultural exchanges by Martel<sup>16</sup> with sections dealing such issues as (1) collective and individual vision; (2) main concepts; (3) sources of power/adhesion; (4) proof of success; (5) type of socio-political and organizational relations; (6) dominant symbols; (7) position in the globalisation debate; (8) subject of intervention; (9) and official discourses.

#### **Conclusions**

Sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics, as disciplines, increasingly work within the solidarity paradigm as shown by the use of the concept of linguistic diversity. This paper has been an effort to put in place the conceptual tool to allow systematic uprooting of competition as taken-for-granted grounding of scientific research and favor the development of articulated and successful ideologies of solidarity.

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## JEZIČNA RAZNOLIKOST, GLOBALNE PARADIGME I GOTOVE ČINJENICE

### SAŽETAK

U prvom dijelu rada izlaže se teza o gotovim činjenicama u jezičnoj raznolikosti. U drugom dijelu opisane su dvije vrste paradigmi globalnih ideologija koje ove dvije hipoteze ilustriraju: rivalstvo i solidarnost. U trećem dijelu predstavljen je sažet oblik novih globalnih problema. Sociolingvistika i antropološka lingvistika su discipline koje pružaju sve više teorije i analize unutar paradigmi solidarnosti, a sustavno bi iskorijevanje rivalstva kao ideje zdravo za gotovo uzetih činjenica u znanstvenim istraživanjima pomoglo razvoju teorije i uspješne primjene ideologija solidarnosti. Ukratko, u ovom članku razmatra se višestrukost zdravo za gotovo uzetih činjenica na razne načine: 1) rivalstvo je stvar ideologije i mnogi društveni pokreti je raskrinkavaju jasnijim definiranjem solidarnosti kao ideoloških polazišta; 2) različitost nije nužno ona koja dijeli, ali to jest u rivalstvu; 3) zagovornici društvenog ustrojstva koje počiva na modelu jednog naroda u jednoj državi imaju interesa u rivalstvu; 4) rivalstvo ne podržava iznalaženje zajedničkoga među ljudima, dok globalizacija pomaže u podizanju svijesti i artikuliranju zajedničkoga, odnosno solidarnosti u različitosti.