

DISCOURSE APPROACHES TO  
POLITICS, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

# Discourses on Language and Integration

EDITED BY GABRIELLE HOGAN-BRUN,  
CLARE MAR-MOLINERO AND PATRICK STEVENSON



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## Discourses on Language and Integration

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## **Volume 33**

Discourses on Language and Integration. Critical perspectives on language testing regimes in Europe

Edited by Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, Clare Mar-Molinero and Patrick Stevenson

# Discourses on Language and Integration

Critical perspectives on language testing regimes  
in Europe

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We are grateful to the AHRC for granting us a Workshops Award, and to the School of Humanities and the Centre for Transnational Studies, University of Southampton for grants that enabled us to carry out our Testing Regimes research project. We would also like to thank Darren Paffey, who acted as Research Assistant throughout the project and designed the website, and we acknowledge with thanks the contributions of David Fleming, Amanda Hilmarsson-Dunn and Becky Jennings.

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, Clare Mar-Molinero and Patrick Stevenson, August 2008



## CHAPTER 1

# Testing regimes

## Introducing cross-national perspectives on language, migration and citizenship

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, Clare Mar-Molinero  
and Patrick Stevenson

One of the most pressing issues in contemporary European societies is the need to promote integration and social inclusion in the context of rapidly increasing migration. A particular challenge confronting national governments is how to accommodate speakers of an ever-increasing number of languages within what in most cases are still perceived as monolingual indigenous populations. This has given rise to public debates in many countries on proposals to impose a requirement of competence in a 'national' language and culture as a condition for acquiring citizenship. These debates in turn have revealed an urgent need to develop a fuller conceptual and theoretical basis than is currently available for the widespread public discussion of the linguistic and cultural requirements being proposed as elements in the gate-keeping process leading to the achievement of citizenship in many EU member states. The controversial nature of such policy proposals and their potentially far-reaching consequences are often highlighted in public debates on social inclusion and integration. This however is frequently conducted almost entirely at a national level within each state, with little if any attention paid either to the broader European context or to comparable experience in other parts of the world. At the same time, further EU enlargement and the ongoing rise in the rate of migration into and across Europe suggest that the salience of these issues is likely to continue to grow. This volume focuses on these debates and seeks to problematise many existing definitions regarding language and citizenship and to challenge some of the assumptions underlying the new 'testing regimes'.

### 1. Introduction: Citizenship, language and the nation-state

National conceptions of citizenship are the outcome of accelerating, nationalising activities from the 17th-century onwards that sought to intensify the power of the



state over the population. The rise of the modern, interventionist state meant that a whole variety of previously diverse practices within a given, unified territory came under pressure to be made more coherent, unified and manageable, resulting in administrative and coercive procedures that were homogenised for greater efficiency (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Schöpflin 1997). As one of the pivotal instruments in this process, language began to play a central role in identity marking and, as a corollary, boundary setting, and the consequences of this have been widely documented in commentaries on language, culture and nationalism (Barbour and Carmichael 2000; Wright 2000; May 2003). Over time challenges arose at the state level with the incorporation of new territories (such as South Tyrol by Italy or Northern Schleswig by Denmark following World War I), through state failure (as in former Yugoslavia) or cross-border movements of people (e.g. from Eastern to Western Europe, as in the wake of eastward EU enlargement), when people with different aspirations and ways of life began to merge with resident populations, thereby disrupting established bureaucratic patterns. Consequently, political and institutional frameworks linked to territorial boundaries were developed and adjusted according to perceived pressures and needs.

As a result of these developments, political debates have increasingly revolved around citizenship issues. In parallel, this complex concept has received much scholarly attention across a range of disciplines (e.g. Miller 2000; Delanty 2000; Hansen 1998). Stressing the malleability of this notion, Judith Squires (2002: 228f) sees it as straddling different axes of tension which she divides as follows: the rights/responsibility axis, the principal focus in mainstream Western political theory, which involves debates not only about the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, but also the appropriate form of each; the territorial/cosmopolitan axis, adopted in theoretical reflections upon nations and nationalism, which explores the centrality for the sovereign nation state of the territorial dimensions of the concept; and the universal/particular axis, focusing on the merits of and foundations for universal norms and evaluation. The rights/responsibilities approach sees membership of a community as a status based on possession of specific rights with associated responsibilities. In our era of extensive migration this notion has been increasingly coupled with that of territorial/cosmopolitan citizenship, thus reinforcing the boundary-staking functions of citizenship as a legal basis. In this context, the right to enter or remain in a country has become a critical issue for citizenship and intensified the gate-keeping role of the state in regulating access to territory. In contrast, and possibly fuelled by globalisation, the universalist paradigm seeks a more differentiated model of citizenship that ensures fundamental rights based on broader norms. Debates on citizenship issues tend to revolve around each of these three axes and frequently develop their own dynamics at the national level.

During the last decade, particularly since the 2004 round of the EU's eastward enlargement, a shift has been observed in many European countries towards stricter conditions for people who want to apply for residence rights or for naturalisation/citizenship. Proficiency in a, or the, 'national language' of the country has been a requirement in some states for many years, but in most cases until recently this has been subject to testing only on a relatively informal and often arbitrary basis (for example, by means of a short interview with an immigration official with no training either in linguistic analysis or in language testing). However, linguistic proficiency has now emerged as one of the key conditions for the granting of permission to stay and for naturalisation in an increasing number of European states, and where this is the case more formal mechanisms for testing have generally been introduced (often alongside testing of knowledge of the history, social institutions and cultural traditions of the country concerned). On the one hand, this could be seen as a necessary if belated formalisation of procedures that should introduce a greater degree of transparency and fairness into the process. On the other hand, it raises a host of ethical, political and practical questions: for example, is it appropriate to use linguistic proficiency in a particular language as a criterion for granting residence rights or citizenship? If so, what level of proficiency in which form(s) of which language(s) should be required, and how should this be tested? Should this requirement be imposed on all applicants or should certain categories be exempted, and if so, on what grounds? Such questions will be addressed by each of the contributors to this volume, and the fundamental issues underlying all of them will be reviewed in the concluding chapter.

Because of the diverse state-formation histories in Europe, the socio-political context in which these new conditions have been set up and language tests developed differ widely. The motivation, for example, in Latvia (for more information on the Baltic context in general, see Hogan-Brun et al. 2007) differs from that in the Netherlands (see Extra and Spotti, this volume) or Germany (see Stevenson 2006) or Spain (see Mar-Molinero and Smith 1996). Whilst new countries or recently re-established nation-states in central and eastern Europe are concerned with instituting, or, in the case of the latter, overturning formerly imposed language regimes, the challenge perceived by western European states relates to the increasing impact of multiculturalism resulting from extensive westward migration. At the same time, conditions in other countries such as Belgium (see Van Avermaet, this volume) and Sweden (see Milani 2007) have so far militated against the introduction of language tests as conditions for obtaining residence rights and citizenship.

With the increasingly multicultural nature of virtually every European state, an emerging challenge is whether codes of solidarity and reciprocal loyalty will be developed that allow for centrifugal and centripetal forces to co-exist harmoniously, particularly at the national level. This implies that appropriate political and

institutional systems for immigration and citizenship be set up to provide for the security and welfare of newcomers in their host countries. Currently these can only be developed at state level since there are no existing EU-wide frameworks for citizenship legislation that could bind states to a code of practice in determining regulations and procedures for granting residence rights and citizenship. The implications and practices resulting from language policies that impact on language and migration too vary in accordance with (often historically conditioned) ideologies on multiculturalism and (im)migration, and social-demographic developments in the countries concerned.

There is thus an urgent need to develop a fuller conceptual and theoretical basis than is currently available for the widespread public discussion of the linguistic and cultural requirements being proposed as an element in the gate-keeping process leading to the achievement of residence rights and especially of citizenship in many EU member states. As the chapters in this volume show, the controversial nature of policy proposals and their potentially far-reaching consequences for social inclusion and integration are often highlighted in public debates but these are frequently conducted at a national level within each state, with little if any attention paid either to the broader European context or to comparable experience in other parts of the world (notably in countries with long traditions of migration and highly developed language testing regimes such as the US, Israel or Australia). At the same time, further EU enlargement and the ongoing rise in the rate of migration into and across Europe suggest that the salience of these issues is likely to continue to grow. This volume, therefore, seeks to raise the level of discussion to take account of international dimensions and to promote a more coherent and more soundly based debate (see also Extra, Spotti and Van Avermaet, *in press*).

## **2. Discourses on migration, language and citizenship**

Prompted by the social impact of continuing cross-border flows of people since EU enlargement in 2004, the dynamics of contemporary political debates about migration, identity and citizenship have developed a powerful momentum across Europe. Perceived threats to national sovereignty (in economic, political and cultural terms), and in particular in relation to the idea of national integrity, have increasingly led governments to pursue policy agendas that have accentuated a 'politics of difference', based on what Blommaert and Verschueren (1998: 194–5) call the 'dogma of homogeneity': "a view of society in which differences are seen as dangerous and centrifugal and in which the 'best' society is suggested to be one without inter-group differences". In accordance with this view, national migration policies have been developed not merely as instruments of political 'management'

but as part of a larger ideological process, in turn giving rise to what Blommaert (1999) calls language ideological debates.

This fits with the dominant discourse found in most European nation-states, which, although nowadays *de facto* multicultural and multilingual, nonetheless still see themselves as essentially and indisputably monolingual<sup>1</sup>. Until relatively recently, these states have been able to maintain their dogma of linguistic homogeneity (whether or not they inscribe it in constitutional and other forms of legal apparatus) through a combination of implicitly embedding the idea of a 'national language' in state institutions, such as (above all) education and public employment, and the unspoken recourse to established tradition and 'common sense'. Indigenous or long-standing ethnolinguistic/national minorities have been absorbed into this homogeneous political culture to a large extent uncontroversially by granting limited linguistic rights on the one hand and promoting what Kymlicka (2001a: 25) calls a 'societal culture' on the other: "all liberal democracies", he argues, "have encouraged citizens to view their life-chances as tied up with participation in common societal institutions that operate in [the 'national' language]".

However, a common shared understanding of 'national' integrity is now being challenged by major population movements and the less stable climate these create in national territories. Examples of such questioning of hitherto accepted beliefs and understandings of national identity can be found in the debates in the United Kingdom about 'Englishness' versus 'Britishness', creating claims of a 'disunited kingdom'; or the debates in Germany at the turn of the millennium on multiculturalism and the concept of the 'Leitkultur' (dominant or guiding culture); or discord in France or Austria over social and ethnic inclusion. It is in this context that many European governments of all political colours have more or less simultaneously introduced new legislation to control the entry of migrants.

As a result the issue of the relationship between language and citizenship, more than simply a principle in liberal democracies, should be analysed taking into account the historicity of discourses on language and citizenship within the context of the national histories of the states in which they occur. From this perspective, we are likely to discover that political activities are in fact inspired by ideological intentions in an attempt to defend the myth of the 'nation' as a stable monolingual norm which is constantly challenged by multilingual realities. This denial of societal multilingualism fuels discourses that ignore, or reject, the very real situations created by migration.

Such discourses are frequently taken up in the media, where migrants have been depicted as threats to national harmony and peace and responsible for

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1. Cf. Ingrid Gogolin's discussion of the 'monolingual habitus' of multilingual states (Gogolin 1994).

– rather than victims of – problems of unemployment, criminality and insecurity. Typically, the extent to which migrants draw on national benefits is often foregrounded as opposed to, for example, their contribution to the economy or to national pension schemes. Such tendencies can take on darker shades as was the case in Switzerland where the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) launched a campaign to introduce into the Swiss penal code a measure allowing judges to deport foreigners who commit serious crimes once they have served their jail sentence. The campaign was visually supported with a controversial poster bearing the slogan "For More Security", which showed three white sheep kicking a black sheep out of the country (see also Blackledge, this volume, on the role of far-right political parties in the UK, such as the British National Party).

Meanwhile, whilst discourses on hybridity and multiple belongings circulate freely within intellectual settings, increasingly vociferous demands are made at the political level for undivided loyalty and affiliation to 'national cultures' for would-be denizens or citizens of European states. As a consequence many nation-states have reasserted their role as protectors of a 'national culture', questioning multiculturalism and promoting the management of diversity in which migrant rights are conditional upon acceptance of national values and loyalty to the state. Despite the increased saliency of the discourse of international human rights and its application to a growing number of fields, nation-states continue to frame the exercise of citizenship as different for migrants (Kofman 2007: 464). Thus, as Bryan Turner notes (2006: 610), the modern state exhibits a contradictory relationship to multiculturalism, seeking on the one hand to encourage labour migration and porous political boundaries whilst on the other hand maintaining an interest in sustaining order and sovereignty. Hence discourses vacillate between treating multiculturalism as a social resource and moral position and as a problem that is produced by migrant communities.

In considering the various gate-keeping means employed by states to deal with the supposed 'crisis of multiculturalism' in an age of particularly high levels of migration, the existence and nature of different, contextually determined, national perceptions on this subject need to be taken into account. Whilst some countries have adopted (and, over time, adapted, as was the case in the UK; see Blackledge, this volume) a multicultural discourse, others, particularly new or newly independent nation-states, are more intent on fostering cultural (and linguistic) unity. In the post-communist settings of central and eastern Europe, for instance, where ethno-cultural diversity still tends to be perceived as an existential threat to states, discourses on sameness and difference are often embedded in the 'security/loyalty' framework (cf. Kymlicka 2001b: 22; Hogan-Brun 2005). In this region, identity politics have increasingly become part of hegemonic discourses and political practice (O'Reilly 2001: 2), and language and culture continue to play a principal role

in nationalist ideologies against a largely heterogeneous reality that is a legacy of past conditions. Consequently citizenship laws came into force soon after the restitution of independence in these countries and were instrumental in determining national naturalisation procedures based on an examination of language competence and cultural knowledge.

In the more established settings of western Europe too, a discourse of management design and planning is now intensifying to control increasing levels of diversity caused by more complex, west-bound migration flows. Procedures that are being developed in various ways at state levels to filter prospective citizens are closely related to preoccupations with national identity and social cohesion, and they often intensify in response to major international events of the scale of 9/11 and the bombings in a range of European cities (Kofman 2007: 458f). We shall see below that although the values to which migrants are increasingly required to subscribe are in fact generally based on the recognition of norms relating to human rights, the rule of law and tolerance for others, they are also presented with an expectation to conform to, and be examined in their knowledge of, what are presented as the core values of the nation-state.

### 3. Perspectives on testing regimes

As we have established above, public debates on proposals to impose a requirement of competence in a 'national' language and culture as a condition for acquiring citizenship are intensifying, often ostensibly in response to external political events and the ensuing internal social turbulence. With a lack of international frameworks for the development of a code of practice for regulations and procedures for determining residence rights and citizenship, future gate-keeping mechanisms are likely to continue to be drawn up along national lines. In addressing a number of issues that have arisen from measures taken so far, the contributions to this volume critically examine the nature and remit of selected 'language testing regimes' and explore the political and ideological implications in various different European contexts.

Piet Van Avermaet lays the groundwork for this discussion by introducing a range of issues relating to the nature, quality and purpose of language assessment for immigrants in Europe. In presenting an overview of results from a study carried out in conjunction with the Association of Language Testers in Europe

(ALTE)<sup>2</sup> on testing regimes and related policies that have been developed for three categories of newcomers (for the purposes of immigration, integration, and citizenship), he offers some (sociolinguistic) considerations on the legitimacy of testing procedures based on language proficiency and, in the case of citizenship applications, knowledge of society. His exploration of the underlying mechanisms that explain the new/renewed increase in language tests for newcomers and as a condition to obtain citizenship in a (growing) number of European countries is followed by a critique of ethical aspects of current testing policies. He proposes a code of practice for professional developers of tests for newcomers generally and for the purposes of naturalisation in particular. As a possible way forward he promotes the idea of education for democratic citizenship to strengthen social cohesion, mutual understanding and solidarity in our rapidly changing demographic environments.

The challenges presented through increasing levels of diversity have led to discourses on management design and planning that have arguably resulted in the redefinition of the rules of membership of national communities through language testing. In her radical critique of the language testing for citizenship regimes in terms of their rationale, purposes and consequences, Elana Shohamy argues that tests are a covert strategy for creating and perpetuating *de facto* language policies that result in social exclusion and discriminatory differentiation practices. She goes on to claim that tests, and especially language tests, are used by governments as weapons for political purposes and for creating policies that are based on questionable notions of nation-states. Her contribution explores how the managed combination of tests and conceptions of language and of citizenship create a powerful instrument for the purpose of gate-keeping. More fundamentally, she finds that tests deliver both intended and unintended messages about the prestige and status of certain languages, standardising particular language varieties, perpetuating notions of correctness and suppressing diversity.

The appropriateness of such testing regimes is further pursued with a special focus on the Netherlands in the contribution by Guus Extra and Massimiliano

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2. The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) is an association of *language test* providers. ALTE now establishes a six-level framework of language examination standards for twenty-four languages (*Basque, Bulgarian, Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, and Welsh*). The principal objectives of ALTE are: to establish common levels of proficiency in order to promote the transnational recognition of certification in *Europe*; to establish common standards for all stages of the language-testing process: that is, for test development, task and item writing, test administration, marking and grading, reporting of test results, test analysis and reporting of findings; and to collaborate on joint projects and in the exchange of ideas and *know-how*.

Spotti. Here, the old multicultural policy was replaced in 1998 with the Integration of Newcomers Act, which stipulated that immigrants who wished to settle had to follow an integration programme, demonstrate loyalty, accept the common political culture and learn the Dutch language. Subsequent calls for a reduction in immigration have been couched in terms of the state's inability to cope with numbers and diversity (Kofman 2007: 454), and prospective newcomers are now also expected to acquire and demonstrate linguistic skills prior to their arrival in the country. Backed by a Dutch discourse that focuses on 'othering', three levels of tests are asked of newcomers, which Extra and Spotti discuss in some detail. These include: (1) an admission test (phone test, to be done before entry into the country), (2) an integration test (multiple-choice test for newcomers and so-called 'old-comers', or migrants who have already lived in the country for some time), and (3) a citizenship test.

In a validity analysis the authors then question the integration test on the basis of the multiplicity of possible answers, their (ir)relevance, social desirability and level of detail required. They also claim that many actual Dutch citizens would face challenges in passing the test, and that numerous Dutch people are critical of the tests' objective/subjective dimension, ethical standards and fairness. In conclusion, juxtaposing the diversity approach manifested at the EU level with that of promoting homogeneity within nation-states, the international image of a cosmopolitan and tolerant country such as the Netherlands is questioned on the basis of its strict expulsion policy for asylum-seekers and the current restrictive testing regimes applied to newcomers to the country. Overall, they propose that the appropriateness of these testing regimes should be reconsidered on ethical, legal and linguistic grounds, and that a conceptual basis and rationale for such tests is needed.

Nationally managed migration policies have been most enthusiastically adopted by the UK, where initially the economic benefits were stressed. Tighter control and deterrence that were then applied in order to close off other possible reasons for migration and routes of entry again involve language testing. In his contribution, analysing contemporary discourses of migration to the UK, Adrian Blackledge argues that there is a broad consensus in the academic world that current language testing for citizenship processes are predicated on ideological assumptions that are discriminatory. The question, however, of whether language testing for those seeking permanent leave to remain as residents in the UK or seeking entry is appropriate or not is more widely contested. With a focus on recent legislation to extend the existing range of language testing for immigrants to Britain, he proposes that such requirements amount to a racialisation of language, which contributes to a monolingual and monocultural ideology in multicultural Britain. Reconsidering the purpose of using such gate-keeping mechanisms for newcomers



he concludes that actual discourses that appear to be egalitarian, liberal and emancipatory often lead to policy proposals that are illiberal.

Kristine Horner focuses in her chapter on the centrality of the discourse of integration, which she explores in order to understand how this is used in the attempt to equate the 'migration problem' with citizenship regulations at national levels and at the supra-national level within the EU. Concentrating on multilingual Luxembourg she considers how the policy of introducing language requirements as a prerequisite for legal citizenship can seek to resolve tensions amongst social practices informed by nationalist ideologies; in what ways this policy is discursively justified; and how social actors draw upon the discourse of integration to frame issues of shifting migration patterns and new forms of citizenship legislation. In conclusion, she advocates that language policy scholars need to engage with wider constituencies in order to reach a more thorough understanding of debates about citizenship legislation and language requirements.

In Austria the law governing foreigners was revised and implemented in 2003, imposing compulsory language courses on all new migrants from countries outside the European Economic Area (unless they can prove adequate knowledge of German), with exemptions for 'key workers'. This carries an emphasis on sanctions through fines and a non-renewal of the residence permit if the time allowed for completion is exceeded. The subsequently imposed questionnaire testing additional knowledge of the 'democratic order' (see also Van Avermaet, this volume, on 'knowledge of society' testing) was highly controversial and vigorously debated in the Austrian media following its introduction in 2006. This restrictive regime therefore has much in common with those in other EU member states, but in her contribution Brigitta Busch offers a different perspective, proposing a somewhat more optimistic outlook by exploring an experiment in the local-level management of multilingualism. She argues that although language policy formally remains a nation-state domain, in the process of 'glocalisation' other actors gain in importance. Focussing on grassroots initiatives as well as on local institutions (in this case the main public library in Vienna) and bodies that can promote and support linguistic diversity, she claims that, confronted with the multilingual realities of everyday urban life, actors in cities cannot ignore the challenges posed by 'heterophonia' and 'heteroglossia' in urban societies. In her view, such local language policies have the potential to promote multilingualism as a resource (such as for the development of cultural industries or for trans-urban economic and cultural relations) rather than a problem or impediment.

The final chapter in the volume is a critical commentary by Tim McNamara on the challenges, both practical and theoretical, raised by all the contributors, from the perspective of language testing researchers. McNamara sets out the nature of the challenge, and draws on the other chapters to illustrate the dilemmas facing

language testers invited to develop language tests for citizenship. He argues that the chapters collectively demonstrate that the construct in such tests is not about practical communicative skills, but rather what he describes as “a displacement of a deeper measurement, of (external) conformity to a national ideology”.

#### 4. Conclusions

It is evident from many of the contributions to this volume that the long-contested relationship between language and nation has not lost its potency in contemporary Europe but that it is now formulated in the apparently less jingoistic and more inclusive terms of a common language within the state in order to achieve the moral purpose of social justice and cohesion and the political purpose of active citizenship. The language of the national majority is couched in official discourses as both the willingness on the part of the newcomers to accept and learn this majority language as the legitimate national language, and also as the appropriate democratic way to include the new arrivals in public life. However, the arguments presented here claim that the underlying purpose of this discourse is to re-assert an idea of the integrity of the nation rooted in stable monolingualism rather than addressing the perceived challenges of a supposedly divisive multilingualism.

Such a defence of a necessary link between ‘national’ languages and citizenship may seem ironic in an era of shifting identities brought by globalisation, although it could be argued that the very environment of economic, political and cultural globalisation actually provokes an entrenchment into a sense of national identification. This contemporary manifestation of linguistic nationalism thus operates as a defensive reaction to the 21st century emergence of transnational and cosmopolitan communities. Many national governments are, then, claiming the right to impose proficiency in a ‘national’ language precisely as a form of resistance to the loss of national sovereignty in the face of perceived competition from other national languages brought by migrant groups. We would argue that this represents an attempt, through linguistic gate-keeping, to preserve (rather than construct) a public (Gal and Woolard 2001) that will remain strong and intact only so long as it is conceived as inherently monoglot.

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## Fortress Europe?

### Language policy regimes for immigration and citizenship

Piet Van Avermaet

For some years a shift has been observable in many European countries towards stricter conditions for people who want to enter, settle or apply for citizenship in the country. One of the new (or renewed) conditions for obtaining citizenship is language proficiency. Because of the diversity in Europe, the socio-political context in which these conditions have been set up and in which language tests have been developed differs considerably. At the same time policy makers strive for transparency and uniformity in migration policies across Europe. This chapter identifies and illustrates cross-national tendencies regarding conditions for admission, integration and naturalization of immigrants.

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter starts from the observation that for some years there has been a shift in many European countries towards stricter conditions for people who want to enter, settle or apply for citizenship in the country. One of the new (or renewed) conditions for obtaining citizenship is through demonstrating competence in (one of) the official language(s) of the country. Because of the diversity in Europe, the socio-political context in which these conditions have been set and in which language tests have been developed differs considerably. At the same time policy makers strive for transparency and uniformity in migration policies across Europe. This chapter, therefore, aims to explore the contrasting cross-national conditions for admission, integration and naturalisation of immigrants. Firstly, in section two, we try to unravel the reasons for these changing policies. Section three provides some comparative data on integration policies in Europe. These data are then discussed in section four. Section five returns to the questions raised in section two: reflecting on the data presented in section three, we ask what motivates

countries to set stricter conditions for immigrants. Section six concludes with some final remarks.

## 2. Stricter conditions for immigration and citizenship: why?

### 2.1 A brief history of recent migration processes

Socio-economic and socio-political developments, such as the fall of the 'iron curtain', the extension of the EU, globalisation processes and continuing poverty in (mainly) African countries have increased migration into Western European countries. At the same time Europe is going through a process of economic and political unification. Both of these processes have an effect on the different nation-states across Europe, not only on their economic and political structures but also on their cultures and languages. Concerned about the social cohesion of the nation, its identity and its cultural and linguistic heritage, national governments seek answers to questions such as 'What unifies the nation?' or 'What makes someone a citizen of a nation-state?' Others ask similar questions from a less emotional, less rhetorical, more functional perspective and look for policies that ensure the social cohesion of a country or a region. Language and societal knowledge tend to be regarded as key elements in these policies, and instruments have been developed to measure language proficiency (i.e. proficiency in the standard variety of a, or the, 'national' language) and the norms and values of the so-called host country of potential 'citizens' or 'new' immigrants.

This societal and political concern for the nation-state, its language, norms and values facing immigration and the multicultural society is more intense now than at any time since the movements of people after the Second World War. Twentieth century European migration processes are strongly characterised by economic fluctuations. When the economy booms, employers express a great need for an increased labour force, and policy makers create the political context to enable this. A country's entry conditions are then often very lenient, as long as the labour force is young, strong and male. When the economy comes to a standstill, however, 'foreigners' tend to be rejected and policy makers set laws to reduce the influx of immigrants. Grimmeau (1993), for example, distinguishes four major waves of economic migration in twentieth-century Belgium. A first wave arrived after the First World War, when a greater workforce was needed, but this came to a halt during the economic crisis of the 1920s. Shortly after the Second World War a second phase of economic migration started. A third round of extra labour was required during the economic boom in the Golden Sixties, when European governments and employers negotiated contracts with southern European, North

African and Turkish Governments for the recruitment of young male workers. No conditions existed then regarding language or societal knowledge of the 'host country'. Immigrants were not subjected to formal language testing or a language course, but opportunities to learn the language of the 'host country' often arose through voluntary work. The same can be observed during the fourth immigration wave in the 1970s and 1980s. An official 'migration stop' was imposed in most European countries in the 1970s, when economies started to falter as a result of the oil crisis. The fourth wave, therefore, emerged mainly through processes of family reunion as men who had migrated in the 1950s and 1960s were joined by their wives and children.

Some European countries only started to develop an immigration policy at the end of the 1980s with their political acceptance that the past three decades of migration could no longer be regarded as temporary but as a permanent feature (Van Avermaet 2008). At the turn of the millennium the largest immigration groups were refugees and asylum seekers, reunited family members and labour migrants from eastern European countries who arrived as a result of unification processes in Europe.

It is only in the last few years that a shift has started to occur in some European countries towards stricter conditions for people wanting to enter, settle or apply for citizenship. A new (or renewed) required element was language knowledge and familiarity of a country's cultural values and norms. In a small-scale comparative study of the immigration policies in ten European countries, Dispas (2003) revealed that in most of these countries the word 'assimilation' was perceived as politically incorrect and hence tended to be replaced with the concept of 'integration'. A subsequent, more in-depth analysis (Dispas 2003) of these integration policies, however, reveals that over a period of ten years a shift can be observed from policies that acknowledge cultural pluralism to policies that emphasize assimilation into the 'host country'. This means that in these cases the word 'integration' is not used in its reciprocal sense. So, whilst 'integration' is the key term used in all policies, the long-term aim is often 'assimilation'. The same can be observed for the notion 'exclusion'. Except in the case of those introduced by the former Dutch Minister of Integration, Rita Verdonck, none of the policies of European countries investigated here state that the stricter integration policies serve to overtly exclude people. Strong barriers are being raised through language and knowledge of society tests (KoS tests), high fees, and compulsory integration programmes, so that the covert exclusion of a large number of people becomes a fact.



## 2.2 The 'fin de siècle': a change in social climate

A range of political, institutional and societal events account for this change in climate in Europe. At the socio-economic and socio-political levels, the fall of the 'iron curtain', followed by the EU's eastward extension, had a strong impact. At a time of accelerating globalisation the continent is also going through a process of economic and political unification. As a result, a shift in the political landscape in many EU nation-states can be observed.

Furthermore, some major socio-demographic developments caused by increased migration from within as well as outside of Europe (e.g. through continuing poverty in African countries) have contributed to this change. Intensified and more 'fluid' human mobility is also a contributing factor. Migration is no longer simply perceived as a process of departure but also of arrival. Many political refugees or asylum seekers who enter Europe in one of the member states may stay there for some time before moving on to another country. At the same time cheaper travel can facilitate economic migration. Polish welders taking a cheap Ryanair flight on Monday morning from Krakow to Brussels may work in the construction business there until Friday and fly back home that day to spend the weekend with their family; or Polish women employed in the cleaning business in various German cities may arrive by bus at the start of the week, again rejoining their family at the end. These new 'types' of migration, along with 'previous' migrations from the 1950s to the 1970s, put a great deal of pressure on many European nation-states where concepts such as social cohesion, integration, citizenship, identity, culture and language are concerned. Members of both the majority and migrant groups are confronted with new habits, norms and values. For each of these communities the daily question is which of these practices, norms and values are accepted, tolerated and adopted within the public as well as the private sphere (Parekh 2000; Modood 2003; Pinxten and De Munter 2006).

Moreover, the effect of major societal incidents – for instance, the fundamentalist attacks in New York, Madrid, London and other places around the world, the so-called 'war on terror' policy and the riots in the *banlieues* in Paris – on policies and public opinion cannot be ignored. The perceived failure of the 'integration' of second and third generation migrants has also led to a climate of apprehension or 'Islam fear', in Modood's (2003) words. A feeling of insecurity can stimulate negative attitudes towards immigrant groups (Stephan, Renfro et al. 2005). Scheffer (2000) and others refer to the 'multicultural drama' or 'the multicultural experiment' of the 1970s and 1980s in terms of complete failure.

There is a general sense of malaise about what is going on in the world today. With rapid changes in society many people feel that their 'safe' and familiar surroundings are disappearing. This can generate hostile attitudes towards the 'other'

(the ‘dangerous stranger’) and resentment about everything that is unknown and unfamiliar. Exacerbated by more competition on the labour market, a sense of unease about ‘our’ way of living is emerging that can result in a stricter delineation or definition of the in-group (Esses et al. 2002). Having lost their beacons from which they draw their safety and confidence (Coolsaet 2006), many people are driven to strive for security and confidence through, for example, religious revival, sects, and the nation-state.

### 2.3 Why language and culture?

Such sentiments have served as a basis for the extreme right to offer simple promises of security, seize on scapegoats and rekindle nostalgia for the past (Coolsaet 2006). According to Massey (1995) and McBride (1999) this can lead to extreme ideas of assimilation to ensure and safeguard ‘cultural homogeneity’ and revive attitudes of ‘them against us’. As a result, ideas such as ‘they’ have to ‘integrate into our society’, ‘adapt to our culture’ or ‘learn our language’ have become more prominent. However, the question emerges as to the precise nature of ‘our’ culture. It is not clear whether this can be defined so that immigrants know what it means to be, and be perceived as being, integrated into ‘our’ society. Furthermore, ‘our society’ is not as homogeneous as is frequently claimed.

The nature of language too as an instrument of communication is heterogeneous: we can choose to use the so-called ‘national languages’, or what has been termed ‘regional minority languages’, or in turn ‘immigrant languages’, not to mention dialects.

As citizens of multicultural and diversified societies our choices are determined by the dynamic, complex and heterogeneous nature of our cultural and linguistic environment.

The discourse, however, in many European nation-states is rather selective when it comes to multilingualism. Within the European space, multilingualism is perceived as something positive, as having an added value and surplus. Knowledge of many foreign languages and having extra qualifications is seen as an asset, as a must in a globalising world. Multilingualism is strongly promoted by the EU, the Council of Europe and the European nation-states (see, for example, European Commission 2005, 2007). Most European countries – strongly encouraged and subsidized by the European institutions – develop education policies to promote the plurilingual competencies of Europe’s citizens. The European Union’s policy of mother tongue plus two foreign languages (‘M+2’) expresses this approach strongly. The mother tongue, however, usually refers to the national language of a certain country in this context, and it clearly does not stand for the mother tongue of migrants.

While multilingualism is considered by many (education) policy makers as something 'positive', it can at the same time also carry negative connotations. The multilingual reality of many European cities and the plurilingual repertoires (Blommaert and Van Avermaet 2006) of their inhabitants are increasingly seen as problematic. An often-heard sentiment is that migrant children have a 'language deficit'. Although 'language' here is not specified, it refers to the standard variety of the national language. This and similar quotes (e.g. 'linguistically deprived migrant children' or 'adult migrants with a language deficit') make clear that the knowledge of other languages by many migrants has little or no value at work, at school or even in the street. Often migrants are proficient in many more languages than the bulk of the so-called autochthonous people. Their plurilingualism is not usually recognised or acknowledged, whilst that of, say, a native Belgian citizen is normally seen as 'good', as an asset, as having an added value. The plurilingual repertoire of immigrants is often seen as an obstacle in the process of the acquisition of the dominant language, in a process of participation and integration. Migrants have to adapt to a monolingual policy and discourse that promotes monolingualism as the norm.

While migrant children and their parents get the message daily that 'their linguistic repertoire' is a disadvantage for being successful at school and in society and that they have a 'language deficit', this multilingualism is a reality in many cities across Europe. In multicultural neighbourhoods a very functional and complex multilingual reality can be observed. The residents in such neighbourhoods often master very 'task-specific' competencies in many languages, including the standard variety of the dominant language. Their competencies are immediately relevant in specific contexts and important for social networks in the neighbourhood. In some neighbourhoods in Antwerp (Belgium), for example, an asylum seeker from Liberia can be better off with some Berber when he wants to rent a house, because some of the house-owners are Moroccan.

Migrants' proficiency in 'their mother tongue' is often seen as an impediment to their opportunities in finding a job or for school success. For that reason they are often judged to have a 'language deficit' in the 'dominant language'. Looking at languages and language use in such a way is in many cases counter-productive. A shift is needed from a dichotomous model to a polycentric model in the way that we look at language use in multicultural societies (Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck 2005). The reality is that every individual in that society constantly switches from variety to variety depending on context, interaction partner and topic.

The plurilingualism of migrants is highly organised and the standard variety of the dominant language has its place in that plurilingual repertoire (Blommaert and Van Avermaet 2006). In specific societal domains or contexts a specific (sub-) repertoire is used, and for each of these contexts a particular set of linguistic

resources is needed, which is not necessary in others. A universal recipe, only offering 'general' language proficiency programmes, or of language tests only measuring someone's level of 'general' language proficiency, be it for integration or other purposes, cannot be fruitful. A language tuition programme and/or a language test needs to meet specific demands (i.e. the lack of specific competencies in the 'dominant language'). They should be more 'tailor-made' and based on an accurate and realistic analysis of the needs and possibilities of the learner/user/candidate (Van Avermaet and Gysen 2006). Language teaching programmes or tests developed for measuring the proficiency of the 'official' language(s) should meet those 'parts' of a plurilingual repertoire of task-specific competencies that are absent or are needed by a particular person. This is the case for newly arrived migrant children at school, for people looking for a job, for parents that want to communicate with the school, for integration, for citizenship, and so on.

Another frequent assertion is that 'social cohesion is important for a society to survive.' However, the question arises as to how productive it would be to look for a uniform identity, for common (uniform) cultural values (a 'Leitkultur') as a basis for cohesion in our diversified, multicultural societies. Independent of possible ethical burdens, many policy makers let the importance of stability – a hallmark of the monocultural society (Kymlicka 2003) – prevail over the right of everyone to express their own culture. The search for common norms and values may turn out not to be fruitful and lead to generalizations and clichés. Instead of basing social cohesion on the dominant culture alone, individuals from different cultural backgrounds too should form part of a larger mosaic. A just foundation for social cohesion ought to extend 'full' citizenship to every individual wanting to be part of that society. Citizenship could then grant everyone the chance to integrate into a culturally diverse society in which an equal and 'full' position is offered to one and all for mutual respect and engagement. This conception of citizenship is neither neutral nor passive. It implies and presupposes the acceptance of the rights and duties that stem from the universal concepts around which a society has organised itself; and above all, true citizenship can only be realised if every form of discrimination and exclusion that disables integration comes to an end. Integration is only possible if we start to accept the idea of a multicultural and multilingual society, and consequently the concept of multicultural citizenship.

As we have already stressed, the current language policy context in Europe can sometimes appear to be two-sided. On the one hand, before an international audience most European politicians advocate a process of economic, social and cultural integration (or unification, some would say). In their own countries, however, (often the same) politicians tend to manifest a more nation-centred discourse. This paradoxical situation can be observed not only among politicians and at the level of language policies. Society at large, too, tends to deal with language diversity

in contradictory ways. On the one hand, often in a broader European context, we argue in favour of multilingualism and say that diversity is important and has an extra value. But at the same time, at a more national level, we demand the use of one language. So, whilst multilingualism and multiculturalism can be seen as an opportunity and an asset that is strongly advocated by the European Union and the Council of Europe, it can be perceived as an obstacle in public as well as in private spaces within countries.

### 3. Testing regimes across Europe: a comparison

At the beginning of 2007 a small-scale study was conducted in co-operation with the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE, [www.alte.org](http://www.alte.org)) to compare integration and citizenship policies across Europe. Data were collected by ALTE members in 19 countries.<sup>1</sup> Since policies across different European countries change rapidly and are subject to an intensive process of reciprocal influences across European governments and politicians, these data have only a limited period of validity. The data presented here, therefore, have to be read as a 'status questionis' at the beginning of 2007. Table 2.1 gives an overview of the countries involved (data has still not been collected for five countries).

**Table 2.1** Overview of European countries involved in a comparative study of integration policies

COUNTRIES	yes	no	COUNTRIES	yes	no
Austria	X		Latvia	X	
Belgium	X		Lithuania	X	
Bulgaria	X		Luxembourg		X
Denmark	X		Netherlands	X	
Estonia	X		Norway	X	
Finland		X	Poland	X	
France	X		Portugal		X
Germany	X		Russia		X
Greece	X		Slovenia	X	
Hungary		X	Spain	X	
Ireland		X	Sweden	X	
Italy	X		United Kingdom	X	

1. For some countries the data have not been provided for all three categories: immigration and entry, integration and residence, citizenship.

**Table 2.2** Overview of the 10 questions asked in the survey

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1.	Is there an obligatory contract or programme to be fulfilled?
2.	Are courses/tuition programmes officially offered?
3.	What is the language level range of courses?
4.	Is there a tuition cost for the candidate? If so, how much?
5.	Do candidates have to do a language test(s)?
6.	If so, what is the required level of test?
7.	Is there a cost involved in doing the language test(s)? If so, how much?
8.	Can candidates be sanctioned if they don't fulfil the contract, don't do the test or fail the test?
9.	Do candidates have to do a 'knowledge of society' test (KoS)?
10.	Is there a cost involved in doing the KoS test? If so, how much?

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For each country ten questions were posed and analysed using official documents and websites. Table 2.2 gives an overview of the questions asked on three policy categories. For practical reasons these categories are artificial clusters:

- '*Immigration and entry*' stands for policies developed for newly arrived migrants. In some cases (e.g. Netherlands) candidates have to meet conditions in the home country before entering the host country. This cluster also includes policies where immigrants have to meet conditions on arrival or shortly after they have entered the host country.
- '*Integration and residence*' clusters policies for people who have already been living for some time as immigrants in the host country and want to apply for permanent residence. In some countries, independent of obtaining temporary or permanent residence, so-called 'oldcomers' are obliged or encouraged to follow an 'integration programme'.
- '*Citizenship*' categorises policies developed for people who want to apply for citizenship in the host country.

For each of the categories, the data will be discussed in sections 3.1–3.3.

### 3.1 Immigration and entry policies

Table 2.3 presents an overview by country. Of the seventeen countries involved in the study, eight (Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) have not set up any language conditions for people wishing to enter. Of the remaining nine, in seven cases immigrants have to fulfil a contract or are obliged to follow an immigration programme. In nine out of ten, language courses

Table 2.3 Overview of state policies for immigration and entry

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Belgium* (Flanders)	yes	180h +120h (n.o.)	A1 A2	no	no	no	no	administrative fine (50–5000€)	no test; course is incl. in 2	no
Bulgaria	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Denmark	no	NGO offer	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Estonia	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
France	yes	200–400h	A1-	no	yes	A1-	no	no, but cost for second try	no	no
Germany	yes	600h + 30h KoS	B1	1€/h max	yes	B1	no, but cost for second try	yes, no permanent work or residence	yes (not central yet, differs across Länder	no
Greece	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Ireland	no	1000h 1 year	B1/B2	no	no	no	no	?	no	no
Italy	yes	NGO offer	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Latvia	no	in some cases	At least B1	some are free	yes	B1	14€	no	no	no
Lithuania	yes	yes	A2-B1	no	yes	A2	no	no	no	no
Netherlands	no	NGO offer	no	varies	yes	A1-	350€ in some cases varies from 30–830€	yes, no entry	yes	see 7
Norway	yes	yes	yes	free for some	if no course yes	A2-B1 voluntary	for some groups	for some groups	no	no

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Slovenia	no	compulsory for asylum seekers and refugees 300h	?	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Spain	no	NGO offer	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Sweden	no	yes	all levels	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Austria	yes	75h + 300 at 45 minutes	A2	750–1500€	yes	a2	30€	yes	no	?

\* Belgium is a federal state consisting of three regions: Flanders, Wallonia and the Brussels Capital Region. For some policy and law-making matters the federal state of Belgium is responsible. Nationality laws and policies in relation to citizenship, naturalisation and residence are also decided on by the Belgian government. The 'integration of new arriving immigrants' is the responsibility of the regions. Flanders has an immigration and entry policy, Wallonia does not.



and tuition programmes<sup>2</sup> are offered officially. Their level varies from the lowest CEFR<sup>3</sup> (2001) level A1 (in France) to the highest C2 level. In five countries out of ten, candidates have to pay for the language course but the price varies. In some countries it is free for some groups of immigrants; in Germany they have to pay €1 per hour, with a maximum of €600, and in Austria it varies from €750–1500. In seven out of ten countries candidates have to do a language test. The intended level of the tests varies from A1.1 to B1. In four out of seven countries where candidates have to take a language test, they are charged a fee for the test. The cost varies from €14 in Latvia to €350 (and in some cases up to €830) in the Netherlands. In five out of the ten countries that have language conditions, candidates can be penalised in one way or another, and again the sanctions imposed vary considerably.

In the Netherlands candidates have to perform a test in the home country (see Extra and Spotti, this volume), with a failure resulting in a ban on entering the Netherlands. In the Flemish part of Belgium, immigrants do not have to take a test. They are, however, obliged to follow a language programme. If they refuse to take the course, or if they do not follow it on a regular basis, they can be fined between €50 and €5000. Several western European countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria) require candidates to take a language test. However, the majority of southern European countries (new immigrant countries) involved in this survey have no or rather lenient language policies for immigrants.

In only two out of the ten surveyed western European countries (the Netherlands and some *Länder* of Germany), immigrants have to take a test based on their ‘knowledge of society’ (KoS). However, in some others, such as in Belgium (Flanders), they have to learn about the values and norms of the ‘host country’. This is often integrated or additional to the language courses offered. The debate about norms and values is prominent in most European countries. The possibility of introducing a preparatory course or a test on societal knowledge, norms and values of the ‘host country’ is being discussed with increasing frequency. In the Netherlands the candidates have to pay for the KoS test. The combined fee for the language test and the KoS test is €350.

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2. What is remarkable is the difference in hours of tuition offered. France, for example, provides a course of 200h to 400h to reach the lowest CEFR level A1.1, while Belgium offers 180h for level A1. Germany offers language courses of 600h for candidates to reach level B1, while Ireland has courses of up to 1000h for the same level.

3. For more information on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels, we refer to the COE website ([www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)). A brief overview of the CEFR levels is given in appendix 2.1.

### 3.2 Integration and residence policies

Table 2.4 gives a brief overview of policies on integration and residence in each country involved in the study. Nine of the seventeen countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Spain and Sweden) do not impose any language conditions for integration or people seeking permanent residence. Interestingly, Belgium (Flanders) and France do have language conditions for new immigrants and to some extent for people who have already been resident there for some years, but not for immigrants wanting to obtain a residence permit. In almost half of the countries with language conditions for 'integration and residence' candidates are obliged to sign a contract or to follow a language programme. In two thirds of the countries surveyed language tuition programmes are officially offered. There is a wide variety (in terms of levels) of language courses offered. They range from A2 to C2 (see CEFR grid in appendix 2.1). In five out of eight countries immigrants have to pay for the courses. In the Netherlands and Slovenia, NGOs or private (for profit) companies offer language programmes. Almost all countries that have language conditions for integration and residence require immigrants to take a language test; only in Poland can the test be taken on a voluntary basis.

A variety of required levels of language proficiency can be observed. In the Netherlands level A2 is required. Germany, on the other hand, requires a B1 level which means that, for reasons that are not clear, an immigrant is expected to be more proficient in the language of the 'host country' there than in the Netherlands.

In almost one third of the eight countries involved immigrants have to pay rates varying between €80 and €193 for the test; in the Netherlands, the fee is €37. In more than half of the countries candidates can be sanctioned for not following the programme, non-observance of the contract or not taking the language test. Two out of eight countries require immigrants to take a KoS test.

Table 2.4 Overview of state policies on integration and residence

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Belgium	no	NGO offer	no	no	no	no	no	yes, if no residence permit	no	no
Bulgaria	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Denmark	yes	yes	A2-B2	no	yes	A2-B1	no	yes	no	?
Estonia	no	no	no	no	yes	A2	no	yes	no	no
France	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Germany	yes	600h + 30h KoS	B1	600€	yes	B1	No, but cost for second try	yes, no permanent work or residence	yes (not central, yet differs across Länder)	no
Greece	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Ireland	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Italy	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Latvia	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Lithuania	yes	yes	A2,B1	no	yes	A2	no	no	no	no
Netherlands	no	NGO offer	no	depends on course taken	yes	A1-A2	193€	yes	yes	37€
Norway	yes	yes	yes	free for some	if no course, yes	A2-B1 voluntary	for some groups	yes	no	no
Poland	no	100h + 40h KoS	A1-C2	110–300€/month for some groups	voluntary	B1, B2, C2	80–120€	no	no	no
Slovenia	no	NGO offer	A1-C2	depends on course length	no	no	no	no	no	no
Spain	no	NGO offer	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Sweden	no	Yes	A1-C2	no	no	no	no	no	no	no

### 3.3 Citizenship policies

Table 2.5 gives a brief overview of citizenship policies for each country involved in the study. Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Ireland do not impose any language conditions for people wanting to apply for citizenship. However, in many of these countries the societal and political debates are evolving in the direction of installing language and civic conditions. In Belgium, which has the most lenient citizenship policy, more and more politicians argue for linguistic requirements in the citizenship procedure.

In eleven of the eighteen surveyed countries applicants for citizenship have to prove that they have mastered the language of the 'host society'. Five of these eleven countries require candidates to follow a programme of study, although a language tuition programme is officially offered in only four. Everywhere else candidates have to find language courses using their own initiative through NGOs or the private market. A wide variety of language courses (ranging from A2 to C2) are offered. In three of the four countries that officially offer language programmes, this is at the expense of the candidates (in Bulgaria, for example, this amounts to €202). In almost all (nine out of eleven), candidates who apply for citizenship have to take a language test. It is mainly the 'new' (eastern) European countries that have language tests for citizenship.

Another salient fact is the variation in required language proficiency levels. In Lithuania, Estonia and the Netherlands, for example, an immigrant with a proficiency level of A2 in the national language of the 'host country' is accepted as a citizen of the country. In order to become a citizen in Denmark, however, a candidate must have a higher level of Danish at B2. So it seems that an immigrant can be considered a legal citizen at different language levels, which is intriguing both from a theoretical and from a pragmatic point of view.

In two thirds of the nine countries that have a compulsory language test there is a cost involved in taking the test. This ranges from €6 in Lithuania to €255 in Germany. In the Netherlands applicants have to pay €193, in Bulgaria €200 (including the language course). In more than half of the cases (Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK) candidates who do not take the language course or the test, or who fail the latter, can be penalised.

Contrary to the immigration, residence and entry regulations, citizenship requirements in the majority of countries (seven out of eleven) demand that applicants not only have to take a language test but also a KoS test. In four out of the seven countries it has to be paid for, and this is pitched between €6 and €80.

Table 2.5 Overview of state policies on citizenship

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Belgium	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Bulgaria	yes	yes	B1-C2	Min. 200€	yes	B1 or higher	included in tuition cost	yes	yes	no
Denmark	no	no	B2	no	yes	B2	no	yes	yes	80€
Estonia	no	no	no	no	yes	A2	no	no	yes	no
France	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	No	no
Germany	no	NGO offer	B1 required	depends on course	depends on Länder; varies from test to interview	Appr. A2+/B1	cost for procedure: 255€	yes	in some Länder	no
Greece	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	No	no
Ireland	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	No	no
Italy	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	No	no
Latvia	no	no	B1	no	yes	B1	no	no	Yes	no
Lithuania	yes	yes	A2	no	yes	A2	included in whole test: 6€	no	yes	see 7
Netherlands	no	NGO offer	no	to be paid by candidate	yes	A2	193€	yes	yes	37€
Norway	yes	yes	no	free for some groups	no	A2-B1 voluntary	free for some groups	no	no	no
Poland	no	no	no	no	voluntary	B1,B2,C2	80-120€	no	no	no

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Slovenia	no	NGO offer	depends on needs of candidate	small sum	yes	A2-BI	100€	yes	no	no
Spain	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Sweden	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
UK	yes	yes	different levels up to BI	NGO and private market	yes	BI	free for some groups	yes	yes	52€

#### 4. Testing regimes across Europe: some observations

Such a survey can of course risk skimming over detailed information, therefore missing out on the nuances of each country's policy, but it does show tendencies across Europe. The data presented in section 3 are no more than general, but intriguing observations. More detailed information and more in-depth analyses of the integration policy of a number of countries within as well as outside of Europe are presented in Extra et al. (in press).

The observation stated at the beginning of this chapter, that countries in Europe are introducing increasingly stricter conditions and sanctions for people seeking entry to obtain a residence permit or citizenship, can be confirmed on the basis of our small-scale survey. Required knowledge of the host country's 'national language' and of the 'shared norms and values' – i.e. socio-cultural knowledge – are clear, salient features in the observed policies. Although such policies have not been introduced everywhere yet, the spreading societal and political debate is undeniable. The data also point to some considerable variation amongst the different European nation-states. However, the current national policies are subject to rapid and constant changes. Based on a first ALTE survey in 2002 only four out of fourteen countries that were included (29 per cent) officially had language conditions for citizenship. From this second ALTE survey in 2007 we see that already eleven out of eighteen countries (61 per cent) have started to involve language conditions for citizenship. The data presented and discussed here are a mere snapshot of the various existing policies that are in a constant process of change. Europe's national policy arenas have a significant influence on each other and countries with the strictest policies seem to be setting the norm.

It can also be observed that many of the surveyed countries have language tests as a condition either to enter the country to obtain a residence permit or for citizenship, which raises a set of questions: Is a language test the best means to measure someone's degree of integration? Or is it mainly an instrument for exclusion? Is it an instrument to control migration flows and to distinguish between in- and outgroups (McNamara 2005)? These concerns also involve issues of the ethicality of language testing (Shohamy 2001; Van Avermaet 2003; see also Shohamy, this volume), and relate to more technical and qualitative aspects of test development (Van Avermaet, Kuijper and Saville 2004), such as reliability and validity (ALTE, forthcoming) and to issues of impact (Hamp-Lyons 1997; Shohamy 2001, 2006; see also Extra and Spotti, this volume).

Our data show that whilst the number of nation-states that have a KoS-test is limited, this is not so for citizenship. An immigrant who wants to become an official citizen has to show his/her knowledge of the cultural heritage and history of

the country and adopt the 'norms and values' of that country. More than half the surveyed countries that have a language or KoS-test charge a fee at varying rates.

Mostly language and KoS tests for citizenship have been instituted in the newly joined EU member states, i.e. mainly from the former 'Eastern Bloc'. Language tests for immigrants entering the country or seeking to obtain a residence permit have been introduced more in western European countries, which is perhaps not surprising. Having undergone major changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the 'new' European countries have been in a process of nation-state re-building (see also Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero and Stevenson, this volume). In contrast, the western European countries have, since the end of the 1990s, witnessed a strong increase in immigration. However, even in western European countries language conditions, language tests and KoS-tests for citizenship are becoming increasingly important issues within political discourse.

The extent to which immigrants can follow official preparatory language courses for the tests varies too. In some countries the initiative lies with the immigrants themselves to organise their own learning trajectory. Often they have to find what is offered on the private market and pay high prices for such courses. In Germany special language courses are officially provided, but here candidates have to pay one Euro per hour. This may amount to €600 for a candidate. Immigrants who want to enter the Netherlands have to undergo a language test in their home country at the Dutch embassy or consulate at a fee of at least €350. On arrival in the target country they have to take another language exam at a higher level of proficiency and a KoS test. This examination 'system', instituted in the new 2007 act on integration in the Netherlands, consists of a centralised and a decentralised part ([www.ind.nl/nl/Images/bro\\_inburgering\\_tcm5-105967.pdf](http://www.ind.nl/nl/Images/bro_inburgering_tcm5-105967.pdf)). All this may (as in Germany) amount to €600. Attendance at a language course in Dutch, which is not officially provided by the government, is not included in that sum.

For the three categories (see Tables 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5) discussed above a large variation in the required level of language proficiency was observed. In an increasingly unified Europe and in light of the European Commission making itself more vocal in its participation in the immigration debate, this of course is not unproblematic. How will Europe deal with the reality that an immigrant, who may have obtained citizenship in the Netherlands with an A2 level of Dutch, might then, with the associated right of free mobility within Europe, translocate to Denmark, where a B2 level of Danish is required for citizenship? Or what will happen with an immigrant living in Belgium who can acquire citizenship without any language condition and who – once citizenship is granted – can freely move to countries in Europe that have language tests?

Many European countries use the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a basic instrument to realise their policy. This



raises a number of questions. The CEFR has been developed for the learning, teaching and assessment of foreign languages and is not intended for the context of second language learning. Developed to promote multilingualism in Europe, the CEFR descriptors at the lower levels assume literacy. This is problematic when used for integration and citizenship programmes and tests where a part of the target group is (functionally) illiterate or has low literacy skills. The CEFR descriptors at higher levels have been designed mainly for more educated people. Socially lower placed and semi-skilled persons that have no higher education background do not belong to this target group. Also, the CEFR descriptors mainly refer to adults and adolescents; it is less appropriate to use this framework for children or young learners, yet in some European countries the CEFR is used for the children of newly arrived immigrants in primary and secondary education. A final concern is that the level descriptions of the CEFR are not domain-specific. Thus, descriptors, taxonomies, and lists are not exhaustive or specific enough to be used directly for curriculum and test development.

This misuse or misinterpretation of the CEFR is even more problematic if we take into account the sometimes serious consequences attached to some of the language courses and tests used. People can be refused citizenship if they are unsuccessful in a language test that has been designed and developed on the basis of an instrument (the CEFR) that was not meant for these purposes. The main concern that arises when contemplating the use of the CEFR across Europe is that it seems to be applied to promote multilingualism on the one hand and monolingualism on the other. Users will need to be made aware of such a possible misuse and its impact.

##### **5. What motivates countries in the development of language (testing) policies?**

What motivates countries in Europe to have language proficiency and language tests as a condition for entering the country, to get a residence permit or to obtain citizenship? The discourse seems to imply that requiring immigrants to learn the standard language and the cultural values of the host country and to take a language and a KoS test will guarantee that the fundamental values of the host country are shared by everyone. For many this seems reasonable, but it begins from the assumption that, for example, the Dutch, German or Flemish society is homogeneous in its language and cultural norms and values. However, many so called autochthonous people in the Flemish region of Belgium master the dialect of the area where they live and have only a limited proficiency in Standard Dutch, and yet they function perfectly well in the Flemish society. It is very difficult to obtain

a clear picture when asking 100 inhabitants of any European country to mention one cultural value that is typical for their country and which they all share.

According to some, knowing the language of the host country will increase security in certain neighbourhoods, preventing riots such as those in the *banlieues* in Paris a few years ago. It is clear, however, from social workers in these neighbourhoods that most of the young people who were involved had a very good, 'independent' level of proficiency in French. These riots were socially determined and knowledge of French would not have had any influence on what happened. Another frequent argument is that knowledge of the (standard) language of the host country is a token of integration. Knowledge of the host country's language would also give immigrants the opportunity to participate and function in a given society. This also seems reasonable and is based on three assumptions:

1. *Knowing the language increases someone's opportunities for work, education and upward social mobility*

However, knowledge of the standard language does not by definition solve the 'problems' faced by immigrants since they are structurally discriminated against. Their language use is an effect of that rather than a cause. As long as socio-economic marginalisation continues, access to the standard language will remain restricted; and as long as the poor performances of immigrant children at school can be explained as systematic and structural, upward social mobility and access to the standard language (which often go hand in hand) will also remain limited.

2. *Only the standard language guarantees these opportunities and it serves as the only efficient and necessary means of communication*

All European countries are multilingual. The language(s) of schooling is/are in most countries the national standard language(s). At the same time it can often be observed that teachers in Flanders, for example, use another variant of the Dutch standard language in the playground. People being interviewed on BBC or ITV often use a dialect or a regional variant of standard English. For more and more of our academic and professional work we need English or French. But also in our daily social life, when using the internet, reading job vacancies in newspapers, we may involve other languages and/or language varieties, or different modes of communication. Participation in any society and opportunities for increased upward social mobility (pre)suppose plurilingualism, including the standard language. This needs to be reflected in education, teaching and assessment.

3. *We assume that immigrants have no or unsuitable language tools to function successfully in a country or region*

Most immigrants are plurilingual, mastering many languages and language varieties, often including the standard language. They are often proficient in more

languages than the average ‘German’ or ‘English’ person. This functional plurilingualism often enables them to ‘integrate’ into their neighbourhood more easily. When policies for entry or integration of immigrants or for citizenship are made and language is an issue in these policies, one of the main questions that needs to be answered is which function a language has to fulfil. Is a Turkish immigrant who has lived for more than 30 years in Flanders integrated, and can he call himself a citizen of Belgium when he speaks Turkish with family and friends, some Arabic at the mosque, a bit of French he learned at school and put to use in Brussels, some Dutch to function at work and some Ghent dialect to do some shopping?

Besides an official discourse, hidden agendas are evident in some of the immigration policies in Europe. In some cases these policies are used as a mechanism for exclusion. One of the reasons for the development of the language test for people who want to enter the Netherlands is to reduce the number of marriages of second or third generation Turkish boys or girls with someone from the home country. It also functions as a mechanism for controlled migration.

The discourse and the policies themselves are often an expression of the dominant majority group. A policy may be chosen as a strong defence against ‘Islamic terrorism’ and be embedded in a discourse that takes advantage of the ‘fear’ described above. To some extent these immigrant policies have to be seen as a token of the revival of the nation-state, with one language, one identity, and one uniform set of shared norms and values. This is supposed to instil in people a feeling of security and confidence. This revival of the nation-state opposes the processes of globalisation, the unification and enlargement of the EU on the one hand, and the increasing importance attached to the regions and the localities, the city and the neighbourhood on the other.

## 6. Concluding reflections

This chapter provides an overview of clear tendencies of European policies for the entry and integration of migrants. Since the end of the twentieth century, a clear shift can be observed towards stricter conditions for people wanting to enter one of the European countries (whether it be for political or economic reasons), as well as for those who hope for a temporary or permanent residence permit and for migrants interested in obtaining citizenship. The data clearly show that language and (cultural) knowledge of a given society are key features in most countries’ integration policies in Europe. It is noticeable that in the majority of countries a change is taking place from providing opportunities for immigrants to follow language tuition programmes to obligatory programmes with tests and sanctions. In

some countries it is clear that stricter conditions are not only used to 'strengthen cohesion' but also as an instrument for exclusion or a gate-keeping mechanism.

More and more European policy makers are aware of the fact that they will not be able to maintain their current immigration policy in the future. A comparative study (2007) has revealed that if Europe's countries retain their current immigration policy, every economic sector will have to contend with a labour force shortage by 2050. Some countries are beginning to realise that, on top of the language and KoS conditions, other measures are needed to control the migration processes. The United Kingdom, with reference to Australia and Canada, is considering the idea of introducing a points system for potential immigrants. Recently the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs (Karel De Gucht) suggested that serious thought should be given to a European system to promote controlled migration, with a minimum score on a set of parameters for applicants (e.g. sufficient proficiency in the target language, the right qualifications for those domains needed in the labour market etc). With ever-changing immigration and integration policies it seems that some countries are considering adopting measures and mechanisms other than the current language conditions to control migration and at the same time exclude certain groups or individuals.

In most nation-states that have language as an entry condition, for integration or for obtaining citizenship, tuition is offered only in the national language, which is also the tested language. The cornerstone of integration policies in most European countries, therefore, is the national language, the language of the majority group. Monolingualism is considered the norm, and it is ideological in nature. Knowledge of the national language of the country is the main condition for those who want to apply for citizenship, on the grounds that this is essential for integration and social cohesion.

However, as we have argued, multilingualism and multiculturalism are a reality in Europe and in European nation-states. According to some, this reality of an increasing complexity of society produces 'normlessness'. That is why immigrants tend to be obliged to 'integrate', to acquire the dominant language and to adopt the norms and values of the nation-state. However, the increasing complexity that immigration brings does not produce 'normlessness', but multiple norms that have a social basis and a function. Diversity needs to be understood, explained and used in a positive way. It needs to involve a continuous dialogue and negotiation between different social and cultural groups or individuals with varying levels of tolerance and respect (Kymlicka 2003; Parekh 2000; Hartman and Gerteis 2005; Pinxten and De Munter 2006). Already in the 1960s Bernard (1967) referred to the importance of dialogue and intercultural negotiation; otherwise we continue to systematically discriminate against groups and individuals.

In the vein of Parekh (2000), it can be argued that all people have more or less the same capacities and needs. These, however, are mediated, structured and defined by their respective cultures. Political authorities have the democratic and moral obligation, from a principle of equity and equality and taking into account the mechanisms of reciprocal influences, to provide equal opportunities for development (e.g. cultural expression, language use) for all social and cultural groups. Instead of devising policies for the integration of immigrants or for citizenship that are based on a culture of obligations, conditions, tests, sanctions and exclusion, policies should aim to encourage all people to participate as citizens in society. All this should be based on human rights principles and in accordance with the Declaration of Education for Democratic Citizenship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE), which defines education for democratic citizenship as follows:

It must equip men and women to play an active part in public life and to shape in a responsible way their own destiny and that of their society; instil a culture of human rights; prepare people to live in a multicultural society and to deal with difference knowledgeably, sensibly, tolerantly and morally, and to strengthen social cohesion, mutual understanding and solidarity (CoE, 2000).

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APPENDIX 2.1

*Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), Council of Europe, Strasbourg*

	Understanding		Speaking		Writing		
	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing	Writing	
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialized articles and literary works.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.		

	Understanding		Speaking		Writing		
	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing	Writing	
<b>C1</b>	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialized articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skillfully to those of other speakers.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.		
<b>B2</b>	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.			



		Understanding			Speaking		Writing	
		Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing		
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.			
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables, and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.			

Understanding		Speaking		Writing
Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
A1 I can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.



## CHAPTER 3

# Language tests for immigrants

## Why language? Why tests? Why citizenship?

Elana Shohamy

The vast amount of migration worldwide is bringing about major debates and controversies around the types of membership that immigrants are entitled to in the new societies they immigrate to. Obtaining citizenship of the state for newcomers is considered the highest level of membership as it leads to acceptance of rights and benefits as well as civil obligations. For the states, 'citizenship' provides a category that can be used to control and determine the composition of the state – those who should be entitled to rights and benefits versus those who should be denied them.

In this chapter I will argue against the stipulation of 'language' and 'language tests' as criteria for obtaining citizenship by showing that these two categories represent biased, discriminating and unattainable requirements that can lead to invalid decisions about the rights of people in societies. I will then critique the category of 'citizenship' as a definer of people and argue that it is used by states to manage people in arbitrary ways and thus represents a violation of basic civic and human rights that reinforces and perpetuates social classes and creates terminal 'second class people'. I will conclude the chapter with a set of proposals for fairer assessment, should this policy of a language testing regime continue to exist.

### 1. Introduction

A 'language tests for citizenship' regime refers to a policy, implemented in a growing number of countries in the world, especially in Europe, requiring immigrants to pass language tests in national and/or official languages of the state as major conditions for obtaining citizenship regardless of length of residence, status, employment, income, education and background. The ramifications of this policy include termination of residence, deportation, and denial of major benefits such as health, education and welfare. The formats of these tests vary: at times, the tests are administered in the new country upon applying for citizenship; at others, the test is conducted in the home country, as is the requirement of the Dutch government,

as a condition for entering the new country (see Extra and Spotti, this volume). Some of the language tests are accompanied by additional tests requiring knowledge of the society which relates to the history, culture, civics and social norms of the host country. For example, in the US, a language test that is currently being piloted includes the statement:

[...] in order to qualify for U.S. citizenship, applicants must demonstrate a basic understanding of English, including an ability to read, write, and speak the language. They must also be able to show that they know the fundamentals of U.S. history and Government (<http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aanewtest.htm>, March 13, 2003).

In the remaining sections of this chapter I will argue that the use of *language* and *tests* as well as *citizenship*, the three pillars upon which these policies are based, is anchored in false assumptions and beliefs, and leads to discrimination and violation of basic rights of immigrants, the groups to whom these policies are directed. Thus, I will begin by presenting the common beliefs upon which the policies are based; this will be followed by a set of arguments that attempt to refute these beliefs by pointing to their lack of validity and, in my view, their harmful consequences. I will end the chapter with a set of proposals for re-visiting the policy should 'citizenship' continue to be used as a category for membership.

## 2. Language

### *Common beliefs about language*

Ideologies and beliefs about languages are deeply rooted in personal biographies, and in political and educational contexts. Ample literature describes the construction of language in symbolic and ideological terms (for example, Blommaert 2006; May 2001; Shohamy 2006; Ricento 2006). Specifically, in most nation-states worldwide 'national languages' have been constructed as central ideologies for classifying and categorizing people, reinforced by powerful institutions such as administrative bureaucracies, media, educational systems, curricula and tests. It is specifically in nation-states with their strong control of bastions of power that language has successfully become the major definer of national identity. It is therefore widely believed nowadays that knowledge and use of the hegemonic language(s) of the state serve as primary symbols of belonging, loyalty, patriotism and inclusion, and can therefore be used legitimately as criteria for classifying people, i.e. those who know the language proficiently versus those who do not. The views about languages are also extended to the ways languages should be used, i.e.

'non-standard' varieties versus standard ones, native-like accents versus non-native, along with the common belief that languages should conform to hegemonic prestigious standard varieties. Language, then, is directly related to 'true' national membership so that those who do not master it in specific ways are often viewed as outsiders to the national collective group and therefore cannot be considered equal members of the state.

These beliefs are widespread, unproblematized and tend to overlook variables such as age, background and learning opportunities (Scovel 2000; Lightbown and Spada 2006). Thus, not acquiring the hegemonic language(s) is often associated with lack of willingness to assimilate and to belong, or as having negative attitudes towards the state. Immigrants are often viewed in stereotypical terms as taking advantage of the economy of the new country with no willingness to be part of the new society and to contribute to its welfare. Such views are rarely challenged by the majority groups and the media; groups such as 'English only' or 'English as an official language' in the US support the notion that knowledge of the English language is a major prerequisite for loyalty and patriotism. For example, Pat Buchanan (2006) demonstrates the association of knowledge of English with national unity by stating that speaking English is essential for the unity of the nation. In schools, language is viewed as the only medium of instruction, referred to in ideological terms as 'mother tongues' (Hutton 1999), and is perpetuated, explicitly and implicitly, as the single linguistic choice. In most nation-states language is viewed, constructed and promoted as a core for the creation of national identity, social cohesion and unity.

### *Challenging common beliefs about language*

However, counter-arguments to these common beliefs are voiced by scholars and researchers who reject the inseparable association of language and state. Blommaert (2006), among others, argues that:

It is an unfortunate situation for social scientists, but the world is not neatly divided into monolingual states. Consequently, official administrative belonging – being a citizen of a state – is a poor indicator of sociolinguistic belonging, let alone of language behaviour in general. The relationship between *national identity* and the language-oriented activities of the state is even less straightforward, if for nothing else because of the elusiveness of 'identity' (Blommaert 2006: 238).

Questions are also being raised as to the specific languages that immigrants should be expected to master given the multilingual diversity of most states, especially in situations of multiple official languages consisting of a number of regional languages. In some areas in Spain, for example, it is not possible to determine the 'one'

specific language, given the multiple languages used in different regions and the existing controversies. A related complexity may refer to the linguistic variety, especially since immigrants continue to use their home languages and therefore adopt a mixed linguistic variety (Valdes 2004; Canagarajah 2006). In a research study that examined the role of home languages in the academic performance of immigrant students in schools, it was found that the first language continues to play a significant role in academic performance, and its use increased significantly the test scores of immigrant students in mathematics. Thus, when the questions were presented in bilingual (Hebrew/Russian) form, students performed better than the control group who received the mathematics questions in Hebrew (the new language) only; the advantage lasted for up to twelve years from the date of immigration (Levin, Shohamy and Spolsky 2003; Levin and Shohamy 2008; Shohamy 2006).

A central argument against the use of language as a criterion for citizenship relates to the length of time it takes immigrants to acquire a new language, especially if they are of adult age and in situations where they were not schooled in the new language. But even in situations where the new language served as the medium of instruction, research shows that the process of acquiring a new language lasts between seven to eleven years (Thomas and Collier 2002; Levin and Shohamy 2008). We can expect that this process will be even longer for adult immigrants.

Related to the above set of arguments is the reality that most immigrants lack both opportunities and access to the learning of the new languages. It is not clear how those who impose language citizenship tests expect immigrants to acquire proficiency in these languages. One can assume that most immigrants are eager to learn the new language in order to increase their employment opportunities and income. Yet, it is often the case that instruction in the language is not available, and when it is, it tends to focus on the most elementary language levels and not beyond; such levels are usually insufficient to pass a language for citizenship test.

Other issues exist as well about the use of language as a criterion for citizenship, such as determining the appropriate language level needed for proper functioning in the new society or at the workplace, deciding how 'good' is 'good', and what language areas should be emphasized in those tests – for example, knowledge about the language, grammar, communication and accent (see also van Avermaet, this issue).

Yet, the most important challenges for using language as a criterion for citizenship arise from two directions beyond language proficiency: one is the extent to which there is a *need* for all immigrants to be proficient in the hegemonic languages. The question here is to what extent knowledge of a new language is always *essential* for *all* newcomers in order to function 'properly' in the new society they move to. The second issue relates to the *rights of a state* to impose a language on individuals and whether such an imposition does not violate personal rights of freedom of speech and of democratic principles.

Regarding the first challenge, there are many cases of immigrants and indigenous groups who function well in society, education, the workplace, and the community with no knowledge of the hegemonic languages. While knowledge of these languages may be needed in some situations, this is not always the case as many immigrants choose to continue to function in their own communities using their home languages, creating their own language and culture contexts as comfortable and functioning settings which they are eager to maintain. One wonders whether the acquisition of 'national' languages should not be a choice for people who can make their own rational decisions as to the language they need to know and use in a multilingual, transnational world. After all, access to relevant information, when needed, can be obtained in a number of different languages with infrastructure such as translation, interpretation and communication with people of the community. How essential is knowledge of a specific language in an era of globalization, diversity, common markets, transnationalism, multilingualism, striving diasporas and flexible boundaries? A case in point are expatriates who continue to use their home languages and do not acquire the hegemonic languages even in cases when they are eager to become citizens in order to be eligible for basic rights. Should all these groups be denied citizenship on the basis of lack of language proficiency?

Regarding the second challenge, questions need to be raised about the legitimacy of the imposition by central governments of specific languages on people even if these languages are considered 'official' or 'important', or 'useful' or 'central'. After all, people are born 'into' languages; this is not a choice, and 'changing' these languages poses great difficulties that often cannot be met. Such a demand may be challenged to ask if knowledge of a specific language should be considered as part of civil duties and whether the imposition of certain languages on people is a legitimate and ethical demand. Should this demand not be viewed as a violation of basic rights and freedom of expression? As Cameron asks: is the impulse "to meddle in matters of language" (Cameron 1995: vii) legitimate? Is the impulse to define its nature, to force people to learn and use it, to regulate it, ethical? Does it not represent some type of intervention? For all these reasons, there is a strong case for rejecting the use of the category of 'language' as a condition for citizenship, i.e. full civil membership in society.

### 3. Tests

#### *Common beliefs about tests*

In similar ways to the common beliefs about languages, there are strong beliefs about tests. In most societies tests have been constructed as symbols of success,



achievement and mobility, reinforced by dominant social and educational institutions as major criteria of worth, quality and value (Shohamy 2001, 2006; Spolsky 1995). Tests have been constructed as symbols of standards, objectivity, merit as well as productivity in education, the workplace and society as a whole. In the educational arena, it is widely believed that tests motivate students to learn and teachers to teach more effectively. Tests are therefore widely used as tools to force test takers to conform with stated goals and to enforce and perpetuate various explicit and implicit national and regional educational agendas. Governments and other central authorities use tests to impose educational policies knowing that those who are affected by the tests will change their behaviour as they are eager to succeed in the tests, given the high implications at stake (Shohamy 2001).

According to Bourdieu (1991), beliefs about tests originate from their symbolic power, as there is an unwritten contract between those in power who want to dominate and those who are subjected to the tests in an effort to perpetuate and maintain existing social order. For bureaucrats, administrators and elite groups, tests symbolize social order; for parents, who often do not trust schools and teachers, they provide an indication of control; and for various elite groups, they provide a means for perpetuating dominance. The wide consensus and trust in tests enable governments to use them in the context of immigration and thus to control and restrict the entry and continued residence of groups that the state is eager to keep out. Tests are widely trusted by test-takers so that even minority groups who are strongly affected by tests have an overwhelming respect for them and often fight against their abandonment as they have internalized their power and consequences (Shohamy 2001). Spolsky (1998: 1) notes: "For much of this century, the general public has been brain-washed to believe in the infallibility, fairness and meaningfulness of the results of tests and examinations." The rhetoric of testing is based on propaganda and myths utilizing devices such as numbers, scientific language and objectivity (Foucault 1979). Tests have unchallenged authority and are considered to be the domain of experts and are therefore rarely challenged and criticized. The myths about tests include views that tests are capable of changing and improving knowledge as well as educational systems, raise standards and expand equality and efficiency. Beliefs about the ability of tests to raise standards are strong, and they rarely meet any resistance, as was the case of the 'No Child Left Behind' testing legislation introduced in 2001 in the US (Menken 2008).

Given the trust in tests, the unwritten contracts between testers and test-takers as argued by Bourdieu, the mechanisms used by tests as described by Foucault and the beliefs that tests can guarantee high quality and standards, it is of no surprise that language citizenship tests are introduced with little resistance and wide consensus.

*Challenging the common beliefs about tests*

Yet, in similar ways to the beliefs about languages, the widespread beliefs about tests are unsubstantiated and unfounded. While language is associated with notions of patriotism, loyalty and social cohesion, views about the capacity of tests to lead to high levels of achievement and standards, fairness and objectivity are unsubstantiated. In fact, in the past decade these beliefs have been challenged and resisted by a growing body of research that has examined the uses and consequences of major tests within the domain of 'critical language testing' (e.g. Messick 1996; Davies 1997; Lynch 1997; Shohamy 2001, 2006; Spolsky 1998; Hamp-Lyons 1997; Elder 1997; McNamara and Roever 2006). In a large number of studies that examined the social and political dimensions of tests, it has been demonstrated that tests are often used for a variety of undeclared and covert purposes, other than just 'measuring knowledge'. Research examined the rationale for introducing tests and the uses of the results indicating that tests are introduced for various political agendas, for manipulating educational systems, for imposing specific knowledge and for gate-keeping 'unwanted' groups that authorities want to keep out. In terms of the effects of the introduction of tests on learning and knowledge, it has been shown that they often have a negative impact on learning and lead to narrowing the curriculum and knowledge. Within the domain of language, it has been shown that tests affect the prestige and status of some languages (those that are selected to be tested) and suppress and marginalize others (those that are not being tested). Thus, it is in the power of tests and those who introduce them to create *de facto* language policies and to determine their hierarchies (Shohamy 2006; Menken 2008). It has been shown that tests have detrimental effects on people's lives: they perpetuate social classes and preserve oligarchies based on pre-defined and essentialist categories. The fact that tests are imposed from above, with little consideration for those being tested who do not have an opportunity to resist these testing policies, may imply unethical and undemocratic methods of policy making.

The case of language citizenship tests presents such an example of tools which are imposed from above in an effort to engineer people's cultures and languages in the name of social cohesion. These tests enable states to persist in creating and perpetuating political ideologies according to pre-defined homogeneous categories of 'one nation, one language'. The tests stipulate standard criteria of correctness – the 'native' monolingual variety and linguistic purism – and thus present unrealistic linguistic goals and criteria detached from the ways in which second language adult learners use new languages. For example, while immigrants tend to develop bilingual, multilingual and hybrid varieties, these language tests are based on monolingual constructs and norms. Thus, there is no recognition of the widely used varieties and/or languages that immigrants use which involve their first

languages and skills such as negotiating meaning and the length of time it takes to acquire second languages even in ideal learning conditions (Canagarajah 2006; Levin and Shohamy 2008). In addition, many immigrants cannot read or write in their own languages, are not familiar with test-taking procedures, and do not obtain test accommodations that can facilitate their success in passing these tests (Abedi 2004). It is therefore expected that not many immigrants would be able to pass such language tests successfully; this in turn can lead to the perception of test-takers as 'non-proficient' and to their being denied citizenship. The use of 'tests' as a condition for citizenship therefore does not represent a fair criterion for deciding membership.

#### 4. Citizenship

##### *Rationale and beliefs about citizenship*

The category of 'citizenship' is widely used and accepted by states to monitor and control people as either belonging to the state or not. Yet, since the establishment of nation-states in the nineteenth century, and especially in the past decade with vast global migrations, there is renewed interest in the criteria and definitions of citizenship as nation-states are faced with large numbers of people eager to belong and obtain basic human rights.

It is customary to distinguish between two historical traditions regarding membership criteria for citizenship: *jus soli*, which is based on the principle of territory; and *jus sanguinis*, which is based on the principle of origin (see also Extra and Spotti, this volume). Under *jus sanguinis* the most essential prerequisite for obtaining citizenship is descent, i.e. a common origin, as is the case in states where citizenship is granted to those of a common ancestry (e.g. in Israel citizenship is automatically granted to Jews (Shohamy and Kanza, in press)). By contrast, the *jus soli* approach means that citizenship is granted through a process of 'naturalization' whereby immigrants *become* citizens through a number of symbolic acts determined by states. It is with regards to the latter that knowledge of language has turned into a symbolic act of belonging to the nation, leading to the entitlement or rejection of citizenship. It is with regard to the *jus soli* principle that citizenship has become a thorny issue. On the one hand, there are people who are eager to obtain citizenship and also eager to keep their own ways of living, and on the other hand, states are eager to regulate these people so that they will not pose a threat to the essence of the state in terms of its identity and homogeneity. It is within this context that citizenship re-emerged as a major civic debate focusing on the very criteria that nations should require immigrants to meet, given that immigrants

nowadays are demanding to live on their own terms and often refuse to follow the demands that the state places on them (Taylor 1998).

This new thinking is translated nowadays into 'managed migration', a retreat from multiculturalism and new assimilationist agendas. According to Kofman (2005), states that are realizing the importance of migration for economic purposes are also worried about immigrants' behavior and influences in changing their own societies. Their response has been a growing demand for overt acts of loyalty requiring greater obligations in citizenship practices. This change is manifested not only in growing demands but more so in the *kind* of demands which are made. It is within this socio-political context that the requirement of immigrants to demonstrate linguistic skills in the hegemonic languages as a condition for citizenship has emerged. Thus, the demand for language tests falls within the strong requirements for immigrants to demonstrate affirmation of belonging and loyalty to the state, emphasizing greater obligations, commitments and practices, which go along with tighter control and monitoring of this behavior by the states.

These demands, according to Kofman, need to be contextualized within the historical progression of nation-states. In the 1940s and 1950s, it was clear to most immigrants that there was a need to follow assimilative strategies in order to be 'accepted' into the new societies. Although no overt policies or demands for assimilation were made, it was implicitly understood that assimilation was the *de facto* policy that needed to be practised. In those days immigrants dropped their home languages and other features of identity and adopted new languages and cultural symbols in order to be accepted into the majority group of the new societies they moved to. This was followed by an era of multiculturalism, whereby immigrants demanded more recognition of their differences and maintenance of collective identities, including languages (Taylor 1998; Blackledge, this issue). Still, in Europe the route to citizenship and *full* membership was often denied and most migrants remained as temporary workers. In the US, the route to society's full membership and citizenship was more open, as most immigrants, after a long period of residence and fulfilling specific requirements, were granted citizenship. It is in the current era that policies are changing due to a number of factors, some of which include the proportionally larger number of immigrants, growing ethnic tensions, xenophobia and fear, created by political and violent clashes. All these lead the state to feel that it is losing control of social cohesion and security, and to the need for greater control via 'managed' policies, language tests included.

### *Challenging beliefs about citizenship*

Yet, there are currently strong arguments against the use of 'citizenship' as a category and criterion for membership granted by states. Voices are currently heard

about a need to re-think this notion of citizenship as part of the discourse of transnational, cosmopolitan and global realities. These proposals call for the adoption of *postnational* policies that will limit the power of nations altogether to determine membership since these are viewed as arbitrary, random, selective and ideological, and bring about discrimination and violation of human rights. It is thus argued that the right to grant citizenship should be taken away from the states. The alternative proposals come from universal rights activists, who place a strong focus on 'personhood' as a notion that can protect immigrant rights from these discriminating policies implemented by states. Soysal (1994), for example, argues that there is a need for postnational *universal* citizenship that will focus on immigrant rights *beyond* the nation-state to be granted by higher institutions such as the European Union or the United Nations. The claim is that states require their immigrants to give up their cultures and basic identities in order to become citizens, and this implies loss of basic personal and human rights. The adoption of universal rights, she argues, will allow greater freedom for immigrants to maintain their own cultures as citizenship claims will be based on 'personhood' rather than on 'nationhood'. In that way, immigrants will not be dependent on the state for their rights, and their identities will remain particularistic and locally defined.

Not much has been practised in terms of an international regime for immigrants' rights, as these have not been agreed by the international community. In fact, postnational approaches are meeting great resistance from nation-states given the rise of nationalism and security issues and the calls by most nations to limit the number of immigrants, resulting in greater impositions and control over their behavior. Specifically, nation-states nowadays view their roles as *managing* migration and striving for social cohesion, unity, and the overt demonstration and commitment to national ideologies. In Kofman's words:

It is not merely that a more repressive immigration regime has prevailed but, more significantly, the European nation-state has in the past few years reasserted its position through the development of managed migration systems, the retreat from multiculturalism and the revival of new-assimilationist agendas (Kofman 2005: 454).

Thus:

Whilst discourses of hybridity, diasporas, multiple belongings and cosmopolitanism circulate freely with intellectual writings on globalization and weakening of the nation-state, and mobile non-migrant citizens are encouraged to consume place and other culture..., increasingly vociferous demands for undivided loyalty and affiliation to national cultures and polities render these characteristics suspect for would-be citizens of European states (Kofman 2005: 464).

While states can no longer deny the existence of immigrants and their diversity, this recognition comes along with a list of strict demands, such as language tests, which are draconian in terms of their ramifications. Thus, while there is acknowledgement of the demand of immigrants for rights and inclusion, these demands are accompanied by stipulations that are difficult, if not impossible, to meet.

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

The consequences of the current citizenship policies lead to situations that need to be exposed and discussed. There is a need to show that policies such as language tests for citizenship are not only random and arbitrary but, given the difficulties of meeting them, serve as unrealistic mechanisms for control, categorization, gate-keeping and classification of human beings and for the denial of basic human and personal rights. Given the above arguments about language and tests, it can be shown that such demands for citizenship are not naïve but, rather, used by governments as a means for exclusion and the denial of rights and basic services such as education, health care, pension and social security. The continued existence of citizenship with these stipulations guarantees the continued existence of second class citizens and people who will remain marginalized; such a situation violates the core principles of civic society, equality and democracy.

In this chapter I have tried to show that there are strong common beliefs surrounding each of the three pillars: language, tests and citizenship. When these three categories are combined and feed and support one another, they impose powerful and strong sanctions on immigrants who have very limited space to resist. The combination of these three sources of power against groups in society, often immigrants who are marginalized to begin with, raises questions about the ramifications of the testing policy in causing negative attitudes towards 'the others' and can lead to racial and ethnic tensions rather than incorporation and equality. As has been shown, the use of language as a condition for citizenship is unrealistic, given its unattainable goals, impositions and violations of rights, and the fact that for a large number of people acquiring languages is not a feasible goal, and that it can therefore lead to unequal membership in society and a vulnerable situation of being at risk of deportation and expulsion. In a similar way, the use of tests as a condition for citizenship can be viewed as a draconian and powerful stipulation since most people cannot comply with it. The use of citizenship as a condition for residency is deeply rooted in the history of most nations and continues to be used by states for 'managing' their population composition according to a very narrow set of conditions that must conform to a very strict set of criteria, often difficult to change. Such a policy leads to the violation of the rights of and discrimination against those who

cannot 'pass' the list of requirements. The effects of the language tests for citizenship regimes are far-reaching and can be damaging to individuals and groups.

The implementation of language testing for citizenship regimes raises suspicions as to the 'real' intentions of the policy in the current atmosphere of anti-immigration. One wonders if these language testing policies are introduced in the name of justice or in the name of racism, purism and ethnic and migrant cleansing. When policies that are impossible to meet are introduced, a natural conclusion is that they are driven by the desire to contest and expel groups that society does not believe should be included or that society would like to maintain in their lowest status and hierarchy as economic slaves and not as full human beings. This conclusion is easy to reach given the propaganda, rhetoric and myths about immigrants, described as threats to national harmony, security, peace, employment and national ideologies of social cohesion (see Blackledge 2005, and in this volume).

Language tests provide legislatures with an easy and practical tool for carrying out such policies, as they send a direct and clear message that certain groups in society do not belong as a result of traits that cannot be changed, i.e. the inability to pass language tests. In this case tests become the criterion used for selecting only those that 'fit best' and denying 'others' by perpetuating stereotypical pictures of what they are supposed to be versus what they actually are. It also implies that 'the others' will remain of lower status, marginalizing the languages and their speakers. Thus, the unrealistic aspiration that immigrants will assume all the traits of the nation, language included, perpetuates their lower status, hinders social mobility and the voice of people, and frames the state as engaging in undemocratic and unjust acts.

Rather than creating opportunities for equality, democracy, participation and justice, these language tests perpetuate terminal status. Immigrants are attacked by these 'objective' and high-stake mechanisms that challenge their legitimacy to exist and live as respected human beings. The tests, in fact, legitimate existing discrimination in the name of legality and objectivity.

Yet, given the current atmosphere as depicted above by Kofman with regards to managed migration, it is very unlikely that these policies of language tests for citizenship will cease to exist. In this case, serious issues need to be addressed within this policy: if *language* continues to be used as a criterion for citizenship, then perhaps some changes can take place. For example, such tests should not be based exclusively on a standard variety but, rather should also incorporate other language varieties, acknowledging the normality of bi- and multilingualism and of hybrid linguistic varieties; the tests should include tasks that are centered around content and incorporate L1 skills and knowledge of negotiations; they should be based on realistic language that immigrants attain and use. With regards to *testing*, such tests should employ strategies familiar to test-takers, flexible criteria tailored

to immigrants' interests, background and contexts; they should be incorporated within language instruction and training programs, allowing opportunities for immigrants to engage in formal learning of the language; the tests should be administered only after a certain period of time has passed since immigration to allow familiarity with the language and its codes in different contexts; a single test should not be used for making high-stake decisions; if tests are introduced for the purpose of integrating immigrants then they should not be used for feeding into the design of teaching programs; acquiring the hegemonic language should be viewed as part of literacy skills, where traits such as language negotiations between L1 and L2 learners are considered, and quality criteria for assessing these traits should be developed. These assessment procedures should be based on performance over time in given contexts, based on realistic and feasible descriptions of the type of languages that immigrants can actually reach in reference to age, conditions, context, occupations, literacy level and workplace tasks. In addition, an argument can be made for 'citizens' who are native speakers to acquire skills that will facilitate interaction with immigrants.

Finally, if *citizenship* continues to be used as a classification, there is a need to determine more sensible criteria for what it should include. Should it be based on knowledge of democracy, history, and other values? Should it be based on criteria of 'good citizenship', such as paying taxes, civil behavior, contribution to the community, participation, introducing dimensions of multiculturalism, and not necessarily language? These are just some of the many proposals that need to be posed and discussed so as to make citizenship policies more equal, inclusive and fair.

The inclusion of citizenship as a factor of belonging to a state is complex and, as is shown with the case of language tests, states tend to use it to manage the lives of immigrants and control their behavior. Efforts, therefore, need to be made to seek fairer ways for deciding on criteria for immigration, and to think of fairer ways for granting universal rights and for a more equal policy. In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate the invalidity of the current practice of the use of language tests for citizenship for granting membership to people in states. I have tried to show how the three pillars of this policy – language, tests, and citizenship – combine to present immigrants with an extremely harsh policy that is not possible to meet as it is based mostly on popular beliefs and myths about languages, tests and citizenship, and is directed toward a weak segment of society. The use of this policy leads to illegitimacy, discrimination, marginality and violation of human rights.

As a final note, it is important to be aware of the fact that to be without citizenship is a much marginalized status, as it means having no personal security and no rights to participate in the political and social systems. It implies no protection against the sovereign power, and that basic human rights are open to violation. Civil societies cannot afford to overlook these people or to support policies that make



this status permanent. While governments devise and develop all kinds of mechanisms to perpetuate policies, it is the role of citizens, in this case linguists and language testers, to resist such policies in order to prevent oppression and denial of basic rights. These policies and their consequences are often hidden from the public at large and are 'sold' in the name of security and well-being, but they in fact hide oppression, humiliation and basic rights. In the words of Azoulay (2006): "Wherever the non-citizen is found, the traces of extreme violence are to be sought."

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## CHAPTER 4

# Language, migration and citizenship

## A case study on testing regimes in the Netherlands

Guus Extra and Massimiliano Spotti

This chapter is organised into five sections. Section 1 deals with the notions of language, nation, and citizenship, also from a historical perspective, and with the European public and political discourse on immigrant minority groups in terms of ‘foreigners’ and ‘integration’. Taken from this European perspective, the Dutch discourse on ‘newcomers’ is addressed in Section 2. Newcomers to the Netherlands have to pass three stages of testing regimes, *en route* from admission to the country (*toelating*) through integration (*inburgering*) to citizenship (*naturalisatie*). These three successive testing regimes are outlined and evaluated in Section 3. In Section 4, a validity analysis of the *Nationale Inburgeringstest* is carried out in terms of its contents and in terms of an empirical analysis of what Dutch citizens actually know about what newcomers are expected to know about the Netherlands. Conclusions and discussion are offered in Section 5.

### 1. Language, nation and citizenship

It will take some time before European leaders will address their electorate with statements like “immigrants have made this country more French, not less French”. In the American or Australian context, immigrants are commonly conceived as contributors to the national identity; in the European context of nation-states they are still seen as a threat to this identity. Europe’s identity, however, is to a great extent determined by cultural and linguistic diversity (Haarmann 1995). German, French, English, Italian, Spanish, and Polish belong to the six most widely spoken official state languages in the present EU, whereas Turkish would come second to German in a further enlarged EU. There is also a close connection between nation-state references and official state language references. Distinct languages are the clearest feature distinguishing one EU nation-state from its neighbours (Barbour 2000), the only exceptions (for different reasons) being Belgium, Austria, and Cyprus. This match between nation-state references and official state language references obscures the very existence of other languages that are actually spoken across

European nation-states. Many of these languages are indigenous minority languages with a regional base, many others stem from abroad without such a base. Extra and Gorter (2008) refer to these languages as regional minority (RM) and immigrant minority (IM) languages, respectively.

The construction and/or consolidation of nation-states has enforced the belief that a national language should correspond to each nation-state, and that this language should be regarded as a core value of national identity. The equation of language and national identity, however, is based on a denial of the co-existence of majority and minority languages within the borders of any nation-state. The relationship between language and national identity is not a static but a dynamic phenomenon, and during the last decades of the twentieth century, this relationship underwent strong changes. Within the European context, these changes occurred in three different arenas (Oakes 2001):

- in the national arenas of the EU member-states: the traditional identity of these nation-states has been challenged by major demographic changes (in particular in urban areas) as a consequence of globalisation and migration;
- in the European arena: the concept of a European identity has emerged as a consequence of increasing cooperation and integration at the European level;
- in the global arena: our world has become smaller and more interactive as a consequence of the increasing availability of information and communication technology.

Major changes in each of these three arenas have led to the development of concepts such as a transnational citizenship and transnational multiple identities. Inhabitants of Europe no longer identify exclusively with singular nation-states, but give increasing evidence of multiple transnational affiliations. At the EU level, the notion of a European identity was formally expressed for the first time in the Declaration on European Identity of December 1973 in Copenhagen. Numerous institutions and documents have propagated and promoted this idea ever since. The most concrete and tangible expression of this idea to date has been the introduction of a European currency in 2002 and the proposal for a European Constitution in 2004. In discussing the concept of a European identity, Oakes (2001: 127–131) emphasises that the recognition of the concept of multiple transnational identities is a prerequisite rather than an obstacle for the acceptance of a European identity. The recognition of multiple transnational identities occurs not only among the traditional inhabitants of European nation-states but also among newcomers to Europe. Multiple transnational identities and affiliations will require new competencies of European citizens in the 21st century, which will include the ability to deal with increasing cultural diversity and heterogeneity (Van Londen and De Ruijter 1999), and multilingualism can be considered a core competence in this

respect. Taken from these perspectives (a transnational mindset and self-definition, empathy as the ability to put oneself in the position of the other, and multi-lingual competencies), IM groups across Europe may emerge as role models rather than deficit groups.

In the European public discourse on IM groups, two major characteristics appear (Extra and Yağmur 2004: 11–24): IM groups are often referred to as ‘foreigners’ (*étrangers* in France, *Ausländer* in Germany or *Fremde* in Austria) and as being in need of ‘integration.’ First of all, it is common practice to refer to IM groups in terms of *non-national* residents and to their languages in terms of *non-territorial, non-regional, non-indigenous, or non-European* languages. The call for integration is in sharp contrast with the language of exclusion. This conceptual exclusion rather than inclusion in the European public discourse derives from a restrictive interpretation of the notions of citizenship and nationality. From a historical point of view, such notions are commonly shaped by a constitutional *jus sanguinis*, in terms of which nationality derives from parental origins, in contrast to *jus soli*, in terms of which nationality derives from the country of birth. When European emigrants left their continent in the past and colonised countries abroad, they legitimised their claim to citizenship by spelling out *jus soli* in the constitutions of these countries of settlement. Good examples of this strategy can be found in English-dominant immigration countries like the USA, Canada, Australia, and South Africa. In establishing the constitutions of these (sub)continents, no consultation took place with native inhabitants, such as Indians, Inuit, Aborigines, and Zulus, respectively. At home, however, Europeans predominantly upheld *jus sanguinis* in their constitutions and/or perceptions of nationality and citizenship, in spite of the growing numbers of newcomers who strive for an equal status as citizens. For an analysis of the concepts of naturalisation and citizenship in the USA we refer to Johnson et al. (1999).

In this context, an interesting difference emerges between the American and European public discourse on ethnicity and nationality/citizenship. In the United States, word order constraints occur in such a way that ethnicity functions as modifier or adjective, and nationality/citizenship as head or noun (cf. references like *Latin/Afro/Anglo/Asian/Chinese/Dutch American*). In Europe, IM groups are often referred to by their source country instead of the target country of which they hold the nationality, resulting in such linguistic patterns translated in English as *Turks* instead of *Turkish Dutch*, or *Moroccans* instead of *Moroccan French*.

A second major characteristic of the European public discourse on IM groups is the focus on integration. This notion is both popular and vague, and it may actually refer to a wide spectrum of underlying concepts that vary over space and time. Miles and Thränhardt (1995), Bauböck et al. (1996), Kruyt and Niessen (1997), Böcker et al. (2004), and Michalowski (2004) are good examples of comparative case studies on the notion of integration in a variety of EU countries that have

been faced with increasing immigration since the early 1970s. The extremes of the conceptual spectrum range from assimilation to multiculturalism. The concept of assimilation is based on the premise that cultural differences between IM groups and established majority groups should and will disappear over time in a society which is proclaimed to be culturally homogeneous from the majority point of view. At the other end of the spectrum, the concept of multiculturalism is based on the premise that such differences are an asset to a pluralist society, which actually promotes cultural diversity in terms of new resources and opportunities. While the concept of assimilation focuses on unilateral tasks of newcomers, the concept of multiculturalism focuses on multilateral tasks for all inhabitants in changing societies. In practice, established majority groups often make strong demands on IM groups to assimilate and are commonly very reluctant to promote or even accept the notion of cultural diversity as a determining characteristic of increasingly multicultural societies.

It is interesting to compare the underlying assumptions of ‘integration’ in the European public discourse on IM groups at the national level with the assumptions made at the level of cross-national cooperation and legislation. Across the EU, politicians are eager to stress the importance of a proper balance between the loss and maintenance of ‘national’ norms and values. A prime concern in the public debate on such norms and values is cultural and linguistic diversity, mainly in terms of the national languages of the EU. National languages are often referred to as core values of cultural identity. Paradoxically, in the same public discourse, IM languages and cultures are commonly conceived as sources of problems and deficits and as obstacles to integration, while national languages and cultures in an expanding EU are regarded as sources of enrichment and as prerequisites for integration. (For a more detailed discussion of discourses on integration, see Horner, this volume.)

## 2. The Dutch discourse on newcomers

The enterprise of nineteenth century nationalism, together with the claim for the existence of homogeneous national languages, led to the creation of nation-states and to their inhabitants’ national identities (Heller 1999). Consequently, the major difference between the people who fall within the nation, language and identity equation and those who fall outside it, is that the former are legally recognised citizens of an ‘imagined community’ of people, that is, the nation (Anderson 1991). These community members – even though not knowing one another – rely on the assumption that they share cultural, linguistic and religious norms, values and practices that those outside the community boundaries do not hold. In this

respect, the Netherlands constitutes no exception. The current Dutch political and public discourse on newcomers, in fact, presents a wide jargon of 'othering'.

The first concept taken from this jargon is that of *allochtoon*. This concept was officially introduced by the *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (1989) (WRR = Scientific Council for Governmental Policy) and it refers to a person who was born abroad and/or whose parents (or at least one of them) were born abroad. A further distinction is made by the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics between western and non-western *allochtonen*, on the basis of which people from richer and poorer countries are treated differently. In statistical data, the former category (people from richer countries) also includes Indonesians and Japanese. The latter (people from poorer countries) includes two large Mediterranean communities originating from Turkey and Morocco, and two large previously colonised communities originating from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. The introduction of the concept *allochtonen* by the WRR was, in line with governmental policies, intended to abandon a group-oriented approach of immigrant minorities and to focus on individuals. Over the years, the concept has become discredited for at least two reasons. Firstly, third generation groups who, like their parents, were born in the Netherlands, are still referred to as *allochtonen*. Secondly, the other-reference term *allochtonen* is often used in the public discourse by Dutch people in contrast with the self-reference term *autochtonen* or Dutch. This othering even takes place when *allochtonen* hold Dutch nationality and are in fact Dutch. As mentioned in Section 1, this othering is based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* instead of *jus soli*.

A second widely-used concept in the Dutch discourse is *inburgering*, the closest English translation of which could be civic integration (De Heer 2004). The concept spelt out in the *Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers* (WIN 1998) refers to becoming an integrated *burger* (citizen) and it is widely used in the context of the integration of newcomers. This concept, however, not only deals with newcomers but also with poorly educated *oudkomers* (literally 'oldcomers'), who are those members of IM groups that are already legal residents in the Netherlands and in many cases have already become Dutch nationals. The extension of the *inburgering* concept to *oudkomers* has led to a paradoxical discourse in which *inburgering* programmes and tests are discussed for people who are already *burgers*. By entering the process of *inburgering*, both newcomers and 'oldcomers' become residents faced by successive testing regimes. The first regime, aimed only at newcomers who are not qualified as refugees or asylum seekers, takes place in their own country of origin once newcomers have asked to be admitted to the Netherlands. The second regime, called *inburgering*, starts for both categories on Dutch territory. The completion of this trajectory grants a newcomer the possibility of becoming eligible for a renewable residence permit, while it certifies that the 'oldcomer' is



now an integrated citizen. Finally, it is through a third testing regime, the one on *naturalisatie* (citizenship), that the now integrated newcomer can become eligible to apply for Dutch citizenship. Newcomers who have passed the *inburgering* exam can apply directly for citizenship.

The last antithesis we present deals with the concept of naturalisation and that of transnational identity. This regime grants eligibility to Dutch citizenship and, at least on paper, it seals the newcomer's belonging to the Netherlands. At the level of the nation-state, therefore, the concept of naturalisation presupposes that becoming a citizen of the nation-state where one resides is the 'natural' condition that a newcomer should strive for. However, the opposition among the requirements set by the naturalisation procedure and the concept of transnational identity leads to yet another paradox (Lucassen 2006). The concept of naturalisation stems from an ideology of single nationality. In spite of the European rhetoric on transnational identity and citizenship (as advocated for German and French citizens, for example, by Gerhard Schröder and Jacques Chirac at a common session of the German and French Parliaments in Paris, 2004), many European nation-states, including the Netherlands, have been reluctant to accept dual citizenship (De Hart 2004).

Non-Dutch citizens who want to acquire Dutch citizenship are supposed to give up their original nationality, the only exceptions being recognised refugees and persons who are legally not allowed to give up their original nationality (e.g. Greeks or Moroccans). The former Dutch policy on dual citizenship in terms of 'yes, provided that' has shifted to 'no, unless'. In the current political and public discourse, dual citizenship is conceived as a lack of integration or even a lack of 'loyalty' towards the nation-state of residence. Few members of the Dutch Parliament take a benevolent attitude in principle towards the acceptance of dual citizenship, in which they are also led by a generally unfavourable public attitude in the Netherlands. Little reference is made in the public and political discourse to the fact that there are many residents in the Netherlands with at least dual citizenship. According to CBS (2006), more than one million out of almost 16 million Dutch citizens held citizenship of at least one additional country in January 2006, which is two-and-a-half times as many as in January 1995; more than half of them were not only Dutch citizens, but also Turkish or Moroccan citizens. Moreover, more than half a million Dutch people living abroad, that is, within Europe or in non-European countries, held dual citizenship. Nor is much reference made to the fact that dual citizenship is accepted in more than 100 nation-states across the world, in particular in English-dominant immigration countries. It is also strongly favoured by many IM groups in Europe, who do not want to be locked-up in one European nation-state and who cherish a transnational identity. What is advocated by national leadership at the European level, however, is commonly declined at the national level.

**Table 4.1** Successive testing regimes for newcomers in the Netherlands

	Stage	Knowledge of Dutch society	Skills in Dutch
1	Admission to NL ( <i>Toelating</i> ) (resp: CINOP)	Audiovisual phone test on NL*	Computerised phone test on oral skills (CEFR level <i>A1 minus</i> )
2	Integration in NL ( <i>Inburgering</i> ) (resp: Bureau ICE/CITO)	Multiple choice test in 7 domains*	– Newcomers: CEFR level A2 for oral plus written skills – Poorly educated ‘old-comers’: A2 level for oral skills, A1 level for written skills
3	Citizenship in NL ( <i>Naturalisatie</i> ) (resp: municipality of residence plus IND, in cooperation with Bureau ICE/CITO)	– Multiple choice test in 7 domains* – Additional requirements	CEFR level A2 for oral plus written skills (as for newcomers in stage 2)

\* passing this test is required for admission to the language test

Newcomers to the Netherlands have to pass three stages of testing regimes, *en route* from admission (*toelating*) through integration (*inburgering*) to citizenship (*naturalisatie*). As from April 2007 onwards, the integration test takes the place of the citizenship test, at least in terms of knowledge of Dutch society and Dutch language skills, in order to reduce complexities; however, additional requirements have to be fulfilled in order to obtain Dutch citizenship. Table 4.1 gives an overview of these successive regimes.

At all stages, the requirements for skills in Dutch are based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), adopted by the Council of Europe (2001) in Strasbourg and intended to function as a European standard for six different levels of language skills (see [www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp) for specifications, and the summary in Appendix 2.1 in this volume). The responsibilities for each of the above mentioned testing regimes are spread over different agencies: CINOP, *Bureau Interculturele Evaluatie* (ICE) plus the *Centraal Instituut voor Toetsontwikkeling* (CITO), and the *Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst* (IND). CINOP, ICE, and CITO are (semi-) private institutions in the Netherlands, whereas the IND is a division of the Dutch Ministry of Justice. No specific rationale is given for this division of tasks, nor is any harmonisation among these agencies demanded by law. The calculus regime for passing and failing shows remarkable peculiarities, as is shown in Table 4.2. The maximum score per test ranges from 30 to 80, and the pass norm from 20 per cent to 78 per cent. No explicit rationale for

**Table 4.2** The calculus regime for newcomers

	Type of test	Max. score	Pass norm	In per cent
1	Admission test ( <i>Toelating</i> )			
	– knowledge of Dutch society	30	21	70 per cent
	– oral skills in Dutch	80	16	20 per cent
2	Integration test ( <i>Inburgering</i> )			
	– knowledge of Dutch society	36	28	78 per cent
	– oral skills in Dutch	80	37	46 per cent
	– written skills in Dutch	not available	not available	not available

these norms and ranges is given either, although they are related to the CEFR levels referred to in Table 4.1. At the time of writing, plans were being prepared by the Ministry of Integration to raise the pass norms for oral skills in Dutch for both the admission test and the integration test, because these norms were considered too low. Proposals to raise the norms were prepared by the Dutch Research Centre for Examination and Certification (RCEC).

In the next section, we go through the development of each of these testing regimes following the trajectory that the newcomer has to follow, exploring these tests and teasing out their peculiarities. (See also Van Avermaet, this volume, for a comparative survey of testing regimes across Europe.)

### 3. Dutch testing regimes for admission, integration and citizenship

#### *Admission*

The computerised admission test, implemented in 2006, can be taken at about 140 Dutch embassies abroad and is, in this sense, a unique phenomenon. Information on the test is available on the website in Dutch and English ([www.naarnederland.nl](http://www.naarnederland.nl)). The text consists of two parts (see Table 4.1). The first part, on knowledge of Dutch society, consists of a series of photos based on a video film about the Netherlands and is accompanied by 30 questions. The film, called *Coming to the Netherlands*, is available in 14 different languages as a tool for preparation for the test, and deals with living in the Netherlands, Dutch politics, work, education, healthcare, and history. There is an uncensored version of the film and a censored version for Islamic countries, in which pictures of sunbathing women and gay people have been deleted. Preparation for this first part of the test is possible by buying and studying a photo album and audio CD. The photo album contains 100 photos, the audio CD 100 questions. All questions are in Dutch and all answers have to be given in Dutch. In this sense, this first part of the test is actually a hidden language

test (for this reason, Franssen et al. (2004) proposed in vain that this part should be left out). During the computerised admission examination in a phone booth at a Dutch embassy, 30 questions out of the photo album are presented and have to be answered through a headphone. Preparation for the test resembles preparation for a Dutch driving licence, although in the latter case questions on driving in the Netherlands may be answered in Dutch, English or other languages, with interpreter support if paid for. Apart from the fact that knowledge of Dutch is a prerequisite for answering the admission test questions on knowledge of Dutch society, it is highly questionable whether the implemented test actually measures such knowledge in an appropriate way.

The second part of the admission test is a computerised phone test that requires both listening and speaking skills at the CEFR 'A1 minus' level (see Table 4.1). It consists of five sections that deal with repeating sentences, answering short questions, indicating opposites, repeating sentences, and repeating two different short stories, respectively. Each section includes four exercises. All 20 exercises are presented over the phone and the answers are then assessed automatically by a speech-sensitive computer, also in terms of quality of Dutch pronunciation. The maximum score is 80 points and the pass norm is 16 (20 per cent).

This computerised phone test was originally developed by Ordinate Company in California as an L2 English test for L1 Spanish and other respondents, and it was adapted for L2 Dutch by Language Testing Services in Velp in cooperation with CINOP in Den Bosch. The American test, however, discriminates between seven different language levels on the basis of acquired scores (10–80 points), whereas the Dutch test only discriminates between passing and failing. The judgments of two experts on the quality of the test were requested by the Dutch Ministry of Integration as first and second external opinions, respectively: a group of four experts in linguistics, testing, and speech technology (see report to Parliament, Verdonk 2005), and TNO (Applied Science Research) experts in Delft (Kessens et al. 2005). The first group came to the conclusion that there was not enough evidence that the proposed phone test would be valid and reliable: pilot testing was done with too highly skilled respondents, test norms for passing/failing were too arbitrary, and present speech technology was considered too under-developed for the proposed type of testing (see also Strik 2005). The same group proposed to carry out more pilot research before implementing the test. TNO came to similar conclusions but was less reluctant with respect to implementing the test.

Other critical comments on this testing regime relate to ethical issues such as demanding these skills before arrival in the Netherlands in the absence of conditions for learning and practising Dutch abroad, and demanding these skills in the artificial context of a computerised phone test in a phone booth at a foreign embassy. Groenendijk (2006) considers the introduction of the test unlawful because

it has led to selective exemptions for citizens of particular countries (see also the regime on integration, below) and to barriers for family reunion (that is, both for partners and children). Legal constraints are spelled out in the Association Treaty between Turkey and the Netherlands, in the European Treaty on the Protection of Human Rights, and in the European Directive on the Right to Family Unification (1999) (Walter 2004). As yet, nowhere in the world are decisions on the admission of immigrants based on computerised phone tests with such far-reaching consequences as in the Netherlands. In spite of all of this, the Dutch Cabinet and Parliament agreed to the design and the procedures for this admission test in a law called *Wet Inburgering Buitenland*, which came into effect in January 2006. The first 1580 candidates who took the dual test, following its implementation in early 2006, succeeded at their first attempt in about 90 per cent of cases; most of them were 25–36 years old and were Turkish (20 per cent), Moroccan (19 per cent) or Chinese (10 per cent) citizens. No exact information is available on their socio-biographical backgrounds but most of them were highly educated.

### *Integration*

The second stage of testing regimes for newcomers relates to integration (*inburgering*) in the Netherlands after admission has been successful (see Table 4.2). There is an extensive and ongoing public debate on *inburgering* in the media (see Hielkema 2003 for contributions to *Trouw*, one of the nationwide Dutch newspapers). Fermin (2001) goes into many of the ethical and moral dimensions of the concept of obligatory *inburgering* for newcomers, and has asked for a more profound justification from the government. Spijkerboer (2007) offers a legal and political perspective on Dutch legislation with respect to *inburgering*. Gowricharn and Nolen (2004) have conducted a case study in one Dutch municipality on the abilities and needs of both newcomers and ‘oldcomers’ with respect to *inburgering*, and on the local policy process. Statistical information on participants of *inburgering* programmes is provided in the first yearly report on this theme by SCP/WODC/CBS (2005: 28–43).

Information on the present *inburgering* regime in the Netherlands can be found on [www.inburgering.net](http://www.inburgering.net). The regulations have meanwhile become so extensive and complex that a detailed handbook has been made available by Den Uyl et al. (2003). An important report on *inburgering* was presented to the Dutch Parliament by the former Dutch Minister of Integration, Rita Verdonk (2004). The report contained the following guiding principles:

- both newcomers and poorly educated ‘oldcomers’ will be obliged by law to demonstrate *inburgering* in Dutch society;

- residents' own responsibilities in choosing and financing their own programmes are key elements in the *inburgering* obligation;
- the *inburgering* obligation can only be fulfilled by passing a dual *inburgering* examination (see Table 4.2);
- municipalities have special obligations for particular target groups.

For oral skills, the same type of test is used as for admission to the Netherlands, and the pass norm for both newcomers and 'oldcomers' is determined at 37 out of 80 points (= 46 per cent). For written skills, no test norms were available at the time of writing. In terms of target groups, newcomers were conceived as first priority and estimated at 18,000 per year. 'Oldcomers' who were unemployed and who received social benefits were conceived as second priority and estimated at 44,000 per year (see Pluymen 2004 for a critical review of the legislative linkage between residential status and social benefits). Other 'oldcomers' who would act on their own initiative were a last priority and were estimated at 23,000 per year. All in all, a total annual budget of €270 million was allocated for these 85,000 residents. Residents' own responsibilities for *inburgering* were formulated in terms of attending municipal induction procedures, self-financing of participation, choosing from available programmes (for which a certification system and quality checks would be developed by government), and time limits (3.5 years for newcomers, 5 years for 'oldcomers'). Municipal obligations related in particular to unemployment benefit recipients and religious ministers (imams), in the age range of 16–65 years. The proposed framework was detailed and complex; it was also restrictive and sanction-oriented. Financial and/or even residential sanctions would be enforced if the municipal induction sessions were not attended, if lessons were not followed, and if time limits for passing the tests were exceeded. What is feasible, however, in terms of L2 acquisition within a fixed allocated number of hours in a classroom remains an open question, given the enormous variation in background characteristics of those who take part in the lessons.

The critical reception of Verdonk's proposals can be grouped into five categories:

- the enormous size of the target groups versus ministerial budget constraints;
- the violation of the non-discrimination principle by *including* 'oldcomers'/Dutch nationals (*inburgering* for *burgers* is against the legal principle of equal treatment in equal cases), and by *exempting* citizens from EU/EEA countries, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan;
- the demands on programme participants in terms of
  - financial costs, in particular for asylum seekers and for participants with the lowest skills and income levels, estimated at more than €5000 (minus a €3000 reimbursement on passing the test);
  - financial sanctions in spite of absence of guilt;

- an obligation to participate without job guarantees;
- the dismantling of existing expertise in regional educational centres (ROCs) with their expert L2 Dutch teachers, as a consequence of the free-market principle for programmes on offer;
- the absence, as yet, of a certification system and quality checks for such programmes.

In June 2006, Verdonk's latest ministerial proposals for a new law on *inburgering*, to be brought into effect on January 1, 2007, were discussed in Parliament, but encountered similar objections. A majority of the Members of Parliament remained against an unequal treatment of 'native' and 'naturalised' Dutch nationals, most of them out of fear of legal objections brought to Dutch courts rather than as a matter of principle (*inburgering of burgers as contradictio in terminis*). Verdonk's appeal to the Parliament, asking for 'political courage', did not succeed, even for her own party members in Parliament, and led to a halving of the original target groups (reduced to about 260,000 residents). Moreover, many amendments made the proposed law even more detailed and complex, and therefore even more difficult to handle in practice. It should, however, be kept in mind that the Dutch Parliament and Cabinet had urged the former Minister of Integration several times over the last years to propose 'tough' measures. In Dutch society and abroad, many protests were raised against what has been referred to as a discriminatory and repressive *inburgering* policy, for example, by a collective of concerned citizens in the national media (*De Volkskrant* June 21, 2004), by Amnesty International, by Human Rights Watch, and in a recent declaration by Dutch minority organisations ([www.stopdeinburgeringsplicht.nl](http://www.stopdeinburgeringsplicht.nl)).

In order to cope with the difficulties encountered, Verdonk, in accordance with a majority in Parliament, decided to introduce the new law in 2007 only partially, that is, for newcomers without Dutch citizenship. At the same time, the *Raad van State* (Council of State) was asked to advise on how to deal with poorly educated 'oldcomers' who were already Dutch citizens (referred to in the public discourse as '*allochtonen* with a Dutch passport' rather than as Dutch people). In August 2006 the Council of State took the legal position, derived from the principle of equal treatment, that no obligations could be enforced on any Dutch citizen.

### *Citizenship*

The most important pitfall of 'naturalisation' in the Netherlands is that immigrants and their children lose the nationality of their country of origin, with all its legal, emotional and financial implications. The advantageous consequences are the loss of a weaker resident status (or an even weaker refugee status) and the acquisition

of the same rights as Dutch citizens (including active and passive franchise) and EU citizens (including free movement and settlement across EU countries). Dutch citizenship can be granted by the Minister of Justice, whose *Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst* (IND) is charged with handling this task ([www.ind.nl](http://www.ind.nl)). The IND decides on some 30,000–40,000 applications every year. Candidates must have resided legally and without interruption in the Netherlands for 5 years (3 years, if married to a Dutch national), they must renounce their previous nationality, they must have no criminal record, and they must have competence in Dutch. For the latter, as from January 2007, candidates must have passed the *inburgering* exam. Exemption from this exam is possible if the candidate has a testified education and/or competence in Dutch, or a testified handicap that makes test participation too demanding. Having acquired the certificate for this exam, candidates can apply for Dutch citizenship for which the above-mentioned conditions also have to be fulfilled. Verification of all conditions by the IND and by municipal authorities may take up to one year.

The computerised *naturalisatietoets*, which can be taken and administered at one of the eight assigned regional educational centers (ROC's) in the Netherlands, consists of two parts (see Table 4.2). Part 1 deals with knowledge of Dutch society: 40 multiple choice questions are asked about six domains, that is, work and income, living, health care, traffic and transport, government, and leisure time. Part 2 tests four skills in Dutch at CEFR level A2 (see Table 4.1). Items included in the test are taken from a database of pre-tested items that guarantee a renewal of the test every six months. The knowledge test on Dutch society is administered in Dutch and, as in the case of the admission regime, functions *de facto* as a language test in disguise. The knowledge test has to be passed before applicants are allowed to do the four subparts of the language test (see Table 4.2 for maximum scores and pass norms). Failure in one of the (sub)tests leads to a waiting time of at least six months before a new attempt can be made. As yet, no official training packages have been made available for preparing for the test. The IND (2005) brochure refers to existing *inburgering* programmes for acquiring the required knowledge and skills, and stresses that these demands cannot be learnt just from textbooks but should be learnt in practice. For an illuminating study on the realisation and effects of the *naturalisatietoets* we refer to Van Oers (2006).

On 24 August 2006 (that is, the day on which in 1815 the first Dutch Constitution was passed in Parliament), the first municipal ceremonies took place in order to pay tribute to those who passed the citizenship test. The officially prescribed ceremony for this *Naturalisatiedag* includes the Dutch national anthem and flag, although in many municipalities both were considered too 'patriotic' or 'nationalistic'. The turnout of new Dutch citizens for the planned gatherings was rather low (in The Hague, for example, 215 out of 900 invited). From 2007 on, presence at this



yearly ceremony has been compulsory, following ministerial guidelines for the mayors of all Dutch municipalities.

#### 4. Validity analysis of the *Nationale Inburgeringtest*

Since the IND has not made any previous version of the citizenship test publicly available, we opted for a content analysis of the *Nationale Inburgeringtest* (henceforward NIT; see also [www.teleac.nl/nationaleinburgeringtest](http://www.teleac.nl/nationaleinburgeringtest)), and for an empirical analysis of what Dutch citizens actually know about what Dutch newcomers are expected to know. The NIT was developed by Bureau ICE, one of the agencies responsible for the citizenship test, and it was used for a recent TV show that tested the knowledge of Dutch citizens about what newcomers should know once residing in the Netherlands. The NIT is referred to as a ‘realistic reflection’ of the examination that Dutch citizenship applicants have to go through.

The NIT consists of 36 questions, of which the candidate has to answer at least 28 correctly in order to pass. Like the citizenship test, the NIT is divided into different subjects, in this case seven: Dutch traditions, behaviour, environment, institutions, history, topography, and constitutional law. The content validity of the test can be seriously questioned on the basis of the following observations (Hoetjes et al. 2006; Q = question).

##### *Multiplicity of correct answers*

For a number of questions, more than one answer can be argued to be correct. Q25, for example, asks about the reason for the importance of William of Orange; two answers can be argued to be correct, because they say the same thing, only in different words. The number of possible answers also depends on whether the question can have a clear-cut answer. Q35, for example, asks about what to do when you discover that your house has been burgled. Not only are two of the three possible answers very similar, but there is simply no clear-cut answer to the question in the level of detail given. Calling the police may be the wise thing to do in such a situation, but whether this is done after looking at what is missing from your house or just after entering the house seems too arbitrary. Multiple correct answers are also possible, for example in the context of a colleague who is going to get married (Q4) or a family in the street who has had a baby (Q10).

### *Irrelevance of correct answers*

There are a number of questions for which it can be argued that knowing the correct answer is not relevant for being or becoming a Dutch citizen. Q23, for example, asks whom to call when you are looking for homecare for your grandmother. Not knowing the correct answer will only mean in reality that you might call the wrong number before being told whom you should call. No major problems will occur and your grandmother will receive care all the same. The relevance of knowing the correct answer to questions such as 1, 3, and 31 can be questioned for the same reason. Which Dutch citizen, if asked which tradition came into existence in the 19th century (Q1), would know whether this holds for New Year's Eve cabaret, eating oil-dumplings, or letting off fireworks?

### *Detailed knowledge about correct answers*

Technically speaking, for many questions, the possible answers to the questions are not very different from one another. For example, in a topography question (Q29), the distance by train between Eindhoven and Amsterdam has to be selected (in hours). The three possible answers are 1, 2 or 3 hours by train. A fair amount of detailed knowledge is required; for example, it is not enough to know that the two cities are not right next to each other, nor are they hundreds of kilometres apart, but the exact number of hours by a particular type of train is required. A similar thing can be said, for example, about Q27, in which it is not enough to know that nutmeg was introduced in the Netherlands because of a Dutch colony, but knowledge about a specific colony is required.

### *Social desirability of correct answers*

A striking aspect is that many questions do not seem to ask what the candidate would really do in a particular context, but what social norms and values would prescribe the candidate to do. Particular norms and values clearly shine through in this test, but one might wonder whether these norms and values are shared by most Dutch people. A prime example is Q6, in which the candidate is asked what he/she would do when annoyed by seeing two men stroking and kissing each other. The question itself assumes that the candidate will be annoyed by gay men even though this may not be the case. The correct answer (which states that you *pretend* not to mind the gay men) implies that Dutch tolerance in this respect is not really heartfelt, but a pretence. Q15 asks what to do when you feel discriminated against by your colleague at work. None of the possible answers mention talking about this to your colleague. Instead, the possible answers mention filing a claim against

this colleague, ignoring him/her, or discussing this with your employer. These types of question force the candidate to imagine what the designers of the test could have had in mind when designing the question, instead of simply answering what he/she would do in reality.

*What Dutch citizens know about what Dutch newcomers are expected to know*

Inspired by the TV show on the *Nationale Inburgeringstest*, referred to above, Hoetjes et al. (2006) presented this test to a group of 67 *autochtonen*, that is, Dutch citizens born in the Netherlands to native Dutch parents. Table 4.3 gives an overview of the four types of informants that were distinguished and their performance in the test. The criterion for passing was at least 28 correct answers out of 36.

Young and highly educated informants did a little (but not significantly) better than older and less educated informants, respectively. Overall, the pass ratio was 58 per cent, ranging between 50 per cent and 62 per cent. These outcomes show that many native Dutch citizens have faced challenges in passing the test. Particular questions were even answered incorrectly by a majority of the informants.

**Table 4.3** Overview and test performance of the informants

Age	Level of education	Passed	Failed	Total	Pass ratio
20–40	High	12	9	21	57 per cent
	Low	5	5	10	50 per cent
41–60	High	13	8	21	62 per cent
	Low	9	6	15	60 per cent
Total informants		39	28	67	58 per cent

**Table 4.4** Mean scores of the informants and standard deviation

Age	Level of education	N	Mean	SD
20–40	High	21	6.01	1.22
	Low	10	5.96	1.12
41–60	High	21	6.00	1.11
	Low	15	5.68	0.86
Total informants		67	5.93	1.08

Table 4.4 shows that the informants obtained a mean score of approximately 6 out of 10 and a standard deviation that ranges from 0.86 to 1.22. Also in this respect no significant difference between the four types of informants was found.

In addition to the task of filling out the test form, informants were asked to give their opinion about the test before and after they completed it. These opinions dealt with whether they considered the test a good or bad thing, necessary or superfluous, objective or subjective, and ethical or unethical. Opinions were measured by a five-point scale, where one indicated a positive opinion and five a negative one. The poorly educated informants from both age groups showed slightly more positive opinions (that is, lower scores) in all four dimensions than the highly educated informants. All four groups were most critical on the objective/subjective dimension. After the test was carried out, opinions on the same dimensions were asked, and in addition on the dimensions easy or difficult and fair or unfair. The outcome was an increase in the negative direction for all four groups on all four dimensions that were investigated before and after the test was conducted. In particular, highly educated informants emphasized the subjective nature of the test. Moreover, all groups of informants found the test rather unethical and unfair, with all scores (except one) ranging between 3.00 and 3.81. People were often taken aback by the questions, surprised and even indignant, as they believed that the knowledge of certain facts required by the test can by no means be taken for granted as far as an average Dutch citizen is concerned.

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

Striking paradoxes in the public and political discourses on the link between cultural diversity and social cohesion can be found at the global, European, and national levels. At the global level, obligatory integration of newcomers has been referred to by the United Nations as a false remedy for avoiding tensions between population groups in any multicultural society, and cultural freedom as an indispensable ingredient for economic development. According to the *United Nations Human Development Report* (2006), the current debate on immigration provokes nationalistic and even xenophobic reactions. A multicultural approach would recognise diversity within the boundaries of equality and unity – not sameness (see Etzioni et al. 2005 for a similar perspective). At the European level, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity are seen as *prerequisites* for achieving integration, whereas at the level of European nation-states such diversity is commonly conceived of as an *obstacle* to integration. Related to this paradox is the European focus on multiple, transnational identities and affiliations of citizens in the 21st century; whereas at the national level newcomers are expected to become ‘integrated’ residents in a

single nation-state and eventually be 'naturalised' as citizens with a new and single passport. In this context, it should also be noted that the *Common European Framework of Reference* to different language skills at different levels of language competence has been introduced and intended as an instrument for valuing competencies, not as an alibi for exclusion (see also Van Avermaet, this volume).

Multicultural self-definitions and multicultural policies of nation-states, including the acceptance of dual citizenship, have been promoted in English-dominant immigration countries across the world, in which former European citizens played a dominant role. What Europeans found self-evident in going abroad, they find hard to accept at home. Also in Europe, however, IM groups cannot be seen as passive inheritors of idealised monocultural and monolingual nation-states. Anachronistic monocultural and monolingual norms actually discredit the multicultural and multilingual realities and resources that IM groups have created. In the long run, these groups will contribute to a remade self-definition of European nation-states, as a result of their demographic, cultural and ultimately their electoral impact (Extra and Gorter 2008).

As a consequence of tough national policies, the Netherlands is losing its international image of a cosmopolitan and tolerant society. Although many Dutch people would subscribe to such properties as part of their national identity, foreign observers are surprised about the recent critical Dutch tone towards Europe (a result of which was the rejection of a EU Constitution in a national referendum), about the strict expulsion policy for asylum seekers, and about the current restrictive testing regimes for newcomers.

What is demanded from Dutch newcomers in terms of knowledge about Dutch society is certainly not common knowledge for the average Dutch citizen. Seen from this perspective, recent initiatives put forward by the Dutch government to develop a *Dutch Historical Canon* of what all Dutch people should know, should also be evaluated ([www.denederlandsecanon.nl](http://www.denederlandsecanon.nl)). The appropriateness of current testing regimes in the Netherlands should be seriously questioned on ethical, legal, and linguistic grounds, as demonstrated for the *Nationale Inburgeringstest*. A striking aspect of these testing regimes is the anonymity of their actual designers. In spite of what is publicly and institutionally available on the Internet, it is by no means easy to find out who is actually responsible for the rationale, goals, designs, and outcomes of these testing regimes. It also remains unclear how knowledge of Dutch society can be tested separately from knowledge of the Dutch language in successive testing regimes, given the fact that both types of tests are administered in Dutch. No rationale or explanation is given for the interdependencies in these procedures, or for the floating norms for passing or failing. What is missing is a conceptual basis and a rationale for newcomers' programmes that

would be accepted in society at large, both by Dutch citizens and by those who strive for this status, in taking diversity within unity as a starting point.

In June 2006, the Dutch Cabinet fell after its refusal, in spite of a favourable narrow majority in Parliament, to approve a general pardon for asylum seekers without residence status. A new Cabinet was installed in November 2006. In its February 2007 coalition agreement, a new *Deltaplan Inburgering* was announced. The ambition of this plan was to eliminate the existing waiting lists for integration courses and to raise their quality. At the time of writing, the operationalisation of this *Deltaplan* was still under discussion. In November 2008, the newly appointed Minister of Integration, Ella Vogelaar, was already forced to resign by her own Labour Party because of a lack of 'effective leadership' in this sensitive domain. It remains to be seen how the latest Minister of Integration will overcome the many obstacles of earlier plans, referred to in this text both in terms of principles and practices.

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## Being English, speaking English

### Extension to English language testing legislation and the future of multicultural Britain

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Language testing in various forms has been used for some time as a gate-keeping mechanism to determine whether applications for citizenship are successful. In recent times the rationale set out by politicians for such a policy has been that some people's failure to learn and use English has been associated with social disorder, family breakdown and threats to social cohesion (Blackledge 2005, 2006a, b, c). In this chapter the debate is updated: the most recent political discourse has argued that not only should English language tests determine the status of those applying for British citizenship, but they should also apply to those seeking permanent leave to remain as residents of UK, and even those seeking entry to UK. This authoritative discourse, and extension to existing legislation, resides in a similar rationale to previous arguments which have associated minority languages other than English with threats to cohesion, integration, and British identity.

#### 1. Introduction

Whilst debates about the role and value of languages other than English have traditionally been notable only by their absence from the main political agenda in Britain, in recent times senior politicians and influential television news commentators have raised questions about the relationship between use of some minority languages, some people's ability (or inability) to speak English, and evident problems in society. The terrorist attacks on New York in 2001, and on London in 2005, have generated questions about multiculturalism in Britain and other immigration states. Debates about immigration, 'race', integration, diversity, and social cohesion have begun to incorporate discourse about minority languages in Britain. In this chapter analysis of such discourse demonstrates that a 'common-sense', universal point-of-view, or *doxa* (Bourdieu 1977) is established, which presupposes

that the use of some minority languages, represented as oppositional to English, is associated with social problems, as is a failure or refusal to learn English. The universal point-of-view is established in constant *méconnaissances*, or misrecognitions (Bourdieu 2000) which produce the view as self-evident that minority languages other than English are not merely intrinsically inferior to English, but are harmful to a cohesive society. The chapter focuses on political texts which emerged in the period December 2006 – February 2007, which involve senior political figures engaging in discussions about minority languages other than English, and either proposed or actual changes to the law.

## 2. Language ideological debates in multilingual contexts

This section develops a theoretical framework within which ideological debates about minority languages in multilingual societies can be analysed and illuminated. The analysis presented here suggests that in a society which claims an identity which is tolerant, even proud, of its diversity, the underlying, dominant ideology is one which erases difference in favour of homogeneity. This dominant ideology is dismissive of languages other than English, firmly believing that the only route to success for immigrant groups is to leave behind their established linguistic resources, and to replace the language of the home with the language of the host country.

Beliefs and attitudes relating to languages in societies are not always fixed or straightforward. Recently, studies of multilingualism in societies have drawn attention to the social positioning, partiality, contestability, instability and mutability of the ways in which language uses and beliefs are linked to relations of power and political arrangements in societies (Blackledge and Pavlenko 2002; Blommaert 1999; Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Gal 1998; Gal and Woolard 1995; Kroskrity 1998; Woolard 1998). Attitudes to, and beliefs about, language, are often not only about language. Gal and Woolard (1995) persuasively argue that ideologies that appear to be about language are often about political systems, while ideologies that seem to be about political theory are often implicitly about linguistic practices and beliefs. Ideologies of language are therefore not about language alone (Woolard 1998), but are always socially situated and tied to questions of identity and power in societies. Political and popular discourse often comes to regard official languages and standard varieties as essentially superior to unofficial languages and non-standard languages (Collins 1999).

Language ideologies are positioned in, and subject to, their social, political and historical contexts. Nor are language ideologies fixed, stable, or immutable. They are multiple, and influenced by changes at local, national, state and global

levels. Moreover, language ideologies are often contested, and become symbolic battlegrounds on which broader debates over race, state and nation are played out. However, to say that language ideologies are contested and changeable over time is not to assert that they are necessarily always negotiable. Rather, there is often a dynamic tension between identities asserted and chosen by the self, and identities asserted and chosen for the individual by state, nation or institution (Blackledge and Pavlenko 2001; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). This tension is often played out in the domain of language ideological debate.

Language ideologies are about more than individual speakers' attitudes to their languages, or speakers using languages in particular ways. Rather, they include the values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers, and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, national and global levels. Irvine and Gal (2000) note that there are striking similarities in the ways ideologies misrecognise differences among linguistic practices in different contexts, often identifying linguistic varieties with 'typical' persons and activities and accounting for the differentiation among them. In these processes the linguistic behaviours of others are simplified and are seen as deriving from speakers' character or moral virtue, rather than from historical accident. The official language, or standard variety, often comes to be misrecognised (Bourdieu 2000) as having greater moral, aesthetic and/or intellectual worth than contesting languages or varieties (Bokhorst-Heng 1999; Heller 1999; Jaffe 1999; Schieffelin and Doucet 1998; Spitulnik 1998; Watts 1999).

If language ideologies provide one of the means by which powerful groups exercise domination over those less powerful, this is not to say that they are either permanent or unitary factors. That is, the ideologies of dominant groups are rarely monolithic or stable (Gal 1998: 320). The exercise of domination by one group over another is fragile, relying as it does on the compliance of the less powerful group. At the same time, ideologies are multiple and shifting. A speaker's beliefs, values and practices associated with a language may vary from one social context to another. Similarly, language ideologies may vary over time, and may vary within small communities, even within families: "Ambiguity and contradiction may be key features of every ideology, and subjects' adherence to one ideology or another is often inconsistent or ambivalent" (Blommaert 1999: 11). This is not to say that we are less able to identify where hegemonic processes occur in language. Rather, we require a means to come to a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between speakers' linguistic practices and their relation to a broad range of social arenas.

Blackledge and Pavlenko (2002) argue that language ideologies act as gate-keeping practices to create, maintain and reinforce boundaries between people in a broad range of contexts, including community, nation, nation-state, state and global levels. Such ideologies come into being in discourses which are explicit and

implicit, visible and invisible, official and unofficial, long-term and ephemeral, contested and uncontested, negotiable and non-negotiable. They are produced in discourses in news media, in politics, in narratives of national belonging, in advertising, in academic text, and in popular culture, to name but a few of the contexts where ideologies are constructed. Wherever language or languages are discussed and debated, there are implications for speakers of those languages. Such debates almost always occur in the context of relations of power between groups, and are about more than language alone. Where new legislation is put in place to introduce language tests for citizenship applicants in Britain (Blackledge 2004) and Germany (Piller 2001), a new gate-keeping device is installed to marginalise those who have language proficiencies which are different from the majority. This is not a linguistic issue alone. The legislation keeps out those who either refuse, or are unable, to abide by the rules of the dominant group. When an erudite, apparently liberal voice calls for an end to bilingual education in the United States in the name of equality and national unity, the voice says that which is “the last thing to be said” (Bourdieu 1991: 153). That is, the language of racism is often dressed in the clothes of liberal, educated, articulate, common-sense discourse. When a newspaper article supports a call for the prevention of Punjabi street-signs in an English city (Blackledge 2002), and appends statistics which appear to prove that ‘the ethnic minority has become the majority’, the debate is about more than language alone. In order to understand the production and reproduction of language ideologies, it is necessary to identify how the laws of linguistic price formation prevent minority speakers from using symbolic capital to gain access to social and economic mobility. That is, we need to recognise the ways in which social arenas are constructed in often nuanced, subtle and barely visible or audible discourse. A good deal of research has identified the difficulties that linguistic minorities can face in gaining entry to domains of power. Rather less research has identified the ways in which such domains are constructed, and the ongoing reinforcement of their borders, as well as ways in which members of the elite appropriate linguistic resources which are devalued when used by minority speakers. Too little is still known about the countless acts of recognition and misrecognition that produce and reproduce the “magical frontier between the dominant and the dominated” (Bourdieu 2000: 169). These magical frontiers become an issue of social justice when some are excluded at the border and denied access to domains of power. The role of linguistic analysis is to make visible:

the processes which produce and reproduce the social order...and offer to perception an abundance of tangible self-evidences, indisputable at first sight, which strongly tend to give to an illusory representation all the appearances of being grounded in reality (Bourdieu 2000: 169).

In this chapter I seek to identify precisely the kind of ‘tangible self-evidences’ referred to by Bourdieu, as they are reproduced and recontextualised in political discourse.

### 3. Discourse about languages in the new political world

The texts for discussion in the remainder of the chapter were all produced in British political discourse in the period December 2006 – February 2007. They are:

- i. a Downing Street speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, on the subject of multiculturalism, December 2006;
- ii. a Government (Home Office) document setting out extensions to the 2002 provisions relating to English language testing for citizenship applicants, January 2007;
- iii. a radio interview with Rt. Hon. David Cameron, the Leader of Her Majesty’s Opposition, 29th January 2007;
- iv. a speech by Rt. Hon. David Cameron, the Leader of Her Majesty’s Opposition, 29th January 2007;
- v. Commission on Integration and Cohesion Interim Statement, February 21st 2007 (plus a speech by the Chair, and press briefing).

Although the texts do not constitute a single debate, they all engage in comment on, or discussion about the role, value, use, teaching, learning, or institutionalisation of minority languages other than English. In some instances the texts also refer to the teaching and learning of English. Van Dijk (2000a) makes the point that in conducting analysis of political discourse we may examine a broad range of discourse strategies. The question is what structural categories to attend to given the usual limitations of time and funding, to avoid “getting lost in the jungle of a multitude of discursive structures and strategies” (van Dijk 2000a: 86). Van Dijk’s answer, which I adopt in the present paper and elsewhere, is that “[i]t depends what one wants to know, and why, and what theoretical instruments one has to relate text structures with the contextual aims one has” (2000a: 86). The analysis here is therefore governed by the question: ‘What attitudes, values and beliefs about minority languages other than English appear to be constituted in recent political and media discourse about multiculturalism?’ Beyond this, there will be questions about the symbolic role of debates about language, and their place in discourses about immigration and multiculturalism.

### 3.1 The duty to integrate

The first of the texts is a speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Tony Blair M.P. The speech was given at Downing Street in December 2006, and was titled ‘The Duty to Integrate: Shared British Values’. It engaged with the notion of ‘multicultural Britain’ and the integration of immigrant groups. In this major speech on the nature of multiculturalism in Britain, Tony Blair contextualises the debate as a response to “the terrorist attacks in London...carried out by British-born suicide bombers who had lived and been brought up in this country, who had received all its many advantages and yet who ultimately took their own lives and the lives of the wholly innocent”.

The speech argued that integration was about “shared, common, unifying British values”, and that “we need to re-assert the duty to integrate”. The Prime Minister set out six “elements in policy” which underscored what the “duty to integrate” entailed. In brief, these were:

- i. to give grant-aid only to those who will promote community cohesion and integration;
- ii. to stand for equality of respect and treatment for all citizens, especially where the cultural practices of some groups contradict this, for example in the treatment of women;
- iii. to demand allegiance to the rule of law;
- iv. to require visiting preachers to have a proper command of English;
- v. to encourage faith schools to make links with schools from other faiths, and insist that madrassahs meet their legal requirements;
- vi. to include a requirement to pass an English test before permanent residency is granted to those seeking leave to remain.

Not all of these policy elements refer to debates about languages. However, points iv, v, vi do so to some extent, and it is here that the analysis will focus.

In what may seem to be a relatively esoteric point to make in a Prime Ministerial address, Tony Blair made the following statement:

There has been a lot of concern about a minority of visiting preachers. It would be preferable for British preachers to come out of the community rather than come in from abroad. Where they are recruited internationally, we will require entrants to have a proper command of English and meet the pre-entry qualification requirements.

In using the passive construction (“there has been”), Tony Blair creates ambiguity and obfuscation, which allows the possibility that the ‘concern’ (a) existed (b) was well-founded, and (c) was legitimate. Tony Blair’s audience would have been well acquainted with a (finally successful) media campaign to prosecute the leading

cleric at Finsbury Park Mosque, Abu Hamza. On 7th February 2006 Hamza was found guilty of eleven charges of soliciting to murder, and stirring up racial hatred, and this context allows Tony Blair to argue that there has been “a lot of concern about a minority of visiting preachers”. The vagueness of the statement, and the high-profile case of Hamza, allow Tony Blair to imply that “visiting preachers” may be a threat. The next sentence asserts firmly that “it would be preferable” for preachers to be recruited from existing British citizens, or at least British residents. Those who are recruited internationally were to be subject to a test to determine whether they had “a proper command of English”. In fact the requirement relating to visiting preachers was that (as of 23rd August 2004) in order to work as a minister of religion in Britain they must have passed IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Level 4 (“limited user”). The Prime Minister’s statement here refers to the Government intention to raise the requirement to IELTS Level 6 (“competent user”). There is a clear implicit link here between the “concern” about some visiting preachers and having a “proper command of English”. If the “common ground” here, the consensual knowledge, is that the “concern” is about Islamic clerics preaching radicalism and fundamentalism to vulnerable young people, there clearly seems to be a link between such activity and the refusal or inability to speak English. That is, the demonstration of a “proper command” of the English language is perceived to be a means of preventing such activity. The logic here is curious. A visiting cleric wishing to preach radical beliefs to young Muslims in Britain would almost certainly find that the young people’s English was far more proficient than any other language, and so would be likely to be more successful in his or her aims if using English. It may be that the Prime Minister’s argument relies on the notion that a “proper” English speaker is unlikely to preach radicalism, as the English language is a civilising influence. Or perhaps the argument relies on the idea that radical beliefs are unlikely to be articulated in English, for the same reason. It is more likely, perhaps, that in recent political discourse English is the language associated with cohesion and justice, while minority Asian languages are associated with segregation and attendant social problems. This ideology, emphatically stated elsewhere (Blackledge 2006 a, b, c; 2005), needs no logic to support it, as it becomes the common-ground of belief.

In the next paragraph of his speech, Tony Blair does not refer to English language proficiency, but to a list of “unacceptable actions”:

Overseas nationals can come to the UK in a public speaking capacity as business visitors or as visiting religious workers. However, the Home Secretary may exclude from the UK any person where he judges that their presence here is not conducive to the public good. We have published a list of certain unacceptable actions that would normally lead to the exclusion of a person from the UK. The publication of



those unacceptable actions makes it clear that we will not tolerate those who seek to create an environment in which terrorism and radicalism can thrive.

The cohesive link between “overseas nationals” and “recruited internationally” implies that those who are guilty of unacceptable actions may also be those who do not have a proper command of English. It may be overstating matters to argue that in Tony Blair’s argument speaking languages other than English is consistent with, and part of, creating an environment in which terrorism and radicalism can thrive. However, the IELTS requirement and the list of unacceptable actions are side-by-side here as the legislative means to the same end: to deal with the concern about some visiting preachers creating an environment for radicalism and terrorism.

The fifth element of policy set out in Tony Blair’s speech makes a further cohesive link to the “concerns” about visiting preachers:

There have been concerns about some madrassahs. The DfES is working to bring together a host of voluntary groups to form a National Centre for supplementary schools. It will recommend best practice to try to encourage tolerance and respect for other faiths by, for example, establishing links with other schools. There can be no excuse for madrassahs not meeting their legal requirements and they will be enforced vigorously.

Here the cohesive repetition of “concerns” links the point about visiting preachers with the question of madrassahs. The passive construction again allows the “concerns” to be vague and unarguable. Madrassahs, set up mainly for the Islamic instruction of young people, here seem to be conflated with “supplementary schools”, which have a different rationale, linked explicitly to the teaching of community languages. There is also an implication that supplementary schools are faith schools, and that they are characteristically guilty of intolerance, and lack of respect for “other faiths”. Supplementary schools usually provide language instruction for particular linguistic groups, but they are not usually faith-based institutions. Having introduced supplementary schools, the Prime Minister returns to madrassahs, apparently assuming that these institutions are inclined to act outside the law. In forceful language, Tony Blair insists that madrassahs will be obliged to meet their legal requirements. In this section the vigorous discourse of the speech appears to assume that schools set up for teaching community languages are guilty of separatist practices, and are in need of regulation to counter these concerns.

The sixth and final element of policy introduced by the Prime Minister in his speech focuses more explicitly on the importance of the English language for social cohesion:

Sixth, we should share a common language. Equal opportunity for all groups requires that they be conversant in that common language. It is a matter both of cohesion and of justice that we should set the use of English as a condition of

citizenship. In addition, for those who wish to take up residence permanently in the UK, we will include a requirement to pass an English test before such permanent residency is granted.

Here the modality of the opening sentence is emphatic, but apparently inclusive. The phrase “common language”, repeated in the following sentence, has a democratic sense which is consistent with “Equal opportunity for all groups”, and “cohesion” and “justice”. The passive construction continues to create ambiguity: it is not clear who will be the recipient of “justice” when all groups are conversant in the common language. This is liberal ‘framing’ of reference to policy or legislation, a familiar feature of political discourse. Equal opportunity, cohesion, and justice are unimpeachable values, which can hardly be argued with. They set a tone of liberal egalitarianism, and whatever follows is now expected to be in the same vein. However, what follows is firstly a reiteration of existing legislation about English language testing for applicants for British citizenship (Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, 2002), then a planned extension to that legislation. In fact the Prime Minister’s statement here is incorrect: the 2002 Act provides that citizenship applicants must demonstrate their proficiency in English, but not that they actually ‘use’ the language. In the final sentence here, the phrase “in addition”, and the word “include” imply a liberal tone once more, but the extension to the existing provisions is illiberal, in that those who previously were not subject to the language testing requirements (those not seeking citizenship, but seeking indefinite leave to remain) now become subject to the English test. Here equality of opportunity for all groups, cohesion, and justice are dependent on everyone living permanently in Britain being able to demonstrate their proficiency in English.

### 3.2 Embracing a common language

The new provisions for English language testing for those seeking indefinite leave to remain in Britain are set out in the Home Office document *Knowledge of Life in the UK Settlement*:

The Government believes strongly that those who wish to settle in the UK should be encouraged to play a full part in their wider community. We have had tests of language and of UK life for citizenship applicants since November 2005 and we now want to include those people who intend staying permanently in the UK in these arrangements.

Here the social actors responsible for the introduction of English language tests for those seeking indefinite leave to remain in Britain are backgrounded by the metonymic phrase “The Government”. The verb “encouraged” frames the policy in liberal terms, as illiberal policy masquerades as liberalism again, this time even in the

constrained genre of a Home Office document. The argumentation strategy which follows claims authority from the fact that there has been similar legislation for citizenship applicants since 2005, and so (implicitly) it is only logical that this should be the law for those seeking leave to remain ('topos of law', Reisigl and Wodak 2000). The introduction to the document continues:

This will, we hope, encourage people to learn English and to find out about our structures, laws, democratic processes and traditions at the earliest opportunity, so that they can better realise their ambitions here and become full and active citizens earlier.

The liberal framing of Government legislation to require tests of English language proficiency continues here. The over-lexicalised repetition of the verb ("encourage"), allied with the topos of advantage ("they" should do this because it will be better for them) proposes that "people" should take the language test because it will be of benefit to them to do so. Oppositional pronouns are notable here, as "we" and "our" are contrasted with "they" and "their". It is not clear whether "they" will become "we" once they have passed the English test. The Home Office document goes on:

Effective integration of those who wish to adopt the UK as their home – including embracing a common language and an understanding of life in the UK – is important to continued good race relations and community cohesion and is a central part of the Government's managed migration policy which benefits our society and economy.

In this complex example of "double-voiced discourse" (Bakhtin 1994: 106) neo-liberal discourse ("embracing a common language") co-exists in the same sentence with a topos of threat which argues that if some people who wish to live in the UK do not embrace English, there will be an end to good race relations and community cohesion. This is a recontextualisation (Wodak 2000) of Tony Blair's argument, using the same terms ("a common language", "cohesion"), and seems to imply that racism and the breakdown of a cohesive society are in some way related to the willingness or otherwise of immigrants to embrace the English language. As in Tony Blair's speech, the logic of the argument is not stated, because it does not need to be: it is common-sense and common ground that only when everyone speaks English will there be a socially cohesive society. The final part of the introduction even proposes that this has been a coherent argument, with the logical connector "Therefore":

Therefore all adults who apply for settlement (indefinite leave to remain) on or after 2 April 2007 will need to demonstrate knowledge of language and of "life in the UK" in addition to meeting the usual requirements for settlement.

The message from the Home Office (the authors of the document are metonymically backgrounded) appears to be that applicants for indefinite leave to remain in the UK will be subject to a test of their English language proficiency before this is granted, because (i) it is better for them and (ii) it is essential for the cohesion of society as a whole.

### 3.3 The failure of multiculturalism

On 29th January 2007 the Leader of the Opposition, the Rt. Hon. David Cameron, delivered a speech in Birmingham, ‘Bringing down the barriers to cohesion’, which addressed what he described as the “failure of multiculturalism”. On the same day he gave an interview with the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme on the same topic. The next section considers each of these texts in turn, beginning with the radio interview.

In the interview the Leader of the Opposition begins as follows:

We need to build a stronger and more cohesive society, and we need to tear down the barriers that are stopping that from happening, barriers like, er, the failed multiculturalism that treats different, er, groups as separate and as distinct rather than trying to treat individuals as individual citizens. I think we need to deal with the barrier of uncontrolled immigration that has put pressure on communities.

The strong epistemic modality of the first phrase establishes an authoritative, apparently inclusive voice. Here David Cameron recontextualises the voice of Tony Blair, reiterating the Prime Minister’s call for “cohesion”. It is not clear what constitutes a “stronger” society here, but it maintains the vigorous and emphatic beginning to the interview. The repetition of “we need” (uttered three times here in the first fifty words of the interview) adds further emphasis. David Cameron’s language is dramatic here, insisting that there is a need to “tear down the barriers” that are preventing the building of a stronger and more cohesive society. The vigorous verb here conversationalises the politician’s tone, perhaps appealing to the assumed listener. The over-lexicalisation of “barrier” (four instances in the first fifty-five words) indicates the theme of the interview, as David Cameron attempts to set out his agenda. The definite pronoun governing “the failed multiculturalism” implies consensus, but at the same time clashes dialogically with the Prime Minister’s speech, in which Tony Blair had argued that “it is not that we need to dispense with multicultural Britain – on the contrary we should continue celebrating it”. David Cameron appears to argue here that multiculturalism has failed because it has emphasised differences between groups. In his next point the definite pronoun (“the barrier of uncontrolled immigration”) again implies consensus and authority, despite the fact that migration to Britain has been restricted for some years.

Ambiguity here allows the listener to imagine what kind of “pressure on communities” might have been the result of uncontrolled immigration.

David Cameron continued uninterrupted as follows:

I think perhaps most important of all is deal with the barrier of of poor education in our inner-cities. Some people present this as a choice between you know faith schools and non-faith schools and I think that’s rubbish it’s actually the problem today is a choice between good schools and bad schools and it’s the bad schools that are locking too many British Asians and Black British people into permanent deprivation.

The Leader of the Opposition again asserts his case emphatically, as if there could be no argument against the statement that there is “poor education in our inner cities”. In the next sentence he again engages dialogically with Tony Blair’s speech, in which the Prime Minister had said “We will also encourage all faith schools to construct a bridge to other cultures by twinning with schools from another faith”. David Cameron dismisses Tony Blair’s point as “rubbish”, and establishes what he sees as “the problem”, “a choice between good schools and bad schools”. In a statement which appears at first to be unusually liberal for a Conservative politician in recent times, David Cameron expresses his concern that “it’s the bad schools that are locking too many British Asians and Black British people into permanent deprivation”.

Interrupted at this point by a question from the interviewer about the results of a recent survey of young Muslims in Britain, the Leader of the Opposition refuses to be sidetracked from his point about “bad schools”:

Well I think it’s extremely worrying and it shows the extent to which multiculturalism has failed, because what the poll shows is that these young people feel more separated from Britain than their parents did. I was in West Yorkshire recently meeting with British (.) British Asians in Keighley and Dewsbury and Bradford and other places and actually I found a number of parents saying to me you know when we went to school it was taught in English straight away and you had to get on and learn English now there’s so much um bilingual support in the classroom that we’re almost encouraging people not to learn English until later and I think you know that the extent of the failure of multiculturalism treating separate communities as distinct is really shown by this poll.

In his fourth usage of the phrase “I think”, David Cameron articulates his apparent concern at the poll, and blames the “failed multiculturalism” to which he had already referred. Returning to his theme about schools, David Cameron now calls on witnesses to support his argument that multiculturalism has failed. These are no ordinary witnesses, however. At the same time “British” and “Asian”, their geography is also crucial, as Keighley, Dewsbury and Bradford were the location, or adjacent to the location, of violent social unrest involving young Asian men and

the police in 2001 (see Blackledge 2005). The witnesses cited here are therefore almost unimpeachable insiders, produced as evidence to add legitimacy to the Leader of the Opposition's argument.

It is not clear whether David Cameron is quoting directly from any of the parents he met in Yorkshire. However, his response uses no reporting verb, so that the discourse of the parents and the argument of David Cameron appear to be travelling in the same direction (Voloshinov 1973: 138). Whereas reported speech may often be thought of as standing outside of the reporting, or representing speech, Voloshinov suggests that in some instances reported speech may be represented in such a way that it merges with the representing speech. Fairclough (1995: 58) introduces the term "boundary maintenance" to refer to the extent to which the voices of primary and secondary discourse are either kept apart or merged. Merging of primary and secondary discourse can mean the secondary discourse being translated into the primary discourse, so that both voices are speaking at once, or the secondary discourse may overwhelm the primary discourse, so that the voice of the primary discourse comes to closely resemble the voice of secondary discourse.

Voloshinov notes that the mechanism of representing reported speech is located "not in the individual soul, but in society" (1973: 117). That is, the representation of speech – for example in direct and indirect speech – and the evaluative reception of that speech, is contextualised and recontextualised socially and historically. This is true of both reporting speech and represented speech:

Between the reported speech and the reporting context, dynamic relations of high complexity and tension are in force. A failure to take these into account makes it impossible to understand any form of reported speech (Voloshinov 1973: 119).

For Voloshinov the true object of inquiry is the dynamic interrelationship between the speech being reported and the speech doing the reporting. In David Cameron's account of the British Asian parents, the boundary between the politician's argument and the reported argument of his witnesses is blurred to the extent that it disappears and it becomes difficult to know where one begins and the other ends. In short, they become merged:

you know when we went to school it was taught in English straight away and you had to get on and learn English now there's so much um bilingual support in the classroom that we're almost encouraging people not to learn English until later.

In transcribing the radio interview I have not used speech marks to indicate which are the directly reported words of the parents. It may be argued that the reported speech ends before the word "now". However, this is ambiguous, and an equally valid interpretation could allow that the whole of this section is the reported view of the parents. Apparently reported from the mouths of those who have experienced

the education system as British Asians, the argument gains legitimacy and authority. In this section of the interview “bilingual support in the classroom” illustrates and exemplifies all that the Leader of the Opposition sees as “the failure of multiculturalism”.

In the next section of the interview (uninterrupted from the previous section) David Cameron continues with his theme:

so we need big changes let's take down all the barriers that are in the way of a stronger society, the barrier of extremism, the barrier of uncontrolled immigration, the barrier of this multiculturalist approach that's failed, and then the barriers of poverty and poor education.

Here David Cameron lists again the “barriers” which stand in the way of a “stronger society”. Fairclough (1989: 188) suggests that “Where one has lists, one has things placed in connection, but without any indication of the precise nature of the connection”. It is likely that a majority of David Cameron’s audience would agree that most of the items on his list should be addressed politically: poverty, poor education, extremism, uncontrolled immigration – there would be consensus that these features of society should be the subject of political policy and debate. The more contestable item in the list, “this multiculturalist approach that’s failed”, comes to be less negotiable, less debatable, when placed in connection with the other items. That is, multiculturalism, which here includes bilingual support in schools, is a barrier to the development of a stronger society.

### 3.4 Our shared national language

On the same day (January 29th 2007) as the radio interview, David Cameron gave a speech (“Bringing down the barriers to cohesion”) in Lozells, Birmingham. In the speech he reiterated his message of the radio interview:

We need to bring down the barriers that divide people in our country today. Those barriers are not just differences in faith, or race. Not just barriers between those who speak English and those who don't. They are the barriers that divide rich from poor; that divide those who have opportunity from those who are left behind. Yes we must demand from everyone in this country that they obey our laws. But loyalty is not just about laws. Loyalty is about giving people something to believe in. So we must inspire loyalty by building a Britain that every one of our citizens believes in. And we must each of us do all we can to bring down those barriers that make that dream more difficult to achieve. There is no easy shortcut: there are five barriers, five Berlin walls of division that we must tear down together. Each is different and each will require different solutions.

Here the over-lexicalisation of “barriers”, occurring six times in this short passage, insists on consensus that these are obstacles to be surmounted. Whereas Tony Blair structured his speech around six “elements of policy”, David Cameron identifies five barriers, or “Berlin walls”, to be torn down. There is a presupposition here that the barriers to be torn down include barriers between “those who speak English and those who don’t”. The qualifier “Not just” takes for granted the legitimacy of the assertion that such barriers exist alongside divisions in terms of race, faith, and socio-economic status.

The Leader of the Opposition goes on to detail what he sees as the five “barriers”: (1) “extremism” (2) “multiculturalism” (3) “uncontrolled immigration” (4) “poverty” and (5) “educational apartheid”. For the purposes of this paper I will consider closely David Cameron’s remarks about the second of these:

The second barrier we need to tear down is less extreme [than extremism], but more widespread in its effects. For many years, the ruling class in this country believed in something called multiculturalism. Multiculturalism sounds like a good thing: people of different cultures living together. But ...it lies behind the growth in the translation of public documents and signs into other languages. What ought to be about helping people to access essential public services has in some cases become an end in itself, making it less of an incentive for people to learn English and participate fully in our national life. All of these things just create resentment and suspicion. And they undermine the very thing that should have served as a focus for national unity – our sense of British identity.

It is notable that the specific example used by David Cameron changed between the radio interview on the morning of 29th January, and the speech given the same afternoon. Whereas in the interview the “barrier” of multiculturalism was exemplified by claims about the divisive effects of bilingual support for pupils in primary schools, a few hours later multiculturalism “lies behind the growth in the translation of public documents and signs into other languages”. It is difficult to know what precipitated this change: it may be that David Cameron’s advisors picked up negative responses to the point about support for bilingual pupils, or it may even be the case that the leader of the Opposition had forgotten his lines in the early-morning interview, and departed from the script of the speech.

The phrase “more widespread in its effects”, together with “lies behind”, implies that multiculturalism has been a creeping, insidious, negative force. The point about languages other than English here is similar to the one made in the *Today* programme interview, but is contextualised differently. Whereas the earlier point was that providing bilingual support for young children creates a divided society because children are discouraged by this policy from learning English, here the argument is that the provision of translation services for speakers of languages other than English also creates division by making it “less of an incentive for people to learn English and



participate in our national life”. In a topos of threat, the argument here is that when such services are provided there are several negative effects:

- (i) they create social division by preventing people from learning English
- (ii) they create resentment and suspicion, and
- (iii) they undermine national unity and our sense of British identity.

In David Cameron’s speech there is a presupposition that the provision of translation services prevents some people from learning English. The second argument fails to identify who will be resentful or suspicious of the translation of documents and signs into other languages, and offers no evidence that this is the case, but accepts that it is so. The threat posed is one which is not very different from that proposed in the Home Office document: whilst in the Government text embracing English was essential for continued good race relations, here the visibility of languages other than English appears to threaten the breakdown of race relations. The Leader of the Opposition does not question the validity of such resentment and suspicion, rather taking it as an inevitable response to the visible presence in society of languages other than English. The third threat here, that the translation of public documents and signs into other languages undermines “our sense of British identity”, proposes firstly that there is a consensus about what constitutes British identity, and secondly that it does not include the multicultural and multilingual nature of that society. Indeed, it is clear that languages other than English, and particularly their visible presence, is contrary to national unity and British identity.

The next sentence of David Cameron’s speech appears to link multiculturalism, and the translation of documents and signs in particular, to the right-wing extremist political party, the BNP:

Together with the extremism of the BNP, they created a situation in which many people were even scared to be proud of their country, because to say you’re British was practically the same as being a racist. We’ve got to stop all this. We’ve got to make sure that people learn English, and we’ve got to make sure that kids are taught British history properly at school.

Here the pronoun “they” seems to refer to “all of these things” which constitute multiculturalism, including translation services. David Cameron here refers to an argument frequently heard in political discourse that debates about immigration and multiculturalism are prevented by liberal notions of ‘political correctness’ (see Blackledge 2005; Fairclough 2003). The strong modality of “We’ve got to stop all this” (it is not clear which parts of the preceding text are included in “all this”) is repeated in the next sentence, which refers to the learning of English. Implicitly, the problems of division and segregation which David Cameron sees as the responsibility of multiculturalism are represented here by those “people” who fail to learn English. In a somewhat surprising juxtaposition, the parallel construction here argues

also that “we’ve got to make sure that kids are taught British history properly at school”, perhaps implying a link between learning English and British identity.

In the next sentence David Cameron argues for a policy change:

I believe that the Government should redirect some of the money it currently spends on translation into additional English classes. This would help people integrate into society and broaden their opportunities. But the Government seems to be going in the opposite direction. Recently it announced that many new immigrants will no longer be able to get free English lessons. Quite how that helps bring the country together I don’t know. We must make sure that all our citizens can speak to each other in our shared national language.

Here the Leader of the Opposition makes a party political point, following a Government announcement of a reduction in free English classes for some immigrants. However, the first and last sentences in this section of the speech are key. Oppositional discourse in the first sentence proposes a choice for Government between paying for translation services or funding English classes. David Cameron argues for the latter, using the *topos* of advantage to insist that learning to speak English, rather than having public services provided in their own language, will “help people integrate into society”. The opposition between translation services and English classes is a false one, as Government is able to provide both. However, in the political discourse here the dichotomy appears to be ideological, and is about the nature of the society envisaged by the Leader of the Opposition: one which is plural, heterogeneous, multicultural and multilingual, in which different languages are clearly audible and visible alongside English; or one which is homogeneous, assimilationist, monocultural, and monolingual, where languages other than English may be known to exist, but are invisible and barely audible. In the final sentence here the modality of David Cameron’s assertion is emphatic: all citizens must be able to speak “our shared national language” (recontextualising by substitution Tony Blair’s “our common language”), implicitly for “their” own good and for “ours”.

Having argued plainly that the presence and visibility of languages other than English creates social division, brings about resentment and suspicion, and undermines national unity and British identity, David Cameron concluded his speech in egalitarian vein:

We must bring down the barriers in our country. We must push forward the frontiers of fairness. We must create equal opportunity, so everyone has the chance to get on in life, to fulfil their dreams, and to feel that their contribution is part of a shared national effort.

Here David Cameron both reiterates Tony Blair’s phrase “equal opportunity” in a less specific context (Tony Blair had said “Equal opportunity for all groups requires

that they be conversant in that common language”), and also recontextualises the Prime Minister’s more general point about equality of opportunity and aspiration (Tony Blair argued that: “We will continue to do all we can, in the name of equality, to provide hope, opportunity and the chance to aspire, to all our communities”). David Cameron’s speech masquerades as liberal egalitarianism, offering equality of opportunity, while at the same time insisting that “multiculturalism” should be stopped.

### 3.5 Breaking down the language barrier

On 22nd February 2007 the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC), set up by the Government, published its Interim Report. The Commission’s terms of reference were:

- examining the issues that raise tensions between different groups in different areas, and that lead to segregation and conflict;
- suggesting how local community and political leadership can push further against perceived barriers to integration and cohesion;
- looking at how local communities themselves can be empowered to tackle extremist ideologies;
- developing approaches that build local areas’ own capacity to prevent problems, and ensure they have the structures in place to recover from periods of tension.

The section of the report headed ‘An inability to speak English’ appears to address its respondents directly:

Lack of English is something that many of you have said is a critical barrier to integration and communication for new arrivals. We are also conscious that lack of language skills in settled communities can also create social distance. We are therefore adamant that not speaking English is a barrier to integration and cohesion. It hampers people’s efforts to integrate economically and to access the labour market. And it prevents them from developing a sense of belonging to bring them together with others (Paragraph 36).

Use of the second person here invites consensus: you the audience have told us this, and we accept it (“We are also conscious”), so our arguments are all on the same side. The argument here appears to conflate proficiency and use of English (we should assume that “language skills” refers to English proficiency). “Lack of English” seems to refer to a model of language as quantifiable, and is conflated with “not speaking English”, which appears to be about use of English, regardless of proficiency. Both the “lack” of English, and “not speaking English” are a “barrier to integration and cohesion”. The CIC Interim Report picks up and

recontextualises the phrase used by David Cameron. The modality of “We are therefore adamant” appears to be dialogic, apparently clashing in ‘hidden polemic’ with (potential) other views which might argue that this is not the case, as “a polemical blow is struck at the other’s discourse on the same theme, at the other’s statement about the same subject” (Bakhtin 1994: 107). Whoever might make an argument, it is certainly not “you” the audience/respondent, although the report does go on to acknowledge views which told the Commission that English classes are inflexible, expensive, and often unavailable in some localities.

The CIC Interim Report also engages with the question of translation services:

Clearly there will be times when translation is necessary – to help new arrivals in particular, and to ensure that vulnerable groups are protected. However, it is also apparent that translation of public materials can also prevent interaction between groups, prevent language skills being developed, and in extreme cases even cause suspicion across groups (Paragraph 41).

The “show concession” (Antaki and Wetherall 1999), or “apparent concession” (van Dijk 2000b: 40) here appears to acknowledge that translation services may at times be necessary, but this turns out to be no more than a preface to the debunking of the same argument, as translation can “prevent interaction”, “prevent language skills being developed”, and “cause suspicion across groups”. This is a recontextualisation of David Cameron’s point about ‘failed multiculturalism’, in which the funding of translation services exemplified activities which “just create resentment and suspicion”. The CIC Interim Report, like David Cameron’s speech, seems to accept that such ‘suspicion’ is less the fault of the suspicious than of those for whom the translation services are provided. A similar point was made in the press briefing which accompanied the launch of the Interim report:

There are instances where newly arrived migrants require translation services. It can make taking part in the life of the wider community easier, and can protect vulnerable groups within communities. But translation services should be there to help people adapt, not replace learning the language. If they are provided for too long, they can become a crutch for people to get by without learning the English they need to integrate successfully. (<http://www.integrationandcohesion.org/news>)

The modality of the piece once more asserts its authority. Beginning with a ‘show concession’ which appears to concede that translation (and interpretation) services are a necessity, the contrary argument is immediately established. Once again here the provision of Government-funded translation services is represented as oppositional to learning English, and successful integration, this time invoking the metaphor of the “crutch” to add persuasive emphasis.

On the day CIC produced its Interim Report, the Chair of the Commission, Darra Singh, made a speech outlining its provisional findings, saying:

We asked people in our opinion polling what they thought the key barriers to being English were...overwhelmingly, it was speaking English. Now, I do think that the issue of language is potentially contentious. However, it is an issue that demands a public debate. 60 per cent of people thought that not speaking English was a barrier to making a real contribution to this country. That finding has to influence all of our thinking from now on. Because what it suggests is that there is a tangible step the Government can take to build integration and cohesion. It must make sure that both new migrants and those who still rely on their heritage languages can speak English.

Here the Chair of the Commission accepts the view that “speaking English” correlates straightforwardly with “being English”, and argues that the Government should make changes to ensure that new and established migrants “can speak English”. The phrase “still rely” here implies that social cohesion and common national identity are threatened by some people’s insistence on still speaking “their heritage languages”. That is, speakers of minority languages other than English should change their linguistic practices, which are to blame for problems in society.

In his speech Darra Singh argues that by the third generation “English is the common currency” for migrant groups. He seems to regard this as a good thing, but asks, “what happens when brides and grooms who do not speak English arrive in families for whom English is already a second language?” He considers that this “breaks the chain” towards universal use of English, and “the language barrier is potentially resurrected”. In an argument which echoes and recontextualises one which lay at the heart of the introduction of new legislation on language testing for British citizenship in 2002 (Blackledge 2004, 2005), a further scapegoat for the (putative) breakdown of cohesion in society is found: the non-English-speaking spouse. Darra Singh offers a solution to this problem:

One thing might be to provide language lessons for them. Under the new rules, they – and other groups of migrants – will not be entitled to language classes until they have been in the UK for 3 years. By that time, they will have learned to survive without English, and the opportunity to teach them may have been lost. But perhaps we could be braver, and expect spouses to have learned English before they arrive here, which would signal the emphasis we place on its importance.

In what he concedes is “a personal reflection” and not a recommendation of the Commission, the Chair set out a radical position which had not been heard in the debate so far. Darra Singh argues that a good way to deal with people coming to UK who are unable to speak English is to prevent them from travelling until they have

passed an English language test. This point was reiterated in the CIC press briefing, issued on the same day (21st February 2007) as the Interim Report was published:

Darra Singh also states that he personally believes there is a third question which the Commission may want to consider in relation to speaking English: 'Should there be a requirement for spouses to learn English before arriving in UK?' Where UK residents who have limited English language skills (or only speak English outside the home) choose to marry non-English speaking spouses from abroad, there are real difficulties in breaking down the language barrier. Family units are formed from individuals who never get to the point of speaking English fluently and therefore have little opportunity to integrate.

Again the 'language barrier' is presupposed here, caused by, and reinforced by, those who arrive in UK unable to speak English. The lack of reporting verbs in summarising Darra Singh's views lend them an authority here, as his voice merges with that of the press briefing, and the argument that non-English-speaking spouses pose a threat to social cohesion gains legitimacy.

#### 4. Conclusion

Of course most, and perhaps all, immigrants to the United Kingdom are likely to want to learn English, in order to contribute to their own potential for social mobility. But there is a difference between coercing someone to learn a language and giving them access to an environment where learning can take place. There are questions of how speakers of languages other than English activate their social and linguistic capital to gain entry to a place of learning which may be perceived as 'white', middle-class and academic. Learning English will not remove other barriers to participation in society for linguistic minority groups whose language is racialised in the ideological debate. The coercive nature of a policy which requires applicants to learn English or be refused access to the community of citizens, or to remain in the UK, strengthens the existing gate-keeping mechanism so that it is more socially exclusive than before. An alternative approach might make more available English language courses which are free, tailored to the needs of particular communities, resourced with child care facilities, and locally situated. As it is, rather than providing sufficient resources for people to learn English, government policy requires that people learn English in order to access certain resources. In almost all of the discourse surrounding recent policy developments there is a tension between political argument that the policy and legislation is liberal and egalitarian, and the implementation of the law itself, which is illiberal and discriminatory.

In the data presented here senior politicians argued with apparent authority and legitimacy that some people's inability or refusal to learn or speak English constitutes a threat to social cohesion, integration, and national identity. Also, the same politicians argued that the public presence and visibility of some minority languages other than English are associated with radical extremism, social segregation, resentment and suspicion, and pose a threat to social cohesion. The Prime Minister introduced new legislation which extended existing English language testing requirements for citizenship applicants to those applying for indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom. At the same time he introduced an extension to measures which required visiting preachers to demonstrate their proficiency in English before coming to England in their professional capacity, and outlined new measures to require madrassahs to comply with regulation. The Leader of the Opposition argued that 'multiculturalism' had failed, and should be stopped, citing as examples too much bilingual support in school classrooms, and an excess of publicly-funded translation and interpretation services for immigrants. Finally, and most recently, the Commission for Integration and Cohesion published an interim report which argued that translation services prevent integration, and cause suspicion, while the Chair of the Commission gave a speech in which he argued for a further extension to language testing legislation, to include testing of potential migrants before they arrived in the United Kingdom. These arguments were invariably framed in discourses which purported to be liberal, egalitarian and emancipatory, while their policy proposals remained illiberal. These proposals appeared to be based on the notion that proficiency in English for all is directly correlated with social justice and social cohesion, whereas the public presence and visibility of some minority languages other than English are associated with social segregation, the breakdown of social cohesion, and a threat to national unity and British identity. As such, the debate appears to be about more than language or languages. Rather, it is about the kind of Britain envisaged by some of the most powerful and influential social actors in the land: a Britain which is monolingual, homogeneous, and assimilationist, or a Britain which is multilingual, heterogeneous, and pluralist. The debate goes on, but the upper hand is with the most powerful and legitimate speakers.

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## Language, citizenship and Europeanization

### Unpacking the discourse of integration\*

Kristine Horner

This chapter considers the interface between events transpiring at the level of the European Union and the Luxembourgish state in order to understand the timing of recent citizenship legislation and the introduction of language requirements in multiple European Union member-states at the turn of the twenty-first century. Functioning like a kaleidoscope, the discourse of integration is central to this process as it facilitates the presentation of learning the 'language of the country' as the solution to the migration 'problem' and also to the 'problem' of implementing more harmonized forms of citizenship legislation within the European Union. The analysis shows how the discourse of integration is central to the negotiation of social practices informed by nationalist ideologies and the accelerated processes of globalization.

#### 1. Introduction

At the turn of the twenty-first century, various forms of legislation were ratified in several European Union (EU) member-states requiring applicants for legal citizenship to meet vaguely formulated language requirements and/or to pass language tests in the declared 'national' and/or 'official' language/s of the state. Although similar policies have been implemented in other polities situated at the global 'center' (cf. Shohamy 2006: 66–8), this development is of particular interest in EU member-states due to the reconfiguration of political borders as well as the renegotiation of social boundaries bound up with what is referred to as either 'European integration' or 'Europeanization' (Delanty and Rumford 2005). Central to

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these processes are the ways in which social actors conceptualize and frame issues related to citizenship, which can be understood both in terms of legal status and social practices (Isin and Wood 1999). Also of relevance are migration policies furthering free movement of EU passport holders while restricting that of non-EU passport holders. These policies have been undergoing various forms of harmonization across member-states with increasing intensity following the EU summits in Tampere in 1999 and in Nice in 2000, where key decision makers laid some of the groundwork for the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargement phases, and also attempted to tie up remaining loose ends following from the ratification of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 (Apap 2002).

It is therefore essential to grapple with developments unfolding at the EU and global levels in order to understand the timing of recent changes in citizenship legislation and related debates in multiple EU member-states. At the same time, exploring the above processes at the level of the state is productive given the fact that the state continues to function – to a certain extent – as a centering institution (Blommaert 2005: 76), and that social actors in many European polities often continue to identify with the model of the nation-state, in spite of, or perhaps due to the fact that it is subject to increasing pressure (May 2001). Furthermore, policies being harmonized at the EU level need to be negotiated with people living and working in various member-states. The focus of this paper is on multilingual Luxembourg, the second smallest member-state of the EU, as it provides an interesting lens through which to consider the following questions:

1. How does the policy of introducing language requirements as a prerequisite for legal citizenship seek to resolve tensions between social practices informed by nationalist ideologies and changes bound up with the consolidation of EU infrastructures?
2. In what ways is this policy discursively justified and contested in multiple sites and how does it resonate with the deeply entrenched ‘one nation, one language’ and ‘standard language’ ideologies?
3. How do social actors draw upon the discourse of integration to frame issues of shifting migration patterns and new forms of citizenship legislation?

## 2. Language requirements and the *loi sur la nationalité luxembourgeoise*

Located between Belgium, France and Germany, Luxembourg has a geographical size of 2,586 square kilometers and a population of 476,200. It is one of the six founding EU member-states and home to several EU institutions. The current population consists of 41.6 per cent resident foreigners, which is the highest proportion in the EU. However, unlike many other EU member-states, the majority of resident

foreigners hold a passport of another EU member-state, with the largest number of residents hailing from Portugal (Stateg 2007). In relation to its small geographical size together with EU regulations facilitating free movement of (certain members of) the EU workforce, 126,800 *frontaliers* (border-crossing commuters) make up 39.8 per cent of the workforce in the Grand Duchy. About 80 per cent of the *frontaliers* come from France and Belgium and are (primarily) French-speaking, and nearly 20 per cent come from Germany and are (primarily) German-speaking (Stateg 2006); many of them are to varying degrees bilingual German-French/French-German speakers and/or have a good command of English. Moreover, a recent trend over the past decade is the increased organization of and enrollment on Luxembourgish language classes held in Luxembourg and in neighboring areas as it is sometimes regarded as a valuable asset on the employment market.<sup>1</sup>

The language situation in Luxembourg is frequently referred to as ‘triglossic’ in reference to the three languages recognized by the 1984 language law: Luxembourgish, French and German. The spoken/written distinction has been pivotal to understanding long-standing norms and patterns of language use in Luxembourg, with most spoken communication taking place in Luxembourgish and written functions carried out primarily in French and/or German. Luxembourgish language varieties are Germanic and bear similarities to the Moselle Franconian varieties spoken in neighboring parts of Germany, Belgium and France; this relationship provides the rationale underpinning the decision for basic literacy to be taught via standard German in state schools, although an increasing number of children grows up using (predominantly) non-Germanic language varieties in the home (Weber, in press). In relation to the increasing degree of societal multilingualism in Luxembourg together with intensifying processes of EU consolidation, the active promotion of Luxembourgish has been gaining momentum steadily since the 1970s. Somewhat paradoxically, the Luxembourgish government opted for French as the EU working language rather than Luxembourgish; at the level of the state the latter was officially declared the ‘national language’ in the 1984 language law (Horner and Weber 2008: 109–111).

In 1986, the 1968 *loi sur la nationalité luxembourgeoise* (Law on Luxembourgish Nationality) was amended after having been revised previously in 1975 and 1977. Of the amendments prior to 2001, those of 1986 had the most impact as they eliminated a form of gender-based discrimination that had limited the automatic allocation of legal citizenship rights to individuals whose fathers were

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1. It is also the case that Luxembourgish is used in certain places of business beyond the borders of the Grand Duchy. For example, announcements at the Arlon IKEA (Belgium) are broadcast in French and Luxembourgish; this may be regarded as a ‘symbolic’ gesture to please clients with purchasing power but simultaneously has an ‘instrumental’ dimension considering the material effects of economic profit.

Luxembourgish passport holders; the impetus for this reform was of a global nature and stemmed from activities at the level of the United Nations. The granting of legal citizenship rights to larger numbers of people – and the allowance for dual *nationalité* for some children in mixed marriages – in the 1980s was not uncontested among the general public, and the proposal to introduce language requirements was brought forward in the course of these debates. Although this proposal proved unsuccessful in the 1980s, language requirements were ultimately introduced as part of the 2001 amendments for the first time in Luxembourgish history (Scuto 2006). Prior to 2001, procedures for dealing with applicants for legal citizenship involved the foregrounding of applicants' proficiency in Luxembourgish to varying degrees; the 1940 clause requiring the applicant to demonstrate 'sufficient assimilation' – which was retained in the law of 1968 – has served as a means to justify this practice. However, the recent move to *explicitly* legislate language requirements and to implement testing procedures as part of naturalization procedures is central to understanding the dynamics of language policy, particularly in relation to the processes of accelerated globalization marking the late modern period (Horner and Weber 2008: 115–120).

As is the case in several other EU member-states, the denotation of legal citizenship as *nationalité* in Luxembourg refracts the ways in which perceptions of national group membership based on shared ethnicity are intertwined with legal ties to the state (cf. May 2001: 75). The 2001 amendments to the law on Luxembourgish nationality simultaneously entail the opening and closing of the nation (Anderson [1983] 1991). On the one hand, the procedures were relaxed in light of the fact that the residency period was reduced from ten to five years (and to three years for the *option*, for example, in the case of marriage to a Luxembourgish passport holder). On the other hand, a language clause was introduced stipulating that applicants must demonstrate that they have a "basic knowledge" of Luxembourgish, the national language, regardless of their proficiency in French and/or German, the other languages officially recognized by the 1984 language law. Article 7, Paragraph 3 of the 1968 law remained unchanged in the 1986 series of amendments:

1. La naturalisation sera refusée à l'étranger [...] lorsqu'il ne justifie pas d'une assimilation suffisante (Mémorial 1986)

[Naturalization will be refused to the foreigner [...] if he [*sic*] does not demonstrate sufficient assimilation]

The 2001 modifications to Article 7 of the 1968 law include a paragraph stipulating basic language requirements in Luxembourgish and, notably, the word "assimilation" has been replaced with the word "integration":

2. La naturalisation sera refusée à l'étranger: [...] lorsqu'il ne justifie pas d'une intégration suffisante, notamment lorsqu'il ne justifie pas d'une connaissance active et passive suffisante d'au moins une des langues prévues par la loi du 24 février 1984 sur le régime des langues et, lorsqu'il n'a pas au moins une connaissance de base de la langue luxembourgeoise, appuyée par des certificats ou documents officiels. (Mémorial 2001)

[Naturalization will be refused to the foreigner [...] if he [*sic*] does not demonstrate sufficient integration, notably if he [*sic*] does not demonstrate sufficient active and passive knowledge of at least one of the languages stipulated by the language law of February 24th 1984 and, if he [*sic*] does not have at least a basic knowledge of the Luxembourgish language, supported by certificates or by official documents.]

Of particular interest are the ways in which the omnipresent discourse of integration meshes with the justification of language requirements for legal citizenship, which have been implemented and/or debated in and across EU member-states within the same timeframe. In the ensuing discussion, I argue that an analysis of the discourse of integration is central to understanding the dynamics of these developments.

### 3. Renegotiating boundaries and the discourse of integration

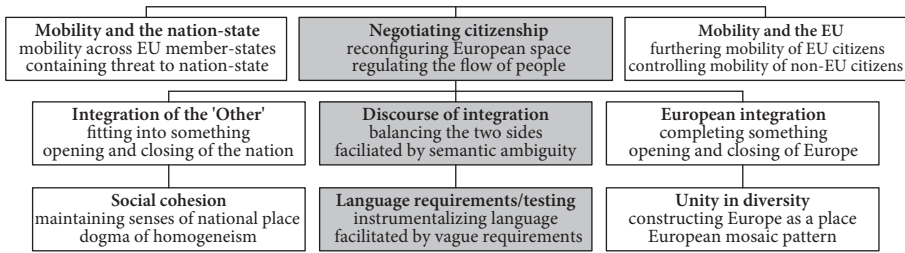
Researchers focusing on the introduction of language requirements and/or testing as part of the application process for obtaining legal citizenship in multiple EU member-states maintain that this move is ideologically motivated (Piller 2001), and – in Blommaert's (1999) terms – that it is part and parcel of a (broader) language ideological debate (see, for example, Blackledge 2005; Stevenson 2006; Milani 2008). Approaching these issues predominantly at the state level, the focus is on state policy documents as well as key print media sources often addressing 'imagined' national readerships (Anderson [1983] 1991). In these analyses, language is central in two respects, as it constitutes both the target and the vehicle of the debate. As a result, this line of research explores the interface between the 'one nation, one language' ideology and the 'standard language' ideology (Horner 2007a) together with the ways in which they are underpinned by the "dogma of homogeneity", the belief that the ideal society is linguistically and culturally homogeneous (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992). These ideologies are at the core of European nationalisms and they are repeatedly drawn upon to perpetuate the illusion of nation-state congruence. A language ideological approach to the (proposed) introduction of language requirements and/or testing as part of citizenship



legislation problematizes rigid distinctions that are sometimes posited between instrumental and symbolic functions of language as well as civic and ethnic nations (cf. Stevenson 2006; Milani 2008; Horner, in press). In language ideology research, beliefs about language held by laypersons *and* linguists are thrown into question: for example how languages are named (Irvine and Gal 2000) and how linguistic standards are bound up with the negotiation of social norms or the propagation of social order (Milroy and Milroy 1999). The focus on ideological processes and related emphasis on discourse, both in terms of stretches of language in use and in the broader sense linked to cultural models (Gee [1999] 2005), has also impacted to a certain extent on research explicitly under the rubric of language policy, with some researchers attending to the wording of official documents and exploring the conditions under which they are legitimated, ratified, implemented, contested and so on (for example, Ricento 2000; Spolsky 2004; Shohamy 2006).

Cognate developments can be found across the social sciences, including the work of Diez (1999), who calls for scholarship in political science – especially in relation to integration studies – to turn to discourse analysis. Drawing on the work of Austin, Foucault and Derrida, Diez (1999) discusses the centrality of language as shaping both social reality as well as academic research rather than simply mirroring them; in particular, he views integration as a social construct, somewhat akin to the way in which scholars taking a language ideological approach view named languages as social constructs. In the field of European Studies, Delanty and Rumford (2005) also take a social constructivist approach to understanding how social, political and economic changes bound up with the consolidation of the European Union are impacting upon related issues at the level of the state. They opt for the term Europeanization rather than integration to describe these transformations, maintaining that the generalized use of integration conflates functional (market) and democratic integration (6). Referring to integration as the first of three key concepts in the historical trajectory of the EU – followed by identity and constitution – Stråth (2006) sketches how policy makers recast the sociological concept of integration in post-WWII (western) Europe. He describes how it caught on in academia and how discourses from both sides fed into each other. His discussion lays bare the linkage between integration and global capital and, perhaps more alarmingly, how scholars have taken part in propagating the discourse of integration. He points out that “its value was in its vagueness and ambiguity and its openness to interpretations” (431); and, furthermore, that it had “the goal of holistic unification” and “processual and transformative connotations” (432).

Parallel to these observations on the use of integration at the EU level is the work conducted by Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) on the semantic vagueness of integration in relation to the ways it has been positioned as the process



**Figure 6.1** Positioning language requirements as the ‘solution’ to the migration ‘problem’ and to the ‘problem’ of implementing new forms of citizenship legislation in the EU.

leading to the solution to the ‘migrant problem’ in Flanders. They outline four main characteristics concerning the use of the word ‘integration’ in their data from (among others) Flemish policy reports and print media sources:

1. Connected to a notion of intentionality and derived from a transitive verb: linked to ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ opposition (cf. Billig 1995);
2. Spatial connotation: linked to ‘here’ vs. ‘there’ opposition (cf. Billig 1995);
3. Process verb: linked to ‘outside’ vs. ‘inside’ (cf. Anderson’s ([1983] 1991) discussion of the opening and closing of the nation);
4. All social actors do not have an equal voice in this outcome (see Blommaert 2005 on the link between identity and power).

The use of integration in the data analyzed by Blommaert and Verschuere is not completely dissimilar to that at the overarching EU level, especially with regard to its semantic vagueness. The vague nature of language requirements and murkiness of the related testing procedures resonate well with the discourse of integration. This discourse facilitates the processes positioned as the solution to the ‘migrant problem’ (integration of the ‘Other’) and simultaneously the problem of implementing new forms of citizenship legislation resonating with the consolidation of EU infrastructures (European integration). For this reason, integration is, in fact, a key term at this juncture but it has been recast in such a way that it can be linked to the model of the nation-state *and* to the project of European unification (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 illustrates the centrality of the discourse of integration, at this historical moment, as it relates to the consolidation of European Union infrastructures together with the ways in which these processes are impacting on the nation-state. It is the discourse of integration that simultaneously allows the tropes of social cohesion and unity in diversity to be positioned as feasible end points or goals at the state and EU levels respectively. Whereas the trope of social cohesion is underpinned by the dogma of homogeneity in relation to the nation-state model (cf. Stevenson 2006: 147–148), the trope of unity in diversity is linked to the

imagery of the European mosaic, sometimes described as “nested circles” (cf. Sas-satelli 2002: 439–441), in relation to the processes of EU consolidation.

At first glance, the central position of integration in Figure 6.1 may seem to stand in contradiction with Stråth’s (2006) discussion of the three “key concepts in the European unification project” – integration (post-WWII to the 1970s), identity (1970s–1990s) and constitution (2000–2005) – but it does not necessarily stand in opposition to his line of argument. Although EU policy makers shifted focus from integration to identity to constitution, the discourse of integration has continued to impact upon social life, perhaps due to the failure of creating some kind of consensus regarding a European identity. Let us recall that the flexibility of the term integration is enabled by its semantic vagueness. It has a capacity to be filled in ways that identity cannot, given the fact that the latter is generally viewed as a core aspect of the human experience, at any point in time, and for social actors the term identity tends to index certain dimensions of the real world. Due to the semantically vague nature of integration, it is essential that we critically approach the ways in which it has been taken over as an analytical concept in relation to social processes. By engaging in reflexive research, the links between integration and global capital become evident and we can explore how certain dynamics of identity and power are erased from view and how the discourse of integration has a potentially commodifying effect on human beings (cf. Gould 2006).

My overarching argument in this chapter is that it is essential to bring together the processes in Figure 6.1 to understand the timing of changes in citizenship legislation (including the introduction of language requirements) in EU member-states at the turn of the twenty-first century. Indeed, the discourse of integration functions like a kaleidoscope (cf. Heller 1999), foregrounding domestic issues at one moment and EU issues at another. The following discussion explores the ways in which the semantically vague concept of integration, together with learning the ‘language of the country’, is presented as the solution to the migration ‘problem’ and also to the ‘problem’ of implementing more harmonized citizenship legislation within the EU. Although working with data at the level of the state, it is imperative to consider the interplay between events transpiring at the level of the EU and of the state.

#### 4. The discourse of integration in action

Articles, editorials and letters to the editor concerning the 2001 modifications to Luxembourgish citizenship appeared frequently in the Luxembourgish print media. Multiple, yet interrelated debates erupted in 2001 mapping patterns of language use onto social change, including the debate about the 700,000 residents.

This debate was triggered by a statement by Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, who referred to statistics projecting a future resident population of 700,000 and claimed this would be necessary to support future pension schemes. The publication of this statement led to widespread media coverage as to whether it was desirable for the (implicitly foreign) population to increase at this rate and the implications this might have for the Luxembourgish language. The introduction of dual *nationalité* was postponed in the process of the 2001 deliberations. Although the new language requirements were ratified in 2001 and came into effect in 2002, the testing and evaluation procedures remain somewhat ambiguous, a point that sparked further criticism from voices in opposition to the requirement. Somewhat paradoxically, individuals in favor of the requirement raised similar concerns by calling the seriousness of the testing into question. In contemporary Luxembourg, members of mainstream political parties often attempt to distance themselves from those nationalist ideologies that *explicitly* draw on ethnic criteria. At the same time, however, there exists pressure from members of the electorate to do precisely the opposite. The Luxembourgish press – in particular the dominant newspaper, the *Luxemburger Wort*, which has close ties to the Conservative Party – plays a central role in mediating these somewhat divergent positions (Horner, in press).<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the 2001 amendments to the law on Luxembourgish nationality were not passed unanimously by Parliament. Representatives of left of centre parties – that is, the Socialists and the Greens – voiced opposition to the requirement of “basic knowledge” of Luxembourgish, but they were defeated by the 1999–2004 coalition of the Conservatives and the Democrats (cf. Scuto 2006: 94–95). The Conservatives – the dominant party in Parliament – initiated arguments in support of the language clause by framing the Luxembourgish language as central to the process of integration; knowledge of Luxembourgish was presented as the key to full participation in social and political life in the Grand Duchy (see also Van Avermaet, this volume). Although the Luxembourgish language is sometimes directly linked to Luxembourgish national identity (Horner 2007b), overt references of this nature were generally not flagged in official statements by politicians concerning the 2001 amendments. By positioning Luxembourgish as a resource or instrument that enables successful integration, it is possible to embed cultural criteria in the discourse without being obvious about it. In a press statement by Laurent Mosar, the Conservative deputy who was responsible for drafting the 2001 amendments to the law on Luxembourgish nationality, the word ‘assimilation’ appears somewhat interchangeably with ‘integration’, raising the question as to what

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2. The *Luxemburger Wort* was renamed *d’Wort* in 2005 when it was converted to tabloid format. The name of the newspaper was changed back to the *Luxemburger Wort* in 2008.

difference exists between the two terms and the alleged policy objectives associated with them (cf. Stevenson 2006: 158–159):

3. Cette loi s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une politique d'intégration volontariste, devant assurer à la population de notre pays un degré élevé de cohésion. La nouvelle loi sur la nationalité facilite effectivement l'accès à la qualité de Luxembourgeois, tout en exigeant des demandeurs de notre nationalité une volonté marquée d'assimilation. (*Luxemburger Wort*, 6 August 2001: 3)

[This law fits into the framework of a voluntarist politics of integration, which has to ensure a high level of [social] cohesion for all the people living in our country. The new nationality law does indeed facilitate access to the status of Luxembourger, while requiring those applying for our nationality to demonstrate a strong desire for assimilation.]

A close textual analysis of excerpt 3 illustrates that the use of integration in the Luxembourgish print media bears a striking resemblance to the ways it is used in Flemish media discourse, in particular by simultaneously facilitating the representation of the political goodwill and openness of the state government towards citizenship applicants, together with the intentionality that applicants need to demonstrate to obtain the 'status' of Luxembourger. It follows that the 'Others' need to express their willingness to take part in this unspecified process because 'we', the welcoming host country, have already done so (cf. Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 111–112). Integration is thus positioned as the solution to the 'migrant problem' in that the completion of this vaguely defined process presumably paves the way towards reaching the equally ambiguous goal of social cohesion (cf. Milani 2008). The process of acquiring Luxembourgish *nationalité* – from becoming one of 'them' to becoming one of 'us' – is represented as having become easier as a result of the ratification of the new amendments, and thus responsibility for successfully completing this procedure lies in the hands of the applicant.

In excerpts 4 and 5, the use of integration is similar to that in excerpt 3, though the following excerpts differ from each other in the sense that excerpt 4 is addressing the 'imagined' nation, whereas excerpt 5 is aimed at a more international readership:

4. Mancher Luxemburger ist [...] vielleicht weltoffener als andere [...] kann es aber trotz seiner Sprachkenntnisse als eine Zumutung empfinden, wenn ausländische Mitbürger, die seit Jahrzehnten im Land leben, sich hartnäckig weigern, ein Wort Luxemburgisch zu sprechen. Andere versuchen es vom ersten Tag an und sind damit "integriert", ob mit oder ohne Luxemburger Pass. (*Luxemburger Wort*, 9 June 2001: 3)

[Many Luxembourgers are [...] perhaps more cosmopolitan than others [...] but in spite of their linguistic repertoire may feel that it is a lack of respect, if foreign co-citizens, who have lived in the country for decades, stubbornly refuse to speak a word of Luxembourgish. Others make the attempt from the first day onwards and are therefore “integrated”, be it with or without a Luxembourgish passport.]

5. La tolérance vis-à-vis des étrangers n'est possible que s'ils manifestent leur volonté d'intégration [...] le fait d'exiger des candidats à la nationalité luxembourgeoise de parler la langue nationale, a pour but de mieux les intégrer et de faire en sorte que la xénophobie reste un phénomène marginal au Grand-Duché. (*Luxemburger Wort, La Voix du Luxembourg* insert, 15 June 2001: 1)

[Tolerance of foreigners is not possible unless they manifest their will for integration [...] the decision to require candidates for Luxembourgish nationality to speak the national language is intended to integrate them better and to ensure that xenophobia remains a marginal problem in the Grand Duchy.]

In excerpt 4, Luxembourgers are once again portrayed as open towards “foreign co-citizens”, with their cosmopolitanism indexed by their (presupposed) multilingualism (cf. Horner 2007a). In spite of this state of affairs, it is expected that “foreign co-citizens” learn to speak Luxembourgish because the national language is positioned as the enabling instrument of integration.<sup>3</sup> An opposition is constructed between the negatively charged “foreign co-citizens” who “lack respect” by not making the effort to learn Luxembourgish and the model “foreign co-citizens” who “make the attempt” and therefore are held up as examples, having completed the integration process “with or without a Luxembourgish passport”.<sup>4</sup> The explicit reference to the passport positions knowledge of Luxembourgish as the key to integration rather than the possibility of obtaining legal citizenship rights; this discourse is indicative of the level of political maneuvering – not unrelated to the 700,000 residents scare – that served to delay the ratification of dual *nationalité* in 2001. In excerpt 5, the ability to speak Luxembourgish is once again portrayed as facilitating the integration process, positioning all Luxembourgish speakers as already integrated and therefore having no remaining criteria to fulfill. Thus, the responsibility for successful integration is dependent on the willingness of the

3. The construction of Luxembourgish as the language of integration is omnipresent in multiple sites, including representations in educational policy documents together with practices in state-run schools (Horner and Weber 2008; Weber, in press).

4. The opposition between Luxembourgers and foreigners along ethnic lines is constructed and reproduced by categorizing even those who speak Luxembourgish and are ‘integrated’ as both ‘foreign’ and not fully-fledged citizens, that is, ‘co-citizens’.

non-Luxembourgish passport holders to learn the “national language”. The failure to demonstrate this “will for integration” – together with not speaking Luxembourgish – is bound up with a discourse of threat in this instance, as this state of affairs is discursively positioned as the cause of xenophobia, thus placing the blame on ‘foreigners’ for any form of hate directed against them (cf. Blackledge 2005, and in this volume).

The emphasis on speaking rather than writing in excerpts 4 and 5 has a particular charge in Luxembourg given the fact that Luxembourgish, French and German are all officially recognized by the language law of 1984 together with the fact that pupils in state-run schools learn basic literacy via the standardized, written variety of German. Drawing on existing discourses, attempts to strengthen the position of Luxembourgish as *the* language of integration took place in the years immediately following the ratification of the 2001 amendments to the law on Luxembourgish nationality. The series of lectures, meetings and debates from November 2002 to January 2004 entitled *Lëtzebuergesch: Quo Vadis?*, which was sponsored in part – somewhat ironically – by the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL), provides one example of the perceived need and effort to discursively construct Luxembourgish as *the* language of integration. The following is an extract from one of these debates, held in November 2003, with the title *Lëtzebuergesch eng Integratiounssprooch?! (Luxembourgish an integration language?!)* [JCJ = Prime Minister and Conservative politician; CM = “naturalized” Luxembourger of Cape Verdean origin and president of foreigners’ association; MN = moderator]:

6. MN: Wéi géift Dir d’Integratioun – mer schwätze vu Lëtzebuergesch als Integratiounssprooch – definéieren? Wat ass dat fir Iech?

[We are talking about Luxembourgish as [the] language of integration: How would you define integration? What is it for you?]

JCJ: Wëlle mat guddem Gefill zesumme liewen. Woubäi an deem Wuert **wëllen** och den Ufank vum **kënne** läit. Mä fir d’ëischt muss ee mol wëllen, ier ee kann.

[Wanting to live together with a good feeling. Moreover the word **wanting** also implies the beginning of **being able to**. But first one has to want before one is able to.]

MN: Den Här Juncker huet elo just eng Definitioun proposéiert, wat ass fir Iech d’Integratioun?

[Mr. Juncker has just proposed a definition; what is integration for you?]

CM: Natierlech fänkt d'Integratioun bei der Sprooch un, d'lëtzebuergesch Sprooch ass eng fundamental Waff, déi ee muss hunn, fir sech z'integréieren, mä dat aleng geet net duer, nëmmen d'Sprooch geet net duer. Integratioun muss och vun engem gudden Wille vu béide Säite kommen. Ech als Ausländer wëll mech natierlech integréieren, dat heescht ech huelen dat wat ech hei zu Lëtzebuerg fonnt hunn an ech wëll och dat respektéieren. An ech wëll och matschaffen a matmaachen, matstëmmen an alles matmaachen wéi d'Land funktionnéiert. Mä ech wier frou – an dat hëlleft nämlech ganz vill, dat huet mir immens vill gehollef a menger Integratioun –, datt d'Lëtzebuurger sech och u menger Identitéit interesséieren.

[Of course integration begins with the language; the Luxembourgish language is a fundamental weapon that one needs to have in order to integrate oneself, but that alone is not enough, the language alone is not enough. Integration also depends on goodwill on both sides. Of course I as a foreigner want to integrate, that means I take what I have found here in Luxembourg and I also want to respect that. And I also want to take part and work together, to vote and to be a part of all the ways in which the country functions. But I would like – that would be a great help, that helped me an awful lot with my own integration – the Luxembourgers also to be interested in my identity] (Melusina Conseil 2004: 244, 247; original emphasis in bold).

Given the relatively consistent manner in which the term integration is used in relation to migration and the positioning of the 'Other' in mainstream media discourse, it is of interest to juxtapose the divergent answers to the question posed by the moderator of the debate in extract 6. By foregrounding intentionality, the response provided by Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker refracts representations discussed in excerpts 3, 4 and 5. However, the use of the indefinite pronoun 'one' allows him to avoid placing the burden of intentionality or responsibility on anyone in particular. The president of the foreigners' association – asked after Juncker provides his response – picks up precisely on the issue of intentionality but underlines the importance of 'goodwill on both sides'. In addition, she challenges the presupposition that the Luxembourgish language is in and of itself the key to successful integration; in her account it is labeled a 'weapon' that one needs as a means of survival. Her response suggests that more is required of the 'Other' than learning to speak Luxembourgish and, furthermore, that intentionality is sometimes sadly deficient on the part of those who by their birthright are simply assumed to be 'fully integrated'. Following her lengthy commentary, these two pivotal issues were not addressed by the other participants. In addition, she was not asked any further questions during the remainder of the discussion. In this way, her attempt to provide a different perspective on integration, highlighting problems attached



to its semantic vagueness, as well as her related request for people to be interested in her identity, was not acknowledged by the other participants and the audience.

Following the ratification of the 2001 amendments and the related moves to position Luxembourgish as the language of integration, the bill for the new law on Luxembourgish nationality was submitted to Parliament on 13 October 2006 and is pending ratification at the time of writing (June 2008); once ratified, this law will markedly alter the current state of affairs as it will include broader provisions for dual *nationalité* and it will stipulate stricter language requirements together with more rigid testing procedures. In spite of the significance of this legislation, it has not received a great deal of coverage in the Luxembourgish press, especially in the columns of the dominant newspaper on the national market. As one exception to this general tendency, the following series of extracts are from articles that appeared together on two opposite pages of the *Wort* in 2006, with excerpts 7 and 8 taken from articles specifically focusing on the pending law on Luxembourgish nationality:

7. Die Sprecher der meisten politischen Fraktionen sind sich einig darin, dass die doppelte Staatsangehörigkeit ein wichtiges Instrument zur Integration der Nicht-Luxemburger ist (*d'Wort*, 19 May 2006: 3).

[The speakers of most political parties are in agreement that dual citizenship is an important instrument towards integrating the non-Luxembourgers.]

8. wer den luxemburgischen Pass neben seinem ursprünglichen Pass erlangen will, muss sich anstrengen. Ich sehe in den Bedingungen auch keine Hürde, sondern ein Garant dafür, dass jeder stolz auf die luxemburgische Nationalität sein wird. (*d'Wort*, 19 May 2006: 2)

[whoever wants to attain the Luxembourgish passport in addition to their original passport has to make an effort. I also do not see any hurdles in the requirements but rather a guarantee that everyone will be proud of Luxembourgish nationality.]

9. Ist darüber hinaus nicht eine weitere Erkenntnis überlebenswichtig, nämlich dass die Europäische Union im Zeitalter der Globalisierung und der aufstrebenden Ost-Mächte Indien und China nur dann bestehen kann, wenn sie wirtschaftlich und politisch stark und – vor allem – mit sich selbst im Reinen ist? (*d'Wort*, 19 May 2006: 3)

[Moreover, is a further acknowledgement not necessary for survival, namely that in the era of globalization and the aspiring Eastern powers, India and China, the European Union can only survive if it is economically and politically strong and – above all – has sorted things out with itself?]

*Doppelte Staatsangehörigkeit* (dual citizenship) is explicitly positioned as an “instrument” of integration in excerpt 7, with language requirements constituting a pathway or obstacle in this process, depending on one’s point of view. In excerpt 8, taken from an article covering an interview with Minister of Justice, Luc Frieden, these procedures are portrayed as the former, with the new requirements represented as a “guarantee” rather than a “hurdle”. In comparison to the situation in 2001, the bar has been raised and intentionality is no longer considered to be an adequate criterion to measure successful ‘integration’. Applicants are required to make a serious “effort” which in turn will be monitored in relation to testing mechanisms (cf. Shohamy 2006: 93–109), creating a situation that is not dissimilar to a competition as a ‘pass’ will enable and a ‘fail’ will block access to *la nationalité luxembourgeoise*. In excerpt 9, there is a discursive move calling for unity in the EU, with this kind of teamwork being positioned as necessary to reach the goal of being “economically and politically” strong, thus taking the discourse of competition a step further. Although the explicit mention of ‘integration’ is absent from excerpt 9 – and the entire article from which it is taken – it is deeply steeped in the discourse of integration, but this is not overtly flagged here because the kaleidoscope is turned in such a way that the discourse of integrating the ‘Other’ – with a focus on the idealized nation-state – is foregrounded on the two-page newspaper display as a whole. The attempt of the newspaper editors to balance the two sides of integration is underscored by a photo displaying two EU passports, a French one with a Luxembourgish one slightly overlapping it, held against a backdrop of the Luxembourgish (red-white-blue tricolor) national flag. The three articles – together with this image – work intertextually to represent the allocation of dual citizenship legal rights as an option aimed primarily at passport holders of other EU member-states, while at the same time the suggestion that cooperation within the EU is required in the face of global change evokes the discourse of unity in diversity and the related imagery of the European mosaic.

##### 5. Constructing Europe and/or maintaining national senses of place?

Pressures to comply with EU harmonization processes are shaping the policies of member-states in various ways as is illustrated, for example, by recent reforms to citizenship legislation (Faist 2007). In Luxembourg some major political actors are delegates both in the national parliament and in EU institutions. One could pose the question as to whether the only way to ‘sell’ the 2001 amendments to the law on Luxembourgish nationality to the electorate was simultaneously to introduce a language requirement. The pending legislation to introduce broader acceptance of dual citizenship in legal terms constitutes an even more controversial move on the

state level and therefore, possibly as a direct result of this, plans to implement higher language requirements and provisions for more rigid testing procedures are in motion (Horner, in press). Dual citizenship rights are highly contentious in Luxembourg and what (some policy makers hope) will make the broader allocation of these rights somewhat more palatable is that applicants have to make a serious effort rather than 'just' showing intentionality towards 'integration' and learning the national language. In much of the dominant discourse circulating on the subject, the distinct process of 'language learning' is conflated with that of 'language testing'.

Recent changes to forms of citizenship legislation in Luxembourg and, on a broader scale, in EU member-states and many countries around the world, may be regarded as an attempt to control migration, especially from the global 'periphery' to the 'center'. At the same time, the decision to implement language requirements and testing – and in the case of Luxembourg to specifically require knowledge of Luxembourgish – is connected to events unfolding since the 1970s as well as those rooted in the longer historical trajectory. At present, there is a tension between responding to the 'democratic deficit' bound up with the steadily increasing number of resident foreigners – and therewith pressure to grant legal citizenship rights to a greater number of people – versus vested interests in protecting socio-economic privileges of certain members of the ethnic core. In the case of Luxembourg, attempts to promote the national language and/or to protect the ethnic core cannot easily be framed in overt ethnic terms if they are to coincide with the image of open and multicultural Luxembourg. As a result, Luxembourgish is portrayed as a resource or instrument which in theory is available to everyone; it remains to be seen how accessible language courses and materials become (language as inclusive) or whether the lion's share of financial resources will be invested in testing procedures (language as exclusive). Although the decision to implement language requirements for Luxembourgish *nationalité* resonates with similar policies in other EU member-states and Luxembourgish is legally recognized as the national language by the 1984 language law, the fact that it has not fully undergone the processes of standardization complicates the legitimation of this legislation. From this, it follows that questions that are often not raised in other EU member-states have been difficult to avoid in Luxembourg: for example, not only which language but which variety of Luxembourgish is considered legitimate or acceptable in testing? Due to the fact that Luxembourgish continues to be used principally as an oral means of communication, many Luxembourgish passport holders would fail a written test in Luxembourgish; however, the same may be said of people who speak other languages in neighboring states but issues of literacy tend to be erased in discourses about language testing and citizenship legislation. The projected 'solution' in Luxembourg is to test oral rather than written Luxembourgish; this

decision will only be finalized with the ratification of the pending *loi sur la nationalité luxembourgeoise*, most likely in late 2008.

In another respect, Luxembourg may be regarded as a kind of magnifying glass due to its small size and large resident foreigner population. Bauman (1998) rightly flags mobility as a key word of the late modern period, pointing out that power relations are bound up with the fact that some people are (potentially) mobile and others are not, but it is also the case that not all social actors feel comfortable with the rapid scale of change and augmented mobility (of certain people) that may be altering their social world. As a response, it is the recast discourse of integration that allows a national sense of place to be maintained (the Other has to 'fit in') while at the same time underpinning and facilitating the process of European unification ('completing Europe'). Unpacking the discourse of integration constitutes one step towards understanding the timing of changes in citizenship legislation in several EU member-states at the turn of the twenty-first century, together with the introduction of language requirements, as well as the ways in which the discourse of integration facilitates the legitimation of selective migration procedures and policies.

Although language policy scholarship has (in many cases) embraced discourse and, more generally, social constructivist approaches to identity and ideology, this chapter has shown that it also needs to address the following issues in order to reach a more thorough understanding of debates about citizenship legislation and language requirements:

1. Engaging with scholarship in cultural/social *geography*, especially work on senses of place (Massey 1995; Feld and Basso 1996); this seems crucial given the centrality of territory in relation to citizenship debates.
2. Questioning the concept of *citizenship* itself by asking how citizenship is understood in various parts of the world and at different historical moments (Isin and Wood 1999; Kymlicka 2001), why it is being redefined and/or legislated anew at critical moments, and in whose interests these decisions are being taken.
3. Grappling with theories of *globalization* (Bauman 1998; Coupland 2003), which is by no means a homogenizing process; although there are increased linkages there is also unevenness and more inequality than ever before.

With the aforementioned points in mind, a further question to explore is whether it is the role of EU member-state apparatuses or the concept of nationhood that is being challenged more abruptly in the present-day EU. And lastly, if we as researchers are to understand the ways in which such deep societal transformations are unfolding together with the ways in which dominant ideologies are being

reproduced or challenged in the EU and beyond, it is essential for us to engage in reflexive research practices.

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## Local actors in promoting multilingualism

Brigitta Busch

Although language policy formally remains a nation-state domain, in the process of glocalisation other actors gain in importance. Local authorities – closer to the daily life of the citizens than the central state authorities – are only beginning to realise their role in the field of language policy. Confronted with the multilingual realities of everyday urban life, language policies in cities cannot ignore the challenges of the heterophonia and heteroglossia of urban societies. This chapter focuses on a local institution that follows a policy of linguistic diversity. The analysis of the language regime negotiated between the institution (the main public library in Vienna) and the users draws on topological approaches developed within the ‘spatial turn’ in cultural studies and on recent explorations in linguistics concerned with the relation between space, place and linguistic practice.

### 1.1 Introduction

My point of departure is the currently widely-debated argument that the migration policy of the European Union has so far been concerned with border regimes and the limitation of migration into Europe rather than with questions of integration and social cohesion. At the same time, in the process of the de-centring of the nation-state, the supra-state level and, in parallel, also the sub-state level are gaining in importance. Paradoxically, parallel to this weakening of the nation-states, there is renewed emphasis on the national language as a symbol of national unity and as an indicator of successful assimilation. Local actors are still ill-prepared and are only beginning to realise the role that they can play in language policies. In urban public spaces, first visible manifestations of an awareness that the cities were becoming increasingly multilingual were typically signs with rules and prohibitions relating to daily life, such as the warning that “fare dodging in public transport will be prosecuted” (Hinnenkamp 1990; Busch and Wakounig 1995). In a next phase there was often a rather ‘naïve’ policy of celebrating multiculturalism and multilingualism, which sometimes resulted in an equally ethnicising language policy by emphasizing different ‘roots’ while the point of reference remained ‘white’ and monolingual. In some cities concepts of diversity policies which aim at



valorising cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource for creative and cultural industries began to appear in the 1990s. In terms of language policy it seems that this orientation results in a *laissez-faire* approach characteristic of the neo-liberal market economy rather than in conscious language planning. In the daily life of the city specific small-scale multilingual language regimes are developing in multilingual neighbourhoods with their institutions and services (Collins and Slem-brouck 2005). The analysis of such a language regime, a case study of the Vienna central library<sup>1</sup>, is the focus of this chapter. (The appendix to this chapter, which gives an overview of the national language regime for migration and citizenship in Austria, contextualises this local regime.)

## 1.2 Spatial approaches in linguistics and cultural studies

In linguistics the topological perspective has so far been applied mainly in research on multilingualism in urban contexts. Referring to Goffman's (1974) interaction analysis and Halliday's (1978) social semiotic approach to language, Scollon and Scollon (2003) draft an instrument based on multimodality and discourse analysis to examine the way in which language is located in physical space. Blommaert et al. (2005a, b) draw on a spatial analysis for the understanding of multilingual interactions, power relations and hierarchisations between languages. Based on research in a multilingual neighbourhood they examine how different localities (such as shops, health care institutions, schools, cafés etc.) develop specific language regimes. Jacquemet (2005) coins the term "transidiomatic practices" for the overlapping multilingual interaction regimes that crystallise in particular localities (see section 4 below), while Scollon and Scollon (2004) conceive those intersections of different interaction practices as a "nexus of practice", in which a multitude of discursive strands and semiotic reference systems create meaning.

These spatial approaches in linguistics are based on theories that underlie the actual concepts summarized under the heading 'spatial turn' in cultural studies. Georg Simmel (1992), who explored space as a social construct at the very beginning of the 20th century, highlights the potential of this approach to reveal power relations. Equally influential is Nishida's (1999) topological work from the 1920s. Bourdieu's (1982) theory of the linguistic market also follows a space-based concept to render hierarchisations between languages and codes visible. In

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1. The data were collected during the project 'Changing City Spaces' carried out in the context of the EU 5th framework programme and in a later project on 'Spaces of Linguistic Diversity' at Vienna University. I am grateful to my colleagues Martina Böse and Julia Sonnleitner who participated at different moments in the field work in the library.

anthropology too, spatial approaches increasingly play a role in the exploration of social phenomena. Augé (1995) distinguishes between traditional places with their history and globalised non-places (non-lieux), where specific de-territorialised social and communicative practices materialise (see 2.1 below). Massey (1993 and 1994) deals with social and territorial aspects of spaces. In the context of globalisation, spaces and places are being re-conceptualised to translocal connections. Appadurai (1998) speaks of ethnoscaples, of spaces where group identities are constructed, which are not territorially fixed and culturally non-homogeneous. Morley and Robins (1996) coin the term “spaces of identity” to explore belongings “beyond imagined community” (Robins 2004).

The analysis of the language regime of the Vienna library is based on a topological approach, on the ethnographic exploration of spaces, in which the library is conceived as a nexus of practice, as a symbolic space constructed through the social and linguistic practices of its users on which in turn it also has an impact. It is conceived as a node that gives access to different networks of communication, where other nexuses of practice intersect. The language order that can be observed in the library is the result of negotiations mediating between diverging interests. It consists of a series of different language regimes that develop in parallel, overlap and intersect. They can be divided schematically as follows.

On the level of communication between the institution and the users:

1. a globalised language regime that corresponds to the needs of diverse, anonymous, mobile users and a non-place dimension;
2. a language regime that corresponds to the place-dimension of the library, the top-down policy of a traditional educational institution situated in the context of national and local language policies and the current reorientation of this policy towards “edutainment”.

On the level of the users, transidiomatic practices in:

1. interaction with (globalised) media;
2. the communication between users in face-to-face interactions as well as in private mediated communication (mobile phone, text messages, chat rooms etc.).

## 2.1 A non-place and a globalised language regime

In a certain sense the library is a non-place as defined by the French anthropologist Marc Augé. He derives this definition from the conception of anthropological places as “formed by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how” (Augé 1995: 101). Non-places, in contrast, do not show these characteristics: they are “a world surrendered to

solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral”, while they “create solitary contractuality” (Augé 1995: 78, 94). Airports, train stations, highways and shopping malls are examples of such non-places. Non-places are spaces of the relative anonymity that goes with the temporary identity of a passenger, a passer-by, a customer. This anonymity can be felt as a kind of liberation, since a person entering the space of a non-place is relieved of his usual determinants (Augé 1995: 103). This establishes conditions of space in which “individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals but ‘moral entities’ or institutions”. Non-places are partly defined by the texts they offer us: their “instructions for use”, which may be prescriptive, prohibitive or informative (Augé 1995: 96). This abundance of mediated texts finds its counterpart in the relative absence of face-to-face communication between the users and representatives of the body administrating the use of the non-place. In this language regime, a ‘globalised’ language regime, the main addressees are mobile and anonymous passers-by. As far as communication of the type ‘user-to-user’ is concerned, there is no or hardly any interference and often a multitude of different codes can be heard.

Its very location within the topography of the city gives the main public library (*Hauptbücherei*) in Vienna the character of a non-place. It is not situated in a quiet park, but on the *Gürtel*, one of the main transport axes, where cars, trams and the underground train line dominate the scene. This highway divides outer and inner districts, the centre and the periphery, that is, the districts with a high proportion of migrant populations from those with a large number of offices and administrative buildings. The library is thus located in a zone of transition, a kind of no man’s land. For the then-director of the Vienna library, Alfred Pfoser (2004: 5), the new location into which the library moved in 2003 presents a challenge as “the wild dynamics of the metropolis prevail here, the red-light district and the drug scene”.

The architecture of the building refers to the concept of openness, to accessibility as well as approachability: an elevator leads directly from the underground station into the ship-like building which is also accessible via a huge outdoor staircase. The director emphasises that the library “is committed one hundred per cent to the philosophy of reducing inhibitions about entering the building” (Pfoser 2004: 7). The institution nevertheless distinguishes clearly between two user groups, the anonymous passers-by and the registered members. A membership card is available on presentation of an identity card only for persons who have their permanent residence in Austria. Only members may take media out of the building and obtain a password for internet access in the building. Without a membership card one may only use the material and the facilities available on the library premises. One can read newspapers, books and magazines from the large open-shelf stock, make photocopies, go to language courses, listen to CDs at the

audio work stations and watch films. Only approximately half of the more than 3000 visitors per day are registered users.

## 2.2 Visitors and users in transit

The main group that uses the on-site facilities rather than the book loan service are young people from the surrounding districts outside of the *Gürtel*, among them many of the so-called second and third generations of migrants. The library staff were surprised, as the director said in our interview, by the “dramatic numbers” of young people with a migration background that began to frequent the library almost immediately after its relocation to the new building. In a focus group discussion we organised (in German, Turkish, and Serbo-Croatian) and in subsequent individual talks with young people coming regularly to the library, the participants agreed that the library was an appropriate “place to meet people”, as it was a “free and unregulated space”, “an alternative to shopping malls where security guards are everywhere and where you cannot go unless you are buying something”, “a park for bad weather”.<sup>2</sup> Also, our interview partners indicated that the library was a more acceptable place for parents than a cafe or the shopping mall. It is the non-place dimension that makes the library attractive for this user group rather than a specific aspect of the media on offer.

Another user group that mainly makes use of the on-site facilities are asylum seekers. The library is appealing to them for several reasons: unlike applicants for citizenship or long-term residence permits, asylum seekers are not entitled to state subsidised German language courses until refugee status has been granted and this usually takes years. A range of ‘teach yourself’ German courses with different departure languages (e.g. Russian, English, French) is available for free and can be used at the multimedia workstations close to the entrance hall. Although internet access in the library is relatively regulated and limited to half an hour, it is possible to connect without having to pay. One of our interview partners remembered the time when he came as a refugee some years ago. He told us that in the beginning he read anything he could get hold of, no matter what it was and in any language he could understand. Reading allowed him to get away from the war images that haunted him as well as from the stress of coping with a new life in a new language

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2. (The original quotations from interview transcripts are given in this and the following notes.) Ein Ort, andere, neue Leute kennenzulernen; ein freier, weniger geregelter Platz; eine Alternative zum Einkaufszentrum, wo die Security überall ist und wo man ohne Konsumieren nicht sein kann; ein Schlechtwetterpark.

that was completely foreign to him. “The day had 48 hours”<sup>3</sup>, he said, and reading was among the very few possible pastimes.

As the library features in travel guides to Vienna as an object of architectural interest with the possibility of free internet access, there are also always a considerable number of tourists in the building. These three user groups have very different linguistic backgrounds and practices and visit the library to meet very diverse communication needs. What they have in common is that they are interested by the non-place dimension of the building, the possibility of using communication facilities without stepping out of anonymity and without being labelled.

### 2.3 A globalised linguistic landscape

The language regime that corresponds to the non-place dimension of the library is similar to language regimes in public buildings with a high transit frequency. Whenever possible, signs and colour schemes are employed to guide the user, such as no-smoking signs, no-mobile phone signs, signs for restrooms etc. The different media sections of the library, the children’s area, the language and literature shelves etc. all have their specific colour and are labelled with internationalised denominations such as ‘College 6: Know How’, ‘College 2: Lokal – Regional – Global’ or ‘College 4: Kirango Kinderplanet’ (Kirango children’s planet). The subtitles chosen refer to the global rather than to the local. Periodic loud-speaker announcements reminding the visitors that mobile phones must be switched off, that registering is possible only in the main entrance hall or announcing that the library will be closed soon are mostly pre-taped. They resemble in voice and intonation announcements in airport lounges or similar surroundings, and are always made in German and in English.

This aspect of the library’s language policy creates the basis for a linguistic landscape that marks the building as a non-place. Gorter (2006: 2), referring to Landry and Bourhis (1997), introduces the term “linguistic landscape” to designate visible language in written form in the public space. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) understand linguistic landscape, the array of official signs and inscriptions as well as the private and the bottom-up manifestations of written language, as constitutive in the symbolic construction of the public space determined by rational considerations, presentations of self and power relations. The signs, the ‘neutralised’ language based on internationalisms or on fantasy words and the use of English as a lingua franca do not address any group in particular, but aim to indicate that the library wants to be seen as a cosmopolitan institution.

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3. Der Tag hat 48 Stunden gehabt.

The languages of the two biggest migrant groups in Vienna – Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish – are represented on the library website and on various leaflets in the entrance hall with instructions and guidelines. Recently Russian was added, mainly to cater for asylum seekers from the Commonwealth of Independent States. Nevertheless, these languages remain less visible when entering the library and it is necessary to take a closer look to discover that they figure in the institution's language regime.

### 3.1 The staircase to enlightenment: educational mission and language planning for cultural diversity

Although the non-place dimension with its semiotic and linguistic regime is omnipresent throughout the building, the traditional educational mission still plays an important role in the self-concept of the institution. The distinction between non-place and place should not be seen as a binary opposition but rather as a continuum. The library website indicates a strong feeling of continuity with the roots of the library movement in the nineteenth and twentieth century. This historical reference anchors the library as a place in the anthropological sense. The socialist movement which, in the 1920s/1930s, had a dense network of 60 libraries in Vienna and a series of adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) propagated the idea that education would contribute to a new social order. With the decline of working class movements and changes in the book market and the use of mass media, the management had to make efforts to address a new public. Former director Pfoser defined “the civilisation of people, the transmission of culture and education amidst the bustle of modern life” as the “original mission” of the institution. For him, the building architecturally embodies not only openness but also “the promise that the path upwards leads via education and enlightenment” (Pfoser 2004: 6f).

To address new user groups, the management employs traditional means, such as readings with authors, film presentations, workshops on cultural topics and programmes for children, and for these events no entrance fees are charged. What is specific about the programme is that there is a strong emphasis on multilingualism. The readings often feature bilingual authors or they address a multilingual public by presenting works in the original language and in translation. Especially for the programmes for children and young people (for example, software presentations or the use of the internet for job offers) care is taken to promote activities in different languages. A milestone in the series of events in the new library premises was the exhibition ‘*gastarbajteri*’ on the history of the so-called guest worker migration in Austria, which was organised by a platform of NGOs which succeeded in involving larger groups of second and third generation youth.

### 3.2 The language market

In the 1980s the Vienna libraries started to build up a stock of books in Turkish and in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. It is only in these languages and in English that the full library range (fiction and non-fiction books) is available. In 2003, when the library moved into the new premises, there were about ten languages, but today one can find media in about thirty languages. The books, audio books and CDs etc. in languages other than German are regrouped in the so-called foreign language section which describes its collection on the website in the following way:

The foreign language library encompasses the world languages English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Portuguese in stocks above 500 items as well as the languages of Austrian minorities and migrants such as Slovene, Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian, Turkish, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Albanian, Rumanian and Hungarian. In addition there are smaller foreign language stocks in Swedish, Finnish, Dutch, Norwegian, Chinese, Arabic, Yiddish, Catalan, Ladin, Latin, classical Greek, Romany and Esperanto. Also: foreign language videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs and audio books!<sup>4</sup>

The spectrum of languages as well as the classification into world languages and languages of Austrian minorities and migrants seems accidental. To some extent the portfolio is a result of the impact of the global language market as by far the largest number of media in languages other than German is in English. Whereas literary works in English are kept in the language section, non-fiction books in English are distributed throughout the library thematically standing alongside the books in German. The tacit assumption that readers who borrow books in the field of, for example, social sciences or economics understand English is one reason for this policy. The other is that the library is eager to keep its stock 'cutting edge', and media in English dominate the international publishing market. Although in the number of titles published annually the German book market still ranks in third place after Chinese and English, in absolute numbers the output in English is almost three times as high (Thussu 2000: 141).

The foreign language section is well equipped with simplified versions of fiction books for learners and bilingual editions in many of the languages that form the portfolio. The language learning section is impressive, hosting 7000 media,

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4. Die Fremdsprachenbibliothek umfasst die Weltsprachen Englisch, Französisch, Spanisch, Italienisch, Russisch und Portugiesisch in Beständen ab 500 Büchern sowie die Sprachen österreichischer Minderheiten und MigrantInnen wie Türkisch, Slowenisch, Albanisch, Serbisch/Kroatisch/Bosnisch, Polnisch, Tschechisch, Slowakisch und Ungarisch. Ergänzend dazu gibt es eine kleinere Fremdsprachenbibliothek in Altgriechisch, Arabisch, Bulgarisch, Chinesisch, Esperanto, Farsi (Persisch), Finnisch, Hebräisch, Jiddisch, Katalanisch, Ladinisch, Lateinisch, Niederländisch, Norwegisch, Romanes, Rumänisch und Schwedisch.

among them 1,100 language courses with manuals, cassettes, CDs and approximately 900 CD-ROM courses. While over 100 languages figure as target languages, German language courses for different age groups and levels are a specific focus. Next to the shelves is a large space with audio, audiovisual and computer work stations – one of the most populated zones in the building. The foreign language section is intended to cater for learners – students as well as middle class users with tourism interests and also for people living in the city who use languages other than German in their daily lives. According to the last census in 2001, this is the case for 24.7 per cent of the Viennese (Waldrauch and Sohler 2004: 153).

The decision to add materials in a particular language to the portfolio is taken mainly on the basis of demands expressed by readers. The policy is to introduce a new language only if a sufficient number of materials can be bought and if there is someone to look after the stock who selects, purchases and classifies new materials. If there are not enough media in the stock and if the stock is not regularly updated, the demand also stagnates. The figure of 500 items is estimated as the critical mass necessary to start with a new language. Although the internationalisation of the book market in terms of ownership and licenses for translations has already gone very far, it still seems to be very language-bound as far as retail is concerned. For Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Russian, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese there are specialised book shops in Vienna through which books can be ordered. For other languages it is more complicated and the librarians have to improvise. For Arabic the library cooperates with a book seller who studied Arabic and who has good contacts in Egypt and in Lebanon, the only two Arabic-speaking countries from which it is fairly simple to import books, but it sometimes takes more than half a year before an order reaches Vienna. The Chinese stock was built up mainly through donations, and a long-standing member of the library, a sinologist, looks after it and does the transcriptions for the catalogue. For others, the library relies on the commitment of employees:

We get [books in] some other languages from all sorts of sources, which are often quite bizarre. We have Romanian in the collection: a colleague has a girl friend who works at the Austrian embassy in Romania, she bought the books there and sent them via diplomatic luggage and we picked them up at the Westbahnhof. And the bill came via the embassy as the book trade over there is completely dilapidated so that you cannot order anything from outside the country, and the publishing industry is so under-developed. It's much the same in Bulgaria, acquiring books there is sometimes a very bizarre business. We've also had Albanian since last year. A colleague who works in a branch library is married to an



Albanian, and they go every year to the book fair in Pristina and buy books there for the central library.<sup>5</sup>

Hierarchies concerning different languages on the global language market are reflected in the library's difficulties in acquiring books in other languages than the few that figure as international.

### 3.3 The library's language policy: bottom-up? top-down? laissez-faire?

Employees are responsible for the bigger languages and it is in fact they who really shape the language policy, which can range from a policy determined in a negotiation process with the users to a top-down approach with an explicit educational character. These two extremes were represented in our interviews by the librarian in charge of the Slavic section on the one hand and by the librarian for Turkish on the other. The librarian from the Slavic language section explains that, after cookery books, Russian books are the category with the highest lending rate in the whole library. The stock includes Russian classics, contemporary literature and, because of the lively demand, a substantial number of detective stories – novels that are well known to Russian TV viewers because of TV series. Whereas these novels are sought after mostly by “ladies living in Vienna, the typical Russian ladies, who like coming and love crime stories and can't get enough of them”<sup>6</sup>, it is mainly students who borrow from the collection of audio books which includes special editions like a 17-hour recording of Dostoevsky's work.

The most important user group of Russian books for her are “the many asylum seekers who make ample use of the facility”<sup>7</sup>. The librarian, who occasionally works as a translator for Russian in a trauma relief service for refugees, says that the library has a cooperation agreement with the refugee centre in Trainskirchen, where

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5. Und manche andere Sprachen beziehen wir über verschiedenste Quellen, die manchmal sogar sehr abenteuerlich sind. Wir haben Rumänisch im Bestand, das hat ein Kollege, der eine Freundin hat auf der österreichischen Botschaft in Rumänien, die hat die Bücher dort eingekauft mit dem Diplomatengepäck und zum Westbahnhof gebracht, wir haben sie dann dort abgeholt und die Rechnung wurde dann von der Botschaft gestellt, weil Buchhandel in Rumänien dermaßen kaputt ist, dass man eigentlich nichts von außerhalb Rumäniens beziehen kann, auch das Verlagswesen dermaßen schlecht entwickelt. In Bulgarien ist es ähnlich, also da läuft die Besorgung der Bücher manchmal auf sehr abenteuerlichem Weg. Auch Albanisch haben wir seit vorigem Jahr, das besorgt eine Kollegin aus einer Zweigstelle, die mit einem Albaner verheiratet ist, die fahren dann zur Buchmesse nach Pristina und besorgen Bücher für die Hauptbücherei.

6. Damen, die halt in Wien wohnen, die typischen Russinnen, die kommen gern und lieben dann die Krimis und können dann nicht genug haben.

7. Die sind sehr sehr viel Asylanten, die das sehr gut nutzen.

an NGO has built up a small library that receives books from the Vienna library. Equally important for the asylum seekers and refugees who come to the library are the 'teach-yourself' courses for German with Russian as source language. The 30 copies available are practically all out again as soon as they have come in.

Among the asylum seekers are, I think, about 90 per cent Chechens; many Armenians and Georgians too, only very few Russians. But Chechenian, Chechenian [books] are impossible to get hold of. There is a problem with the language too, and there is no publishing industry. But for these people it is not easy to read in Russian.<sup>8</sup>

The same librarian is also responsible for the other Slavic languages. As people with a migration background referring to the space of former Yugoslavia, especially from Serbia, are important in terms of numbers, the media stock comprises a large variety of fiction and non-fiction books by authors from the region as well as translations of important works from other languages, various magazines, films and video cassettes. Concerning the languages of the south-eastern European space, her language policy orientation is equally based on closely observing the needs and wishes expressed by visitors. This pragmatic approach is certainly due to the librarian's own background as an NGO activist, but it is also a possibility to escape the dominant language ideology and possible pressure exerted by the successor states of former Yugoslavia to treat Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian as three totally different languages.

The librarian responsible for the Turkish stock follows another approach. She said in the interview that it was important for her that the materials in the library contribute to sustaining Turkish identity. Therefore she only buys books directly in Turkey and not in Germany where a substantial Turkish language media industry has developed around the press house *Hürriyet*, where educational publishing houses have specialised in books and materials for children, and where a whole scene of bilingual writers has developed. She comments:

This is a guest worker culture that has emerged there, they write about the factory, about poverty, about the difficulties they have experienced. This is not Turkish, not Turkish culture like the one I grew up in, that happens in Turkey. (...) They have a culture in between.<sup>9</sup>

8. Bei den Asylanten ist derzeit glaub ich 90 Prozent Tschetschenen. [...] Sehr viele Armenier und Georgier, kaum Russen aber ich hab eh schon gesagt Tschetschenisch, aber Tschetschenisch ist irgendwie nichts aufzutreiben. Ist ja auch mit der Sprache schwierig, es gibt ja nicht einmal ein Verlagswesen. Weil es für die gerade schwierig ist, russisch zu lesen.

9. Das ist eine Gastarbeiterkultur, die dort entstanden ist, die schreiben, was die in Fabrik, welche Armut, welche Schwierigkeiten, die erlebt haben. Das ist nicht türkisch, nicht türkische Kultur, so wie ich aufgewachsen bin, was von in der Türkei geschehen ist. (...) Die haben eine Zwischenkultur.

She regrets that many of “the Turkish children who were born here” do not speak Turkish in public: “As Turks they are looked down upon by the general public and in the library they don’t want to admit that they are Turks and try to speak German. When I say something in Turkish to them, they are afraid.”<sup>10</sup>

The library staff are aware that not all children who have Turkish as their family language also attend Turkish classes in school. The library is often the place where they first encounter the written form of their language in print. Therefore playgroup activities and readings in Turkish are organized on a weekly basis. Also in this context the librarian consciously follows an educational mission:

I corrected hundreds of children – one letter, it worked. They learnt it the wrong way in the family. One letter only [illustrates the sound] ‘h-h-h’ they pronounce, we don’t have a ‘ch’, but a ‘k’. And I repeat this to them and they learn and it sticks.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from the events she organises in the library she tells us that she is not very close to the Turkish community in Vienna: “I don’t speak their language. I speak a high language from Istanbul. (...) And as soon as I open my mouth, it is/ there is a distance with these people.”<sup>12</sup> She explains that in her perception most of those who came as so-called ‘guest workers’ in the 1970s and 1980s came from rural areas and do not read. Their children learn German in school and cannot read Turkish. However, she also wants to cater for them and buys CDs and DVDs. The well-assorted stock of music from Turkey and beyond also encompasses music in other Turkic languages as well as in the languages of the minorities in Turkey.

In the context of the library, the librarian’s purist attitude towards the Turkish language leads to a conservative acquisition policy that excludes ‘impure’ linguistic practices reflected not only in youth talk and popular music but also in contemporary literary works.

10. Gibt’s türkische Kinder, da sind die geboren. (...) Von der Umgebung werden die nur als Türke irgendwie klein gesehen und manche wollen nicht sagen in Bücherein, dass sie Türken sind. Die bemühen sich, Deutsch zu sprechen nur, wenn ich denen türkisch was sage, hm so haben die Angst.

11. Ich habe schon Hunderte Kinder – ein Buchstabe korrigiert hat, hats gewirkt. Was die falsch gelernt haben in der Familie. Eine Buchstabe genug [macht fauchende Geräusche] h-h-h sprechen die, bei uns gibt’s nicht ch, sondern k. Und das wiederhole ich und sie lernen, das bleibt.

12. Ich spreche die Sprache nicht von denen. Ich spreche aus Istanbul eine Hochsprache. (Und in der Türkei nur in dieser Stadt hat man Hochsprache gesprochen so wie ich spreche.) Und es ist kaum mache ich meinen Mund auf, es ist/ die sind/ Distanz habe ich mit diese Menschen.

### 3.4 Edutainment, children and youth

In the children's media centre as well as in the section named '*Scene*', the shelves for popular music and film, and the multimedia work stations are a central element. At almost every computer screen there is more than one child, many watch films or play computer games together. With the different language options on the DVDs it is easy to keep up with a multilingual film stock. From the selection of audio material and of learner software available it is possible to conclude that children with a linguistic background other than German are definitely a target audience and that early foreign language learning is a focus. The director wanted the library to be seen as "a place of concretely experienced 'edutainment' (...) a machine for knowledge and leisure time activity that is a delight to use and experience" (Pfoser 2004: 8). The well-assorted book section with books in German, English, French, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Turkish and Italian, as well as the spacious rummage tables with comics in all of these languages and more, underlines the edutainment concept. Especially attractive for young visitors are the numerous music, auto, sports, computer, animal, girls' and other magazines, the fanzines and photo stories – print products that, traditionally, did not fill the library shelves and were not seen as suitable material. The director hoped "that we can drag them in this way into the civilizing maelstrom of the library. Which actually also happens, I would say, because sooner or later a large number of them also uses the library for reading." (interview with Alfred Pfoser 2004)

Since the publication of the first results of the PISA study in Austria, the Programme for International Student Assessment of the OECD, there has been an ongoing public debate on literacy and on language skills of children with a migration background. In the heated debate – often fuelled by populist politicians with simplifying arguments – the reasoning is often heard that the family language can hinder the learning of German. As a response to this debate the library has intensified its cooperation with schools and education institutions as it aims at being a centre for the promotion of reading literacy. Many school classes with a high percentage of migrants come for guided tours, and some of the visitors come back on their own and stay as users, as readers. The fact that children find their own languages represented and accessible materials in their languages facilitates appropriation.

### 3.5 Imagining the audience: the user as a discursive construct

In our interviews the library staff emphasised the importance attached to feedback from the users. The website also hosts a forum for communication with users and for suggestions concerning the acquisition of new media. Regular statistics on the

number of visitors and members and the book loans by category are produced, but no in-depth studies about the library audience have been done so far. In fact the audience is – as in other media enterprises – the ‘big unknown’, not only in terms of its social structure but also concerning the kinds of media they borrow. In particular, very little is known about on-site use of the library for about half of all visitors. The idea of a multi-layered, diversified public was expressed by most of the interview partners among the librarians. They also expressed the feeling that they are experiencing a transformation from a more homogeneous public to a heterogeneous audience with (sometimes conflicting) interests.

The idea of main target groups within the audience relies in fact mainly on prefabricated categories, on discursive constructs that go hand in hand with interests and modes of appropriation ascribed to these groups. And it is by imagining the audience that the relationship with the audience is structured and concepts for language policies are defined (Busch 2006). The orientation towards an ‘educational mission’ as represented, for example, by the librarian of the Turkish language section results in an emphasis on ‘pure’ language, on understanding reading to a large extent as a means for language maintenance. Understanding reading more as an activity for enjoyment or a leisure time activity favours a conception of the user as a consumer and the library as a service provider. On the level of language policy this translates into a rather unregulated growth of the language portfolio, into a media purchasing policy that is driven more by users’ demands.

#### **4. Transidiomatic practices and modes of appropriation**

Taking the perspective of the users reveals the fact that social and linguistic practices that have developed in the building transcend the traditional function of a library. It is not only the non-place dimension of the location that represents a challenge for the staff but also the shift in media reception from the primacy of the printed word towards an increasing importance of media foregrounding other modes of communication. The book is a form of communication that allows reception independent of location and technical apparatus (the book can be read anywhere) and its reception is also not limited to a particular moment in time (it can be read at any time). Contrary to other print media, books were also traditionally made ‘to last’ and to transmit ideas and (canonical) knowledge to posterity. Historically the municipal libraries functioned mainly as lending libraries and thus had hardly any facilities that invited readers to stay on the library premises for any length of time. The professional image of the librarian was close to that of an educator; she/he should be able to suggest good books and enlarge the stock in an appropriate manner. Audio and audiovisual media, such as CDs, DVDs, cassettes

etc. share with the book the property of being storage media: that is, they can be consulted anywhere and at any time, the only limitation being that technical equipment is needed. This is even more so with internet resources and communication possibilities that can only be made use of at the point where they are 'wired'. The decision to open the library shelves for multimodal media in the 1970s meant that work stations had to be arranged and that the traditional lending library gradually became a place to spend time in. The means of appropriation of multimodal media have contributed to transforming the private space (Morley 2000) and they have also contributed to transforming the profile of the library.

The architecture of the new Vienna library includes niches with spacious work tables throughout the building. There are about 150 computer work stations with internet access and about 40 audio and video places. In the afternoons and during holiday time these places are usually almost all occupied. Looking closer at the communicative and linguistic practices of users that stay in the building reveals that many of the users are engaged in what Jacquemet (2005: 265) defined as transidiomatic practices:

Transidiomatic practices are the result of the co-presence of multilingual talk (exercised by de/reterritorialized speakers) and electronic media, in contexts heavily structured by social indexicalities and semiotic codes. Anyone present in transnational environments, whose talk is mediated by deterritorialized technologies, and who interacts with both present and distant people, will find herself producing transidiomatic practices.

On the days that we spent at the library on our fieldwork, we repeatedly observed a certain number of types of scenes. In several of the niches with computers, there were always pairs or small groups of 15- to 18-year-olds doing their homework. Two girls who agreed to give an interview explained that they attended a commercial school and were in their last year. They come to learn in the library especially before tests and exams as they can learn together, consult other colleagues and books, and it was much quieter than at home with younger brothers and sisters around. While working on their maths, when talking to one another, they switched between German and Turkish. Although it was forbidden, they both had their mobile phones switched on and answered text messages or even whispered responses to a telephone call. These messages and calls were also in German or Turkish or a mix. At the same time the girl who sat at the computer surfed the websites of different radio stations for the top ten in the pop charts – partly in German, partly in English. After finishing their maths they gathered around the screen and looked for interesting events on Viennese websites. A theatre play announced at the Intercult theatre triggered a longer phase of 'googling' Turkey-based websites. Within the short period of time of doing their maths homework they had been

engaged in a range of interpersonal and mass media communication acts in different local and translocal networks. They had originally entered the library as a non-place, a location where they could “hang around and meet people”. Gradually they have transformed their ways of being in the building and have developed their modes of appropriation and the linguistic practices linked with them. For them it has now become a place where they can meet friends, spend time and fulfil communication needs.

Another focal point is the large internet gallery with its 30 computers. A student who works in the gallery estimated that about 40 per cent of the users were Austrians with a Turkish background. Other users were refugees and migrants from Chechnya and from Iran who were waiting for a visa for the US or another country, Africans, and elderly people who do not have internet at home. The student explains: “For some it is the centre of their life, they spend up to eight hours here. They skip school to be in the library. A schoolboy once forged a medical certificate and ran around with crutches to be able to spend the day in the library.” He speaks German and English with the internet users. “Some don’t speak German and only broken English.”<sup>13</sup> The internet facilities can be used for half an hour at a time, and many people come to use email and keep in touch with their friends and family. Consulting websites with news from different countries in different languages is another frequent activity. The regular visitors also often have a particular site they are connected to. One of our interview partners, who came from Bosnia during the war and has recently been naturalised as an Austrian citizen, comes at least once a week. He can look into his mail account at his workplace but for longer mails and especially for visiting his favourite website he comes to the library in his leisure time. This website is one of several initiated by former inhabitants of particular towns or villages in Bosnia, creating a platform for migrants scattered around the whole world. The web master of this particular site has been living in a Scandinavian country for many years; other such sites are hosted in the US or in other European countries. These sites create a virtual space; they bring together people with a common reference to a physical location as it existed before the outbreak of the war in 1991.

In its function as a node where different media practices intersect, where access to web resources is possible, the library has a clear translocal dimension, which is in turn linked with access to the linguistic resources present on the web and to the possibility of (inter-)actively participating in media creation.

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13. Für einige ist es eine Art Lebensmittelpunkt. Einige sind bis zu acht Stunden am Tag da und schwänzen sogar die Schule, um in der Stadtbücherei zu sein. Ein Schüler hat sogar ein ärztliches Attest gefälscht und ist mit Krücken herumgelaufen, um den ganzen Tag in der Stadtbücherei zu sein. [...] Manche können kein Deutsch und nur gebrochenes Englisch.

## 5. Conflict mediation and the negotiation of language regimes

After having moved to the new building the library staff was at first overwhelmed by the unexpected interest from young people with a migration background. The original target audience for the stock in the languages of migrants had mainly been the intellectual elite among migrants and the learners of these languages. The debate on whether the policy of having an open house should not be replaced by a policy of limiting access to registered members comes up periodically among users (as is visible in postings on the website). For the library staff the decision has been taken that this open house policy, although it can also be a burden, is a guiding principle. Efforts were made to enlarge the media stock and to propose specific courses and events to cater for the new user groups. Among the librarians people with a migration background are still under-represented, but significantly the security guard is Turkish-speaking.

What might look at first sight like a conflict between different user groups with diverging interests is possibly more a transformation of modes of appropriation, of changing social and linguistic practices in connection with the use of a library that has become a multimedia facility. The library, like other institutions, has beside its written rules also its unwritten rules, its “covert imperatives and tacit calls for order” (Bourdieu 1997: 162), that seem inherent to the building as social power relations ‘inscribed’ into the space. Patterns of thought and social practices are linked to these power relations as well as aspects of social and linguistic capital which, in their ‘subtlest form’, often remain unnoticed. Traditionally knowledge was a privilege and access to knowledge reserved for distinct social classes, and in the ‘halls of wisdom’ speaking loudly, laughing, eating and drinking and so forth were taboo. One of the struggles that the historic library movement was committed to was that for the access to knowledge embodied by the image of a staircase – a path to climb upwards. But the struggle for broader access was not linked to changes in the rules. The workers’ movement libraries as well as the classrooms in the *Volkshochschulen* adopted the rules of the ‘bourgeois’ institutions. In terms of language policy this meant a regime based on the (national) standard language, an ‘elaborated’ code, the language of education or rather the language of the educated. Other languages came in as foreign languages that opened access to education and to cosmopolitanism – represented, among others, by Esperanto. The language(s) of the street had to be left outside.

Today the new user groups enter the building as a non-place; they are not primarily interested in the fact that the space is a library, but more in the fact that it is a place to be and which happens to have an (interesting) range of media on offer. The on-site use of infrastructures has become as important as the book lending. Symbolically and literally speaking the staircase has become a meeting place



where young people sit and chat. With the new user groups other linguistic practices have made their way into the institution. The heteroglossia of the street and the transidiomatic practices that derive from the simultaneity of personal and mediated (translocal) communication meet the top-down educational policies and contribute to a new language regime which is subject to constant contestations and negotiations.

Following Massey (1994), the specific characteristic of a place is not determined by its delineation from other places or its specific history, but by the social relations and connections between people, and between them and institutions locally as well as beyond the local. This applies equally to language regimes, in particular spaces and places. All the intersecting strands of communication and exchange practices, the conflicts that arise from differences in modes of appropriation and struggle for the symbolic ownership of the place, define the place as a site in the struggle for meaning.

## 6. Conclusions

From the perspective of the library the then-director summarised: “A middle class institution, confronted with the diversity of the metropolis, attempts to react with the diversity of its assets” (Pfoser 2004: 6). In terms of language policy the present compromise tolerates the heteroglossic practices and begins to react not only by enlarging the language portfolio but also by diversifying the media range available to popular genres with their ‘impure’ language practices. The public library network, and in particular the new central library in Vienna, has been successful in attracting large numbers of young people with a migration background and in negotiating a language policy that can foster social cohesion:

1. The staff engages in an open space policy, there is practically no access barrier (no membership card control at the entrance), and different groups can appropriate the space and make use of the resources in their own way with no pressure to conform to a particular pattern of behaviour, as long as the basic rules are observed. The public that frequents the space reflects the heteroglossic reality of the city.
2. Linguistic diversity is valued, no difference is made between foreign language learning and migrant languages; that is, linguistic hierarchies are mitigated, and ethnicising language policies are avoided. A tribute to the institution’s embeddedness into the larger language market is the uncontested position of English as a lingua franca in certain areas.
3. Language policy is seen as a negotiation process between the users and the staff of the library. The aim is to see all visitors as clients, who participate in

making suggestions for the acquisition of new materials (no matter in which language, media or genre) and to mediate between the interests of different user groups.

The example of the Vienna library shows that initiatives which provide open access to spaces in which communication between linguistically and culturally diverse groups can take place publicly can contribute substantially towards inclusive language policies. The example discussed here is not unique. Similar developments can be observed in other locations: for example, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the central city library in Stockholm, and the members of the association of so-called intercultural libraries in Switzerland. We expect to find the heteroglossia of urban life represented in places like youth centres or specific clubs, but less so in places like libraries, traditionally dedicated to the preservation and spreading of a 'pure' standard language. What makes such places like the library particularly interesting is that they provide space in which traditional and new user groups interact, and that they supply a platform for the negotiation of a language regime that respects the needs of people with very diverse social and linguistic backgrounds. By multiplying the possibilities where such encounters and negotiations can take place, cities can engage in a real language policy from below which counteracts restrictive, monolingually oriented national language policy and hierarchisations due to the global language market.

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## Appendix 7.1

### *Legislation on language, migration and citizenship in Austria*

Around the turn of the millennium, particularly after the national elections in 2000 which brought a centre-right wing coalition to power, the debate on immigration in Austria gained momentum. A new element in this debate was the role attributed to the acquisition of the German language, seen as an indicator of the 'willingness to integrate' into Austrian society. This debate led to a first revision of the so-called Aliens Act (*Fremdengesetz*) in 2002. Since then the question of language and migration has been on the political agenda in Austria, resulting in further amendments to the legislation concerning residence permits and the acquisition of citizenship as well as new regulations concerning school enrolment. The debate on school language policy was fuelled by the publication of the results of the international PISA study (the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment) and the subsequent politically motivated interpretation that attributed the responsibility for the meagre results in this test, among other things, to the 'insufficient knowledge of German' among children with a migration background. The restrictive national policy has been criticized mainly for its exclusive focus on the German language and for its coercive character.

#### **The 'Integration Agreement'<sup>14</sup>: knowledge of German as a precondition for long-term residence permits**

Since the amendments to the migration legislation in 2002 and 2005, under the terms of the so-called Integration Agreement individuals applying for a long-term residence permit in Austria have had to enrol on a 'German integration course' within a year of their arrival in the country. This course encompasses 300 hours of German lessons. For applicants who cannot read and write, or who have been socialised in an environment with a different writing system, an additional literacy course comprising 75 units is provided. At the end of the German course a standardised test certifying that the learner has reached the level A2 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework has to be passed. This test must be successfully completed within a period of five years. If an applicant cannot meet these obligations, sanctions come into force which can ultimately lead to a refusal of the residence permit. 50 per cent of the costs of the German language course (up to a total limit of €375) are refunded by the federal authorities if the learner successfully completes the course within two years. The course must also be taken by

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14. Integrationsvereinbarung 2002, FrG-Novelle 2002, §§50a-50d and Verordnung 2005, BGBl. II 2005/449.

spouses and other family members of Austrian citizens, although exemptions are granted for children under nine years of age as well as for medical reasons.

Critics of this legislation acknowledge the importance of promoting the acquisition of German language skills but contest the circumstances in which this is to be done. Although the number of course hours was increased in the 2005 amendment from 100 to 300, language specialists still consider it insufficient for attaining level A2. With the suggested 300 course hours Austria is still below other European countries like Sweden or the Netherlands, which also offer language courses free of charge. Furthermore, it is argued that coercion and the threat of sanctions are not factors likely to create a positive learning atmosphere. In the design of the German language courses, models of good practice for tailor-made language courses, which met the needs of specific groups and which existed before the laws were passed, were not taken sufficiently into consideration.

### **Amendment to the laws on citizenship: testing German language skills and knowledge about Austria**

Traditionally Austria's citizenship policy has been based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, and with the required minimum of ten years of permanent residence in the country as a starting point for the naturalisation process, Austria is one of the most restrictive countries in Europe. The 2006 amendment to the citizenship laws introduced the obligation to prove a sufficient knowledge of German and to complete a written multiple choice test on Austrian history and culture.<sup>15</sup> The level of knowledge relevant to the test corresponds to the history and social science curriculum for the 8th school year in Austria. Formally citizenship is granted by the different *Länder* (federal states) and not by the national authorities, and there are also considerable differences between practices in the different *Länder*.

### **Language testing for pre-school children**

In the school year 2005–6 the Austrian Ministry of Education launched the 'early language development' programme (*Frühe Sprachförderung*). Children must now be enrolled in a particular school one year before school entry, and on this occasion the school authorities assess the capacity of the children to express themselves in the German language. If a child's level of proficiency in German is considered insufficient, parents are urged to send the child to kindergarten where special language support amounting to a total of 120 hours is offered. Although early language learning is, in principle, a meaningful approach, in practice this measure is problematic in some respects: in some regions places in kindergarten are difficult to obtain and expensive – 120 isolated hours of language learning do not have a sufficiently sustainable impact – and the kindergarten staff are often not sufficient-

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15. Staatsbürgerschaftsprüfungs-Verordnung, BGBl. II 2006/138.

ly prepared for this kind of work. Aiming exclusively at improving children's knowledge of German, the measure ignores the importance of the home language(s) and approaches that are designed to develop the language repertoire as a whole. However, the Austrian school system has been providing the possibility of additional mother-tongue teaching in a range of different languages for almost two decades.

### **Challenging the national, monolingually oriented policy**

On a sub-state level a number of municipalities as well as NGOs have been proposing German courses tailor-made to the needs of specific groups for several years. For example, the city of Vienna has developed a special set of courses, such as German courses for owners of small business enterprises (shops, takeaways, internet and telephone shops etc.), or the scheme for mothers of schoolchildren called '*Mama lernt Deutsch*' (Mummy Learns German). These courses usually take place during school time in the schools the children attend, child care for younger children is provided, and the fee amounts to a symbolic contribution of €1 per person and class. These courses have so far attracted a high number of participants.

In 2003 the *Netzwerk SprachenRechte* (Language Rights Network) was founded by specialists from different disciplines (including linguistics, law, political science and sociology) and by staff in NGOs and various other institutions to ensure a constant exchange of information and to intervene in the public debate with grounded arguments that can counterbalance populist discourses (see [www.sprachenrechte.at](http://www.sprachenrechte.at)). The interventions made by this platform aim at valorising linguistic diversity as a resource for the successful development of a functioning language repertoire that encompasses German as well as other languages.

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## CHAPTER 8

# Language tests and social policy

## A commentary

Tim McNamara

This chapter provides a commentary on the other contributions in the volume by relating them to current dilemmas facing language testers working in policy areas involving immigration and citizenship. It is argued that the overt construct of language tests for citizenship (proficiency in the dominant national language, proposed on the grounds of the welfare of newcomers) is a mask for the implicit construct, which is the imposition of a particular ideology of belonging proposed as being in the interests of the majority culture. The technical qualities of the tests further obscure the contestable policy function of their use and render opposition more difficult. This situation poses dilemmas for the theory and practice of language testing.

The growing use of language tests to control access to the right to reside in and ultimately to become a citizen of a new country presents fundamental challenges for language testing researchers. These challenges are both practical (how should we act?) and theoretical (how can we understand what is being asked of us?). In this chapter, I will attempt to set out the nature of the challenge, and draw on the other chapters' contributions in this volume to illustrate the dilemmas facing language testers invited to develop language tests for citizenship.

Language assessment draws on theories of validity developed in the broader field of measurement to establish fundamental conceptual bases for language testing. Central to such theories is the notion that assessment involves using samples of behaviour to draw inferences about individuals being assessed. The design of an assessment is guided by the principle of establishing a clear relationship between what we would like to be able to claim about an individual and the procedures used to gather evidence in support of the claim. Typically, reflecting the communicative tradition of language teaching and testing, the claims about language proficiency are couched in practical, functionalist terms. Thus, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR: Council of Europe 2001)



represents an ordered set of claims, grouped into six levels (from lowest to highest: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) according to the complexity of the skills being claimed (see the Appendix to Chapter 2 in this volume). It is claimed about a speaker who is said to be at level A2 for example that he/she

[c]an understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

while a speaker at B1

[c]an understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

and a speaker at B2

[c]an understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options (Council of Europe 2001: 24).

Such a statement of claims represents the test *construct*, the assumed view of language proficiency which is assessed in the test and which is the target of measurement in any individual case. It is not taken for granted that an assessment procedure will yield meaningful claims about the individuals being assessed. Validity theory insists that these claims be subject to interrogation – what evidence is there to support the truth or relevance of the claim in relation to any particular individual being assessed? Recent developments in validity theory have stressed the need to anticipate threats to the meaningfulness of claims (cf Mislevy *et al.* 2003, Kane 2001 in general measurement; Bachman 2005 in language testing). For example, it has long been recognized that where there is some doubt as to whether a person should be categorized as, let us say, A2 or B1 on the CEFR scale, the likelihood of the categorization in the case of a borderline candidate is determined as much by the characteristics of the person making the judgement (whether they are

relatively harsh or lenient in borderline cases, or whether they are consistent in their judgements with other judges, or even with themselves on different occasions) as it is by the characteristics of the person being assessed. If this reality is not understood and controlled for, the outcome of the assessment is in danger of becoming no more than a form of lottery, where the candidate's fate depends on whom he or she happens to get as a judge. Validity theory is fundamentally concerned with investigating such threats to the meaningfulness of scores and the conclusions about candidates they represent, and is principally focussed on the *fairness* of the assessment, in this sense.

Furthermore, current theories of test validity make a distinction between the *procedures* for assessing knowledge and skill, and the *use* of such procedures for *making decisions* about individuals. We can compare this with the distinction between the accuracy of a measuring tape and the use made of differences in measurement of different individuals: for example, in military recruitment, only individuals measured as being above a certain height are eligible for recruitment. The measuring instrument is used first to *measure* individuals, and then that measurement is used to make *decisions* about inclusion or exclusion. Validity theory has increasingly insisted that not only the measurement itself but the uses to which the measurement is put are the responsibility of those involved in test development (see McNamara and Roever 2006 for a detailed account of these issues).

In light of this, let us consider the use of language tests in procedures for granting citizenship. The first issue is to do with the test construct. To what extent is the requirement to demonstrate a level of language proficiency for the purpose of gaining citizenship a question of achieving a certain level of functional competence, to carry out certain kinds of real-world tasks? We have here a contradictory answer.

On the one hand, policies in different European countries are frequently framed in terms of levels of the Common European Framework of Reference, that is, precisely in terms of the practical communicative competencies discussed above. The chapter by Van Avermaet reports the CEFR levels required (1) to enter the country concerned, (2) to gain permanent residency, and (3) to gain citizenship. For *entry*, seven of the ten countries requiring applicants to pass a language test specify a certain CEFR level (the remaining seven of the seventeen countries surveyed set no requirements for those wishing to enter). For *permanent residency*, the countries that do have a language condition specify the achievement of a level on the CEFR (eight countries have no language condition). For *citizenship*, 9 out of 11 countries requiring a language test specify a level of the CEFR (7 countries have no language requirement, although this is currently the subject of intense political discussion in many of them, and the situation is rapidly changing).

So it seems that the construct of the test is a level of functional proficiency in the national language concerned. However, what are we then to make of the fact

that countries in Europe differ not only as to whether they impose such a requirement, but that when they do, the functional level varies considerably from country to country? For *entry*, the range of levels required across Europe is from A1- to B1+; for *residency*, from A1 to B2; and for *citizenship*, from A2 to B2. Van Avermaet describes this diversity of required levels as “intriguing both from a theoretical and from a pragmatic point of view” (29). The practicalities, suggests Van Avermaet, will be of concern given the push for European integration and the abolition of national borders within Europe:

How will Europe deal with the reality that an immigrant, who may have obtained citizenship in The Netherlands with an A2 level of Dutch, might then, with the associated right of free mobility within Europe, translocate to Denmark, where a B2 level of Danish is required for citizenship? Or what will happen with an immigrant living in Belgium who can acquire citizenship without any language condition and who – once citizenship is granted – can freely move to countries in Europe that have language tests? (Van Avermaet, this volume: 33)

Van Avermaet’s objections to current policies focus on various inconsistencies in the policies being adopted in different parts of Europe: for example the contradictory attitudes to plurilingualism (with only plurilingualism in the national languages of Europe ‘counting’), the accompanying misuse of the CEFR, which was designed to promote plurilingualism, the exclusive emphasis on the standard language, and the way the policies go against the globalizing intentions of the European Union.

The issue of functional competence is also raised by Shohamy in her chapter opposing the use of language tests in the context of citizenship, for the moment taking at face value that functional competence in the language is actually the issue:

Other issues exist as well about the use of language as a criterion for citizenship, such as determining the appropriate language level needed for proper functioning in the new society or at the workplace, deciding how ‘good’ is ‘good’. (Shohamy, this volume: 48)

She also raises a practical objection, that many immigrants function successfully in the multilingual environment of their communities, and in fact have little need for knowledge of the hegemonic majority language:

There are many cases of immigrants and indigenous groups who function well in society, education, the workplace, and the community with no knowledge of the hegemonic languages. While knowledge of these languages may be needed in some situations, this is not always the case as many immigrants choose to continue to function in their own communities using their home languages, creating their own language and culture contexts as comfortable and functioning settings which they are eager to maintain... access to relevant information, when needed,

can be obtained in a number of different languages with infrastructure such as translation, interpretation and communication with people of the community. (Shohamy, this volume: 49)

But is functional competence in the majority language really what language testing for access and citizenship is all about? Or is it a cover for something else, as Shohamy subsequently argues? The studies of particular contexts in the chapters by Blackledge (the United Kingdom), Extra and Spotti (the Netherlands) and Horner (Luxembourg) locate the growing demands for language testing in the majority language in each case within discourses of identity and cultural belonging, reflecting the assumed interests of the dominant group rather than a concern for the welfare of newcomers. Assumptions about the communicative needs of immigrants do, however, feature in such discourses. Let us take two examples.

Firstly, the United Kingdom, where Blackledge traces the evolution of the argument for an extension of the language requirements to permanent residents during the course of 2006 and 2007. Sometimes, functional competence as a motivation for the tests is suggested, as facilitating access to participation in community activities, but this is discussed if at all only in the most general terms. For example, the practical usefulness of functional competence does feature to some extent in the wording of policy statements from official documents:

The Government believes strongly that those who wish to settle in the UK should be encouraged to play a full part in their wider community... They can better realise their ambitions here. (Home Office, 2006)

Lack of English is ... a critical barrier to integration and communication for new arrivals. We are also conscious that lack of language skills in settled communities can also create social distance. We are therefore adamant that not speaking English is a barrier to integration and cohesion. It hampers people's efforts to integrate economically and to access the labour market. (Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007), paragraph 36)

These sentiments are echoed in speeches (see Blackledge, this volume: 99) and interviews given by the United Kingdom Opposition Leader, David Cameron, who also explicitly mentions communication between members of different communities, immigrant and host: "This would help people integrate into society and broaden their opportunities"; "We must make sure that all our citizens can speak to each other in our shared national language." However, a stronger motif in these speeches, and those of the Prime Minister at the time, Tony Blair, is not about functional competence as being in the interests of immigrants at all, but about social cohesion. In Blackledge's words,

In the data presented here senior politicians argued with apparent authority and legitimacy that some people's inability or refusal to learn or speak English constitutes a threat to social cohesion, integration, and national identity... These proposals appeared to be based on the notion that proficiency in English for all is directly correlated with social justice and social cohesion (Blackledge, this volume: 104).

In other words, the motivation for the inclusion of a language requirement is not primarily about the *communicative* but about the *symbolic* function of language. The primary function of the test is not to promote the welfare of immigrants, but to express an ideology associating language use with cultural values.

Horner's chapter considers the usefully ambivalent understanding of the role of language in debates within Luxembourg. The notion of 'integration' (also reflected in the British policy statements, as we have seen) plays a central role in discourse on language and citizenship in Luxembourg. Horner shows that in debates in 2001 on amending the citizenship law to strengthen the requirement that citizens demonstrate knowledge of Luxembourgish:

[t]he Conservatives... [framed] the Luxembourgish language as central to the process of integration; knowledge of Luxembourgish was presented as the key to full participation in social and political life in the Grand Duchy. Although the Luxembourgish language is sometimes directly linked to Luxembourgish national identity, overt references of this nature were generally not flagged in official statements by politicians concerning the 2001 amendments. By positioning Luxembourgish as a resource or instrument that enables successful integration, it is possible to embed cultural criteria in the discourse without being obvious about it (Horner, this volume: 117).

In other words, the arguments in favour of requirements for language proficiency on practical, functional grounds of communication are useful in masking the deeper motivation of the use of language tests as a reinforcement of linguistic and cultural hegemony. The real construct in the test remains covert.

What challenges does this present to our capacity to conceptualise the validity of such tests? The chapters in this volume demonstrate conclusively that the construct in such tests is not about practical communicative skill; in fact, the measurement of language proficiency is a displacement of a deeper measurement, of (external) conformity to a national ideology. How much of this measure is enough? The establishment of sufficient minimum standards usually involves dividing the continuum of proficiency into a number of categories. In this case the categories are two: acceptable and unacceptable, for the purpose of granting entry, residence or citizenship. The setting of cut scores in language tests in (for example) educational contexts is necessarily subjective, and most procedures for establishing cut-points involve gathering multiple judgements of the sufficiency of various levels of

performance in relation to a given criterion. Given that the underlying construct in this case is belonging, as measured by a proxy measurement of language proficiency, rather than language proficiency for more clearly functional purposes, the question of 'how much' is not open to rational judgement, and standard procedures become irrelevant. It is not surprising, then, that cut-points are determined not by language testers but by policy makers, and on purely political grounds, given the entirely political character of the assessments. The differences in cut scores noted by Van Avermaet are, then, explicable given the differing political contexts in each of the countries concerned.

The gulf between the perspectives of policy makers and language testers is further revealed by the role of the so-called Knowledge of Society tests which accompany and sometimes even replace the language tests. As several of the chapters here point out, however, Knowledge of Society tests are themselves *de facto* language tests; for example, Extra and Spotti (this volume: 78) argue that: "It also remains unclear how knowledge of Dutch society can be tested separately from knowledge of the Dutch language in successive testing regimes, given the fact that both types of tests are administered in Dutch." It has been estimated that the British Knowledge of Society test is at approximately level B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference, and this is supported by the analysis of the language level required to understand the booklet on which the recently introduced Knowledge of Society test for Australian citizenship is based (Piller and McNamara 2007). This is a non-trivial issue. Table 4.1 in the chapter by Extra and Spotti raises the question of the consistency in the Dutch policy between the language levels needed for the Knowledge of Society test on the one hand, and the explicit language requirement of the language test on the other. While the language level required for 'integration' and 'citizenship' is A2 (or A1 in literacy skills for longer-term, poorly educated residents), they are still required to take the Knowledge of Society test. The situation for initial entry is potentially more problematic: while literacy is not required, the potential gap between a level of A1- in oral skills on the language test and the language requirement of the Knowledge of Society test is clear. While the Knowledge of Dutch Society test is administered over the telephone, preparation for the test requires familiarity with material provided in a booklet, as in the United Kingdom and Australian cases. In the Dutch case, unlike in the British and Australian cases, some attempt has been made to address this issue, although it is not clear how successful this has been or indeed could be, given the content to be covered, which include Dutch history, politics and law, the importance of acquiring Dutch, child rearing and education, and so on. Account is taken of the A1- level of the candidates in the following way, according to a report on the development of the test (Tijssen et al. 2005):

Each question is phrased as simply as possible taking account of the A1-minus level.

In the recorded question this is realized by a slow and clearly articulated speech, clear phrasing in meaningful units and realizing audible word boundaries and applying stress. For example:

In Nederland / wonen daar / *v*éél mensen / of / *w*éinig mensen?

*\*In the Netherlands / do there live / many people / or / few people?*

- The item must be answerable with a single word or just a few words.
- It is assumed that candidates have practiced the 100 questions and answers in the photo book and the DVD with recorded answers and by practicing these with their teacher or via telephone with their partner or some other acquaintance in the Netherlands.
- The item must be visually supported by a still from the film.

(Tijssen et al. 2005: 9–10, translated by John De Jong)

However, while slow, clear articulation and the requirement of simply worded answers is a presumably helpful concession, and shows that the test designers in the Netherlands are at least conscious of the language issue, the fact that the words used in the question clearly exceed the A1- level is illustrated by the following sample question:

Question: Zijn de kranten, radio en televisie vrij in hun mening?

*Are newspapers, radio and television free to express their opinion?*

Answer: Ja

*Yes*

(Tijssen et al. 2005: 10, translated by John De Jong)

For policy makers, the interchangeability of the tests of language and of Knowledge of Society is consonant with the view that the language test is itself a test of cultural identity. As the focus of both tests is on cultural identity, it is not surprising that the language dimension (salient to language testers) is typically backgrounded in official and public discourse. Language testers in turn are handicapped by the current functionalist orientation to language, illustrated so clearly in the wording of the CEFR, which has its conceptual roots in the notional/functional approaches to language teaching promoted by the Council of Europe in the early 1970s, and are less likely to recognize or to effectively engage with the primary identity functions of the tests. The two sides – policy makers and language testers – are as it were speaking different languages.

In summary, the construct of language proficiency in the context of tests for immigration and citizenship is best understood in terms of ideology, not functional language proficiency. To what extent does language testing theory admit of

this possibility? In fact, the values dimension of language testing has been increasingly recognized and discussed. For example, validity theory since the 1980s, particularly in the work of Messick (1989), has accepted that language tests will be expressive of (implicit) values. Validation in Messick's view involves the articulation and critical examination of such values, in order to ensure the defensibility of the values implicit in tests, though as a matter of practice this is almost never done. Similarly, Kane (2001) sees the uses of tests as falling within the domain of test validation: in other words, test developers have a responsibility to articulate and defend the intended uses of tests. Underlying the discussions of both authors, and more explicitly in the work of Kane, is the assumption that the developers of tests will somehow determine and thus take responsibility for both the values expressed in tests and the uses to which they are put, assuming that such uses are known or can be anticipated, which is clearly the case in this context. This presents a dilemma for test developers in the current context. Both the nature of the test construct and the uses to which the test is to be put are not determined by the test developers, but are entirely externally determined as a function of policy and political processes.

A further problem for language testers is that their very expertise in developing fairer tests is effectively politicised in such contexts. The technical quality of tests becomes a means of enforcing power, as tests can disarm criticism, a point made by Shohamy:

Tests are widely trusted by test-takers so that even minority groups who are strongly affected by tests have an overwhelming respect for them and often fight against their abandonment as they have internalized their power and consequences...The rhetoric of testing is based on propaganda and myths utilizing devices such as numbers, scientific language and objectivity. Tests have unchallenged authority and are considered to be the domain of experts and are therefore rarely challenged and criticized. (Shohamy, this volume: 50)

Often debates about the policies underlying tests are displaced onto discussions of the fairness of the testing mechanisms through which the policy is implemented. For example, in the context of Luxembourg, Horner (this volume) points out the "paradoxical" fact that critics of the policy behind the tests and supporters of the policy alike were concerned about the technical weakness of the testing procedures proposed:

Although the new language requirements were ratified in 2001 and came into effect in 2002, the testing and evaluation procedures remain somewhat ambiguous, a point that sparked further criticism from voices in opposition to the requirement. Somewhat paradoxically, individuals in favor of the requirement raised similar concerns by calling the seriousness of the testing into question (Horner, this volume: 117).



The concern of the Conservatives about test quality is consonant with their political position. But the strategy of the policy's opponents is different: by calling attention to the technical imperfections of the testing procedure they are hoping to attract support for their opposition to the policy behind it. This is further illustrated in the context of the Netherlands in the chapter by Extra and Spotti (this volume), in which the unfairness of the test of knowledge of Dutch society is the principal target of their critique.

However, this concern for test fairness is a two-edged sword, because it implies that a 'fair' test (one that meets normal standards of validity and reliability) would be acceptable, when in fact the real problem is not the quality of the instrument but the policy itself. Technically perfect tests leave no foothold for opposition; the technical qualities of tests sometimes disarm the most intelligent of critics. For example, Piller (2001) couches her argument against the use of language testing for citizenship in Germany in terms of the unfairness of the test from the point of view of how it is administered, rather than tackling the problematic nature of the policy itself which is the basis for the testing. The complex role of technical expertise in enforcing power is more extensively discussed from a Foucauldian perspective in McNamara and Roever (2006), where further examples are given.

While the focus in the chapters in this volume is on critique of the problematic developments which seem to be affecting more and more countries in Europe and beyond (Australia has recently modelled reforms to its citizenship legislation on European precedents, and introduced a linguistically demanding Knowledge of Society test: cf McNamara 2009), two of the authors contemplate alternatives to the current emphasis on linguistic and cultural hegemony and its implementation through testing regimes. Shohamy advocates more flexible and sensitive assessment systems which would do justice to the complexity of the linguistic repertoires on which immigrants can draw, and would be sensitive to their opportunities to learn the dominant language. Busch gives an extended example of the intersection of bottom-up and top-down policy developments in a detailed ethnographic study of the multilingual and multicultural environment emerging in the Vienna public library, which has recently moved to an area of high immigrant concentration. The study reveals flexible practices which stand in striking contrast to the monolithic and oppressive policies being generated and implemented throughout Europe.

Language testing faces a crisis in the face of such practices. The crisis lies in its inability to theorize its own practice, handicapped as it is by its essentially liberal politics, and a view of language that is one-dimensional and functionalist. The situation is made more complex by the fact that language testing is not just a *practice-oriented* field like so much of applied linguistics; it is a *practical* field in that it

must deliver practical language assessment procedures. Critique, no matter how important, is not enough. But how to act, that is the problem.

The dilemma, and the potential impotence of intellectuals in relation to policy, is age-old. An eminent historian writes about the situation of Confucian academics in relation to the imperial court in China in the 3rd century BC:

As W.T. de Bary (1991) points out, the Confucians did not try to establish “any power base of their own... they faced the state, and whoever controlled it in the imperial court, as individual scholars... this institutional weakness, highly dependent condition, and extreme insecurity.... marked the Confucians as *ju* (“softies”) in the politics of imperial China.” They had to find patrons who could protect them. It was not easy to have an independent voice separate from the imperial establishment. (Fairbank and Goldman 1998: 63)

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