

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

The language question, by Fabrizio Nava

Language is a hugely important factor in politics, one around which entire communities form and disintegrate. As an instrument created by society for communication among its members and thus a basic element in its cultural and political identity, language is an engine around which states have been created and dismembered in the last two centuries. Relations between majority and minority languages within states have returned to the fore in the debate on the integration of immigrants, as have discussions on the prospect of one or more languages prevailing over all the others at a global level.

Language as an instrument of socio-political aggregation and disaggregation, by Luigi Neirrotti

The author's life has been marked by experiences necessarily characterised by the language factor, with an alternating pattern of union with and division from the relatives and partners with whom he has been involved. As these relationships developed, he passed from an adolescent condition as a prisoner of linguistic complications to a more evolved one in his mature years, in which a greater mastery and awareness of language have enabled him better to calibrate his aims and results.

Interlinguistics – individual creativity and understanding among minority language speakers, by Giorgio Novello

A language may be seen on one hand as the free product of a collectivity of speakers, but on the other as an imposed factor not susceptible to modification by its speakers. There is space, however, for individual creativity (which is the subject of interlinguistics) expressed not only through the language but on it. The more radical deliberate interventions include the "official" modifications carried out on Standard Chinese (Putonghua), Nynorsk (New Norwegian), Katharevousa ("high" New Greek) and Bahasa Indonesia. The most extreme cases are the planned resuscitation of a dead language (Hebrew) and the creation of a new one (Esperanto).

Institutional multi-lingualism and personal multi-lingualism. For full European citizenship and a European identity, by Dionigio Vergallo

Languages are not codes of expression pure and simple, they are also the product of the history and culture of the peoples that speak them. He who speaks of multi-lingualism is also saying multi-cultural and in political terms, in the final analysis, multi-lateralism. For Europe, the presence of a multitude of languages on its territory is a mark of great cultural wealth and is an integral part of its identity.

Language as a means of expressing the idea of peace, by Marzia Bisignani

This article is not simply a denunciation of the dangers of distorting and mystifying the language of peace, it is an appeal to seek a universal language of peace based on a collective consciousness able to prevail over the diversity of individual and minority entities. It is through the silencing of hatred, rage, vengeance, fear and pride that the language of peace will be universally understood.

Language as an instrument of conquest, by Lorenzo Chiarelli

In the author's view language is an instrument of conquest, always carrying values, culture and a way of thinking and living. Discussing the differences between language and dialect, he analyses a number of expressions which confirm the identity content of dialects. He concludes with a discussion of the relationship between language and territory.

The West and linguistic diversity – analysis of and perspectives on a problematic relationship, by Stefania Scaglione

While speaking a shared language certainly stands as a powerful factor for aggregation in a community, the use of other languages in the community life does not necessarily constitute a threat to its cohesion and civil identity. On the contrary, often it is precisely the insistence on pursuing repressive monolingual policies which systematically prevents cohesion within (ethno-) linguistically heterogeneous communities. It is now incumbent upon the West to design new language policies which are able to enhance the value of multi-lingualism as an important resource.

The Koran and Arabic – the end of a long-standing pairing, by Ilaria Siggia

Arabic has always played a strategically important role in the Islamic *Umma*, a composite and variegated entity in geographical, political and theological terms. On one dimension, the borders of the Islamic world do not coincide with those of the Arab world or the geographical borders of the Middle East. On another, Islam is characterised by the absence of a monopoly on the interpretation of the divine precepts, which is the cause of divisions and internecine conflicts. Within this context there has

been a deliberate exploitation of the Arabic language and its centuries-old association with the Koran by the Al Sau'ud dynasty since the 1970s.

Spanish in the world, by Gustavo de Arístegui y San Román

Language is the most penetrating instrument of what is currently known as soft power. It is no longer just a tool to be used in cultural foreign policy – usually of marginal importance – but a full-blown political factor. In this regard Spanish has enormous potential for universal use in fields beyond the purely cultural, and this may be exploited in a coalition of Latin languages, of common roots and common richness, to be set up in opposition to English as a *lingua franca*.

Afghanistan – languages that divide, by Fausto Biloslavo

The author develops his idea starting from the observation that the two languages spoken in Afghanistan, Pashto and Farsi (now known as Dari), continue to be used as a pretext for ethnic division, conflict and incomprehension, despite the provision laid down in the 1964 Constitution that put them on the same level. In his many and turbulent travels in Afghanistan since the time of the Soviet invasion, the author has learned enough of the local terminology to enable him to survive.

Iraq – the language battle, by Michele Farina

Lost in translation in Baghdad: five years of conflict seen as a language conflict, or a missed encounter. A poor grasp of Arabic – often an inability or refusal to utter the even the simplest greeting – and the scarcity of decent interpreters in the American forces have proved to be a significant and long-neglected factor in the widening divide between the invader-liberators and the local population. And consequently in the difficulty in winning over hearts and minds at the expense of the insurgents. This is a study of the language factor in the resolution, or the festering, of asymmetrical wars past and present.

The policy of multilingualism and language learning, by Sean O'Rian

This paper focuses on a number of developments in macro-level language policies, outlines the background to the new status of the Irish language in the European Union and attempts to examine a proposal designed to improve the teaching of Irish in particular and language learning in general. At the moment the teaching of Irish is undergoing a serious crisis. While almost all primary school children in Ireland are able to speak English and Irish, in English-based schools the majority of students make no progress in Irish. To facilitate learning a second language a proposal is made for a preparatory approach involving the teaching of Esperanto in primary and middle school in Ireland in particular and Europe in general.

The geopolitics of the Italian language, by Mainardo Benardelli de Leitenburg

Language is one of the most widely discussed questions in Italian social and literary history, and Italian has recently been dropped from the list of official languages in the European Community. The author presents a historical overview starting from the 13th century, which saw the beginning of popular literature in poetry, and comprising the development of written and spoken Italian from traditional regional literature to the evolution of the *dolce stilnovo*, the appearance in the 19th century of the language of Manzoni and his antagonists, the composition of the first Dictionary of the Italian language and the practice of transferring teachers and national service conscripts from one part of the country to another so as to spread a standard language over the whole territory. The article concludes with the observation that language changes over time and that its current written and spoken form is the result of standardisation produced by the population's exposure to the mass media.

Nazism – corruption of language and the language of corruption, by Sigrid Lupieri

Language is a powerful instrument of persuasion, able to influence the thoughts and actions of speakers. How did the German people react to Nazi ideology in the religious sphere? Against the expectations of the Nazis and Hitler himself, language proved reluctant to replace the terms of Catholicism with the new idiom promoted by the Nazi regime.

The impact and implications of English language and culture on the borders of British India in the 19th century, by Beatrice Nicolini

In the late 18th and early 19th century information in English in European hands regarding the lands between Persia and the western borders of British India was scarce at best, completely absent at worst. It was at the outbreak of a European crisis that the absence of cartographic and topographic documents on those lands – now part of Pakistan – suddenly became the centre of concern and tension, above all for the political and military governors of British India.

In the rays of the sun of York. Myth, statehood and imperial policy in North-West India. Baluchistan 1870-1914, by Gianluca Pastori

Language is a powerful tool for the creation and dissemination of myths. In this regard the Indian subcontinent was one of the places in which the British Empire wielded this tool with the greatest force. The mythical-symbolic construction of the tribal “nobility” of the proto-state of Kalat is a clear example of how that dynamic interfered with the local power structure.