

Monolingual Multilingualism? Standard languages and their impact on multilingual policies and practices in Europe: a historical perspective

Organizers:

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Venue:

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Topic:

One of the most fundamental changes to Europe's linguistic landscape during the past five centuries was the emergence and consolidation of standard languages. From the late Middle Ages onwards, an increasing economic, political and cultural integration of Europe fostered the need for uniform written languages which could be used across dialect boundaries. In the 16th and 17th centuries, apart from practical reasons to use a common form of a certain vernacular language there were also ideological reasons. There came a growing interest, among writers, scientists and politicians, in shaping the vernacular language according to the model of an 'ideal language'. This search for the 'ideal language form' went hand in hand with the need for uniformity, for strict language rules and for the strict adherence to these rules. Over the centuries, the knowledge of such uniform, normed and codified languages ('standard languages') became increasingly important for social mobility. In the 19th century, standard languages additionally became closely linked to the emerging nation-states and as a consequence, knowledge of the respective standard language of a nation-state ('national language') became an important symbol of political loyalty. All over Europe, the growing importance of standard languages meant a fundamental change to the multilingual repertoires of the regions in question.

Aim of the workshop:

The workshop aims at highlighting common developments as well as differences across Europe concerning the historical relationship between standard varieties and 'other' varieties. It seeks to identify sets of extralinguistic factors which favoured the rise in status of some languages while marginalizing others.

It focusses specifically on the rise of a standard language *ideology* which postulates one language as the best variety for a certain language community. It is one main aim of this workshop to find out to what extent this standard language ideology has influenced – and still influences – language policy and language practices in Europe and in what way it contributes to a 'monolingual' view on multilingualism. One question might be whether – and if so, to what extent – standard language ideology constitutes an obstacle to European individual and societal multilingualism.

Call for papers:

We invite papers addressing the impact of emerging standard languages on individual and societal multilingualism through European history.

The questions below might serve as guidelines for contributions to this workshop:

- ◆ Which social, political, ideological or economic changes taking place from the Middle Ages onwards were relevant to the selection of one or more varieties as 'standard' (and the 'rejection' of others)? (e.g. demographic factors (for example urbanization), protestant reformation movements, the founding of non-clerical educational institutions (universities))?
- ◆ Is there evidence as to how the growing importance of standard languages had a bearing on multilingual practices?
- ◆ Are there examples, in European language history, of efforts to preserve diversity in the face of the increasing hegemony of standard languages?
- ◆ How can the relationship between nation building and standard and other varieties be characterized?
- ◆ What were the social implications of the emergence and spread of standard language norms?
- ◆ To what extent were standard varieties presented/viewed as instruments of economic promotion and as a key to innovation? To what extent was (individual) multilingualism presented/viewed as instrument of economic promotion and as a key to innovation?
- ◆ What is the role of standard languages in present-day debates on multilingualism (e.g. in educational contexts)?

The workshop invites contributions

- ◆ which focus on one or more of these questions in relation to one specific language area; or
- ◆ which compare different language areas with regard to one or more of these questions.

Abstract submission and registration:

The abstract submission deadline is **June 8th, 2009** (please send your abstract to Ulrike Vogl <uvogl@zedat.fu-berlin.de>). There will be a 100€ registration fee which covers conference participation and meals.

Publication:

We are planning to publish a thematic volume based on the contributions of the workshop in the course of 2010. The participants of the workshop should bear in mind that they will be invited to submit their written contributions by January 15th, 2010.

DYLAN:

This workshop is organized within the framework of DYLAN (*Language dynamics and management of diversity*), an Integrated Project funded under Framework Programme 6 (FP6) of the European Union. DYLAN seeks to identify the conditions under which Europe's linguistic diversity can be an asset for the development of knowledge and economy. The project embraces 18 research teams from different universities in Europe. The organizers of this workshop constitute the research team within the DYLAN project that focusses on historical aspects of multilingualism.