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Title: Mapping the Language Ideologies of Organisational Members: A Corpus Linguistic Investigation of the United Nations' General Debates (1970-2016)

Abstract

Supranational and international organisations have long experienced difficulties in implementing multilingual policies, and this is, in part, due to a lack of activism on language matters by their membership (Author, forthcoming; Kruse & Ammon, 2018). The aim of this paper is not only to highlight the importance of investigating language ideology within the field of organisational language policy, but also to scrutinise the language ideologies particular to an influential body of institutional members. Using the United Nations as a site of exploration, and the UN General Debates Corpus (Mikhaylov, Baturo and Dasandi, 2017) as a dataset, this paper traces if and how issues of language have preoccupied the deliberations and work of UN member states over the course of 46 years, and if these discussions align with organisational policy. Using corpus linguistics, the paper maps the ideological landscape and language policy discourses across time, identifying a paucity of discussion over almost five decades. The paper argues that attention to the absence of references to language problems/language policy in the organisation is just as important as an exploration of language problems themselves. If organisations wish to make changes to language policies, and/or prioritise policy implementation, they would do well to attend more closely to the language ideologies of their membership and/or to reasons for their apparent inattention to language issues.

Keywords

corpus linguistics, language ideology, multilingualism, supranational/international organisations, United Nations

1. Introduction

Neustupný (1994: 50) famously argued, "any act of language planning should start with the consideration of language problems as they appear in discourse, and the planning process should not be considered complete until the removal of the problems is implemented in discourse". In this paper, we contend that it is not only an issue of how language problems *appear* in discourse but also how they are *absent from* discourse. While the active discussion of language problems might draw our attention to pertinent issues, the absence of discussions (or, more precisely, the discussion of issues besides those relating to language) might draw our attention away from language problems that are, nonetheless, also pertinent. The reason why some language problems are the focus of discussion, and others are not, is often the result of language ideology, i.e. the beliefs about language that are established in and shared by members of a community. These are often taken for granted and considered common sense (Boudreau and Dubois, 2007: 104). Language ideologies allow us to naturalise, among other things, the (non-)importance of language issues and the prioritisation of some languages over others; however, language ideologies can also be explicitly (i.e. metalinguistically) articulated in discussions and debates, especially between individuals and communities with different language ideologies (Blommaert, 1999; Coupland and Jaworski, 2004). As Woolard (1998: 9) notes, "[i]deology is variously discovered in linguistic practice itself; in explicit talk about language, that is, metalinguistic or metapragmatic *discourse*; and in the regimentation of language use through more implicit metapragmatics". The result of language ideologies, and the concomitant discussion and non-discussion of language problems, is that some language policies take effect and others do not.

While the notion of language policy is multi-layered and complex, Spolsky's (2004) widely-cited model comprises three interrelated areas: language management, language ideologies and language practices. In this paper, we argue that because language ideologies determine the extent to which language can be managed and the ways in which language is practiced, the uptake of language policy is therefore contingent upon language ideology. Using the case of the United Nations as an example, we propose that the organisation's difficulty in implementing and sustaining a multilingual language policy over the course of many years can be traced to a lack of activism in language matters on the part of member states. Our findings suggest that in order to effect real change, more positive engagement with the ideologies of the membership is required, with acute sensitivity to the interconnected power dimensions relevant to the organisation.

The ability of an individual to implement or effect change in the language policy of an organisation is dependent on not only the access to power afforded by a relevant level of organisational membership, but also the language ideologies circulating within that particular (level of) organisational context. As noted by Fitzsimmons-Doolan (2019), there is considerable variability within institutional sources of ideological production. Her research highlights that language ideologies are distributed unevenly across institutional

language policy texts related to different levels of language policy. Therefore, it is not simply a question of "bottom-up"/"top-down" agency in language policymaking and implementation; it is also a question of the extent to which the organisational memberships' ideologies align with those of the policy makers for the proposed or stated policy to be effectively implemented.

The aim of this paper is not only to highlight the importance of language ideology within the field of organisational language policy, but also to scrutinise the role of language ideologies particular to a level of institutional membership. We do this by tracing if and how issues of language have preoccupied the deliberations and work of UN member states (known in the UN, and referred to in this paper, as the 'membership' of the organisation) over the course of 46 years, and determining if these issues align with language policy initiatives or changes emanating from the Secretariat (the executive) of the organisation (i.e. top-down)[1]. More specifically, we ask the following research questions:

1) Have language issues preoccupied deliberations of the UN member states within the United Nations General Debates over the course of 46 years?

2) If so, what are these issues? And do any language issues align with or diverge from language policy initiatives or changes implemented by the Secretariat of the organisation?

The paper proceeds as follows: we begin by reviewing literature on language ideology and language policy (Section 2), before presenting background on language policy in supranational organisations and, in particular, the United Nations (Section 3). In Section 4 we present the data and methods, and this is followed in Section 5 by a discussion of findings. We conclude in Section 6 by highlighting the importance of prioritising language ideology in the design and implementation of organisational LPP.

2. Language ideology and language policy

More than 40 years since its publication, many researchers continue to refer to Silverstein's (1979: 193) definition of language ideologies as: "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use". However, adhering to this definition raises the issue of

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[1] The Secretariat constitutes the executive of the UN, headed by the Secretary-General. Its role is to set the agenda for the organisation's decision-making bodies (in New York this includes: the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council) and to implement decisions arising from the deliberations of Member States. The Secretariat is organised into departments/offices of responsibility. Issues of multilingualism are predominantly dealt with by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, under the stewardship of the Under-Secretary-General, in their capacity as 'Coordinator for Multilingualism'. Financial support for multilingualism is provided by Member States and any changes to policy have to be ratified by Member States.

whether or not ideologies are by definition *articulated*. Woolard's (1998:3) definition ("[r]epresentations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world") is inclusive of a greater variety of expression, in that ideologies can be made explicit or implicit through a range of different means, including linguistic practice and implicit metapragmatics (*ibid,* 9; cf. Coupland and Jaworski, 2004: 36). Indeed, she highlights the "unresolved tension" relating to the "sitings of ideology" (*ibid,* 9) that permeates the different chapters of the edited volume in which she writes. One of the contributors, Spitulnik (1998: 164), proposes that language ideologies can be "ideational" (or "conceptual") while at the same time "processual" and "practice-based": "implicit in practice, embodied in lived relations, and explicit in certain kinds of conscious articulations such as metalinguistic discourse". In this paper, we focus on explicit articulations (which we refer to as *inter alia* representations and discussions) as well as the absence of these; however, we also take into account the processual and, arguably, cumulative nature of these (non-)representations over time by discussing the role, function, and significance of the context in which they take place (i.e. the member states' participation within the annual General Debates forum of the United Nations). Furthermore, while we focus on articulations, it should be noted that these are not objective, factual portrayals. As Van Leeuwen (2004: 111) notes, representations also add elements: evaluations, purposes, legitimations, and so on. In other words, the articulations are ideological. In addition, our focus on articulations does not mean we are not sensitive to the language ideologies implicit in, for example, the different weight of focus attributed to different languages in the General Debates.

Since the study of language ideology emerged from work in American linguistic anthropology, the vast majority of research has employed research methods traditionally associated with this field (e.g. ethnography). However, more recently nascent work on language ideology has employed corpus linguistics (e.g. Ajsic and McGroarty, 2015; Author 2016; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2014, 2019; Subtirelu, 2013). The corpus approach allows researchers to access and process large amounts of data, thereby enabling them to identify majority trends in metalinguistic representation, as well as minority trends and absences (all of which are considered ideological; Author 2016). As shown in this paper (Section 5), this ability to highlight presence and absence of representations (and the concomitant language ideologies underpinning these representations and absences) also sheds light on the agency of particular individuals or members of an organisation when discursive patterns are aligned with shifts in a language policy landscape over time.

Language ideologies are important considerations in the field of language policy, where they constitute one of Spolsky's (2009) three pillars. He explains: "The beliefs that are most significant to language policy and management are the values or statuses assigned to named languages, varieties, and features" (2009: 4). In our paper, we are primarily concerned with how these beliefs underpin metalinguistic discussion through, for example, the prioritisation of some languages over others, the (positive/negative) representation of languages or multilingualism (e.g. through reference to language status, role or practice), the absence of discussion of

language issues or specific languages, and the way that these discussions change and evolve over time with respect to the organisation more generally. In other words, the discussions of specific languages (and lack of discussions of others) may be indicative of evaluations of these with respect to their status or function within the organisation or elsewhere; the *representation* of languages and discussions about multilingualism may contain further implicit or explicit evaluations. In both cases, indications and representations of language value, status, role and practices within the organisation are particularly pertinent to understanding support for organisational language policy within this particular membership level; this support, we argue, may affect decisions about the uptake and buy into policy (reform).

According to Watts (1999: 68), "language ideology is political inasmuch as it forms part of the total set of social principles by which the community organizes itself institutionally". Indeed, Ricento (2006: 9) has noted that language ideologies "have real effects on language policies and practices, and delimit to a large extent what is and is not possible in the realm of language planning and policy-making". However, we add that the potential for language ideologies to impact upon language policies and practices is contingent upon the agency of the individual(s) in question. As noted above, Fitzsimmons-Doolan (2019) demonstrates that different language ideologies circulate in different sectors of an organisation; we suggest that these ideologies combine with the issue of power differentials associated with specific roles and status. Since organisations are structured differently, being sensitive to status (and) membership and the text types that circulate within sectors seems crucial for any study of organisational language policy, and in particular one examining language ideology. This dynamic seems to align with Spolsky's recent (2019: 335) proposal that "advocates without power and managers with authority" function within the language management context of language policy. Thus, in the context of the UN, we argue that institutional actors' ability to exert power on language policy is constrained not only by their role within the organisation, but also as a result of the specific language ideologies circulating in this particular environment.

3. LPP & Supra-national/International Organisations

Whilst different language policies have been adopted in supra/international organisations,[2] multilingualism has been advanced as favourable, supporting the principles of equality and democracy. However, research (e.g. Ammon, 2006, 2012; Author 2006; 2015; Cogo & Jenkins, 2010; Gazzola, 2006, 2016; Koskinen, 2013; Lenaerts, 2001; Piron, 1980; Quell, 1997; van Els, 2005; Wright, 2009) and internal inspections (e.g. JIU/REP/2011/4, see below) within these organisations have long shown that reductions in multilingual provision and use are commonplace, and multilingual language policies have been difficult to implement. The administrations in many multilingual organisations are faced with the conundrum of trying to balance

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[2] e.g. compare the different policy decisions made by the UN and the EU.

competing and sometimes incompatible requirements: equity of provision amongst the language groups represented, efficiency in communication and cost of supporting multilingualism for internal and external operations. In many instances communication is undertaken in a lingua franca – with English often dominating (Author, forthcoming).

It has been argued by scholars (Author, 2015, 2017; Author et al 2019; Barbier, 2018; Fidrmuc & Ginsburgh, 2007; Kruse & Ammon, 2018; Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2010; Phillipson, 2003, 2008, van Parijs, 2013; Xabier, 2008) that supranational/international organisations need to offset tendencies towards economic pragmatism and expediency (and a concomitant reduction in language provision) with the protection of democratic rights and linguistic diversity. As such they should align linguistic support with organizational goals and an expanding network of internal and external stake-holders (including citizens) who must access their work in a language they can understand. However, to what extent do these calls align with the ideologies of the membership of these organisations? Whilst there have been studies detailing the official development of LPP in supranational and international organisations, and more recent work documenting the divergence of policy and practice, limited research has investigated the linguistic beliefs about language held by the organisational membership (as an exception, see Kriszán & Erkkilä, 2014).

In the case of the United Nations, language choice in matters of international negotiation and contact has long occupied the agenda of diplomats and the Secretariat. Indeed, prior to the establishment of the UN, the League of Nations deferred to general consensus, prioritising just English and French. However, it was recognised from the beginning that the United Nations must be inclusive and, as such attempted to accommodate the languages of the World War II victors through Article 111 of the UN Charter.[3] The intention was that Chinese, French, Russian, English, and Spanish would become established, even if the organisation could not accommodate all in practice. So, while French and English became the working languages[4] of the General Assembly in 1946, the "official" status of the other three languages effectively meant that translation and interpretation services would be provided for them. The language regime expanded in subsequent years (see Table 1): in 1948 Spanish took on the status of working language of the General Assembly (although not of the Secretariat) and in 1968 Russian was promoted from official to working language status. In 1973, after continued lobbying from Arab states, Arabic became an official language and Chinese also became a working language of the General Assembly. While minor changes have been made since that time, essentially the decisions of 1973 have remained unchanged and the recent

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[3] Article 111 of the UN Charter states: "Chinese, French, Russian, English, and Spanish texts are equally authentic."
[4] Working languages are those used for internal operations and communication among staff. English and French are the working languages of the Secretariat at Headquarters in New York. Official languages are the languages used for the circulation of official UN documents and are also supported via interpretation in plenary. Some of the official languages are also working languages in Regional Commissions.

initiates in support of multilingualism have a legacy that dates from this time (see https://www.un.org/Depts/DGACM/multilingualism.shtml for relevant resolutions, reports and activities in relation to multilingualism).

Table 1: Chronological introduction of languages for use in the General Assembly and Security Council at the United Nations & Other Language Initiatives by the UN

- **1948** – Spanish – working language of General Assembly (GA)

- **1968** – Spanish – working language of Security Council (SC);
  Russian – working language of GA

- **1969** – Russian working language of SC

- **1973** – Arabic - working and official language of GA
  Chinese – working language of GA

- **1974** – Chinese – working language of SC

- **1999** – Introduction of Mother Language Day (initiated by Bangladesh & introduced by UNESCO - observed annually on February 21st)

Six official languages and two working languages are currently supported at UN Headquarters in New York, whilst different combinations of working languages operate in its agencies (e.g., English, French and Spanish at the International Maritime Organisation in London). These are documented in the organisation's official policy. However other languages are supported in the UN's outreach and field work[5].

In recent years, the Secretariat has made efforts to review language practice and mainstream multilingualism within the organization and in field and outreach work (including external duty stations and offices). Various activities and more detailed resolutions on multilingualism have ensued. This impetus gained ground following an organization-wide inspection of language use within the organisation in 2011 and the appointment of a Coordinator for Multilingualism. The review, which gathered data on self-reported language use, was published in the Joint Inspection Unit Report JIU/REP/2011/4. It detailed a 'piecemeal and fragmented approach' (p.iv) to multilingualism across the organization and the pervasive hegemony of English, as well as inequity in support and use of the organisation's official and working languages. The

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[5] E.g. The UN's 63 regional Information Centres (ICs) operate in five of the six official languages (excluding Chinese) in addition to 97 local languages when necessary. Within countries, UN missions 'may' provide information and support in local languages.

inspectors argued that reform was needed. These findings have also been supported by other empirical investigation (see Author 2015; 2017). Fifteen recommendations for legislative bodies and executive heads were proposed and a resolution (65/311), incorporating many of these, with additional commitments, was formally adopted by the General Assembly on 19 July 2011.

Although the majority of these recommendations have yet to be addressed, the push towards mainstreaming multilingualism in the UN's work within and outside of the organisation, in addition to promoting multilingualism for peace, security and development internationally has been strongly supported by the current Secretary-General, António Guterres. However, as finances are stretched there has been a scarcity of resources, and this, alongside increases to departments' mandates, has led to a push for "cost-neutrality". As a consequence, the Secretariat has suggested that "creative solutions" (United Nations 2015) to the problem of supporting multilingualism for political and public diplomacy and for UN interventions in international settings must be developed.

While the top-down language policies (as detailed above) indicate significant prioritisation of multilingualism, we argue that without the support of the organisational membership, little can be done to change current practices which appear to favour the use of lingua franca. Therefore, we explore if and how issues of language have preoccupied their deliberations and work in the UN General Debates forum over a period of 46 years. The UN General Debates are forums at the annual sessions of the UN General Assembly where senior representatives deliver statements (approximately 15 minute 'interventions') which present their governments' perspective on current issues in world politics – particularly those issues which directly affect them, as well as key issues which they and other member states at the UN have been working on over the previous 12 months. These statements are similar to the annual legislative state-of-the-union addresses in domestic politics. As outlined in the next section, we "map" language ideologies (Ajsic and McGroarty, 2015) by identifying (non-)discussions of language (which pertain both to language use and support within and outside of the organisation, in addition to other metalinguistic commentary) diachronically with the aim of understanding how the underpinning language ideologies align with or diverge from the top-down organisational language policy of the UN.

4. Data and methods

Data were drawn from the UN General Debates Corpus (UNGDC) (Mikhaylov, Baturo and Dasandi, 2017), which contains 7701 files of General Debates statements from 1970 to 2016 (22,070,872 words). Statements were collected from the dedicated webpages of the individual United Nations General Assembly General Debates and the UN Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) and are organised in the corpus according

to year, session (with the first held in 1946) and country. Between 1970 and 2014 the number of United Nations member countries increased from 70 to 193; this resulted in more countries participating in the General Debates. However, non-member states also participate in the General Debates (e.g., the Holy See and Palestine). Where states have ceased to exist, these are linked in the corpus to their legal successor states (e.g., USSR and the Russian Federation) or kept under the country's last known name (e.g. German Democratic Republic) (Mikhaylov, Baturo and Dasandi, 2017). The corpus contains contributions from 198 countries and each speech (/intervention - as it is known at the UN) contains on average 123 sentences and 2866 words ("tokens") (Mikhaylov, Baturo and Dasandi, 2017). Although speeches/interventions may be delivered in a range of languages prior to being translated into the UN's official languages, only the official English versions are used for the corpus.

Each country statement for each year and session consists of a unique file, meaning that the corpus can be analysed according to country, session and year. With 46 years of data from different countries, it contains a wealth of information, allowing for the exploration of both diachronic change and national difference. This allows us to not only address the research focus stated above, but also to situate this within the larger context of language policy within the UN.

Corpus linguistics is a method that applies software to bodies ("corpora") of naturally-occurring computer-readable text, allowing for the investigation of patterns in discourse (e.g. Baker, 2006; Partington, 2004; Stubbs, 1996) and diachronic change (i.e. change over time) (Partington, 2010). Patterns can be established based on repeated occurrences of specific language units. We considered words as units and looked for patterns surrounding the uses of words pertaining to language and multilingualism. Patterns were identified using the WordList and Concord tools of the programme WordSmith (Version 7.0).

We focused on particular words relating to our topic (i.e. language and multilingualism), also including the names of official/working UN languages and the processes through which multilingualism is enabled and supported: *multilingual, multilinguals, multilingualism, language, languages, English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, translation,* and *interpretation.* Each search term was subjected to the following corpus analysis. First, the raw frequency of each item was obtained, then the collocates, clusters and concordance lines of each item were examined. Collocates are words that combine with ("collocate" with) the node word. In some cases, it seemed sufficient to establish that two words tended to co-occur; in other cases, we sought to establish the strength of co-occurrence. In the latter case, we used the LogDice statistical significance test to measure the strength of the relationship between the node word and its collocates. We then ranked the list of collocates according to the strength of their relationship with the node word and considered only the strongest collocates (i.e. those with the highest LogDice scores, a minimum threshold of 7 indicating a strong association; Rychlý, 2008). We also considered the position of the collocate to the left and the right of the

node, with L1 indicating a collocate one position to the left and R1 indicating a collocate one position to the right. We examined clusters of two or more words recurring in set phrases with a minimum frequency of five. A window of five words to the left and the right of the node word was used for clusters, meaning that the node word itself was not necessarily part of the cluster obtained. Finally, we examined concordance lines, which show how search terms occur within their original context (or "co-text"). Table 6 shows concordance lines with the terms "French" and "language" within their original co-text; note that full sentences and even full words are not always included with concordance lines, which are defined according to a set number of characters to the left and the right of the node word.

Although in most cases collocates, clusters and concordance lines were all examined, if the item had a high frequency (e.g. *language* and *languages* had 885 and 148 occurrences, respectively), collocate and cluster analysis were the primary focus and concordance lines were only examined so as to check other findings. In cases where the item was infrequent (e.g. *Arabic* occurred only 49 times), collocates and clusters proved too few to consider; in these cases, the concordance lines were examined in detail in order to establish patterns.

After each item was analysed individually, all collocate and cluster trends were compared in order to identify similarities and differences. The comparison of findings relating to individual languages allowed us to identify specific preliminary findings, which were then further investigated through the examination of the relevant source texts. Given the highly structured nature of the speeches at the General Debates, source texts were short and contained; they also tended to consist of discrete sections, wherein the search term was either relevant (and manifest) or not. This generic structure of the texts made the process of identifying and delimiting relevant extracts straightforward. These extracts were then copied and reconfigured into a table with other identifying information detailing the nation state, the date of the address, and a brief analytical note indicating the theme of the extract (e.g. 'common language'; positive representations of multilingualism; language and the UN - calling for official recognition of a language; gratitude for the introduction of an official language/Arabic; Mother Language Day). A phased approach to the thematic analysis was undertaken. This consisted initially of familiarisation with the content of the extracts. This was followed by recognition of emerging themes and identification of categories, ensuring that distinct content boundaries were established in relation to the themes identified. The final phase involved labelling the theme of the extract (Braun *et al*, 2019). In order to address research question two (see above), the content of the extracts was then compared against the key policy changes identified in Table 1 and recent calls for reform (as documented in Section 3).

The methods outlined here therefore allowed us to explore language ideologies in the United Nations General Debates in the following ways. First, explicit articulations of language ideologies were identified not only through metalinguistic discussion but also through evaluative representations of different languages, language issues, and language practices and how these change and evolve over time, especially with relation to the

organisation and the role of individual member states raising the issue(s). Furthermore, the methods allowed us to highlight the absence of metalinguistic discussion, which can be observed not only through zero sum totals, but also with respect to the year-on-year comparison of member state interventions (e.g. the Democratic Republic of Congo refers to Swahili once in 2008 but not in 2009 or any other year) and the articulation vs. silence of respective member states on issues (e.g. the Democratic Republic of Congo refers to Swahili but Tanzania does not). While absences in and of themselves are not language ideologies, they do shed light on where, when and how language is made relevant and by whom (or not), thereby allowing us to better understand how beliefs about language/the importance of language issues comprise part of the social principles by which the United Nations organises itself institutionally (cf. Watts, 1999: 68).

5. Findings

Frequencies show that the search terms were not used equally, nor were they evenly dispersed throughout the corpus (Table 2). In this section, we present findings relating to these search terms as follows: section 5.1 presents findings on multilingualism and language, and section 5.2 presents findings on official/working languages. Section 5.3 presents findings on translation and interpretation, and Section 5.4 presents findings relating to a thematic analysis of source text extracts.

Table 2: Frequency and dispersion of search terms

Word	Freq.	Texts	% of Texts
TRANSLAT*	1263	1089	14.14
FRENCH	1177	644	8.36
CHINESE	1106	374	4.86
LANGUAGE	885	674	8.75
RUSSIAN	808	420	5.45
INTERPRET*	790	628	8.15
SPANISH	565	222	2.88
ENGLISH	246	191	2.48
LANGUAGES	148	129	1.68
ARABIC	49	42	0.55
MULTILINGUAL	21	19	0.25
BILINGUAL	8	8	0.10
MULTILINGUALISM	7	6	0.08
MULTILINGUISTIC	1	1	0.01

5.1 Multilingualism and language

Despite long-standing discussions and implementation of the UN Resolution on Multilingualism (A/RES/71/328), the terms *multilingual* and *multilingualism* are very low frequency items, occurring in only a small fraction of the texts in the corpus. Concordance lines show that *multilingual* (21 occurrences) tends to be used to refer to countries, societies, states and nations and the few instances of *multilingualism* (7) are

represented positively (*promote, preserve*). Generally, the root form "multilingual*" (asterisk indicating all word forms with this common base) collocates with other "multi-" words (e.g. *multi-faith, multicultural, multi-ethnic* and *diversity*).

In a similar way, the singular *language* is far more frequent (885) and occurs in far more texts (674 or 9%) than the plural form *languages* (148 occurrences and 129 or 2% of texts). Since singular languages tend to be discussed more often than multiple languages, this suggests that multilingualism is a less popular topic than language in a more general sense. Indeed, the examination of clusters and collocates showed that *language* tends not to be used to refer to specific languages (e.g. official languages or national languages); instead, *language* is most frequently used in a metaphorical sense to refer to "ways of speaking" and also with reference to the UN Charter (see Table 3).

Table 3: Most frequent clusters used in the context of the term *language*

THE LANGUAGE OF	150
LANGUAGE OR RELIGION	52
LANGUAGE OF THE	52
SEX LANGUAGE OR	47
AS TO RACE	45
RACE SEX LANGUAGE	45
SEX LANGUAGE OR RELIGION	44
RACE SEX LANGUAGE OR	44
RACE SEX LANGUAGE OR RELIGION	43
DISTINCTION AS TO	42

In terms of "ways of speaking", the most frequent cluster in Table 3 (*the language of,* 150 occurrences) is not generally used to refer to the language(s) *of* different member states. Instead, the most frequent collocates directly to the right (R1) of the cluster indicate the different styles of speech under discussion, i.e. the language of diplomacy (e.g. *dialogue,* 9, *diplomacy,* 2), peace (e.g. *peace,* 9, *reconciliation,* 3), confrontation (e.g. *force,* 6, *violence,* 5, *weapons,* 4, *arms,* 3, *confrontation,* 3), and reason (e.g. *reason,* 4, *facts,* 2) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Selected concordance lines with *the language of*

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nguage of guns and bombs be replaced by the language of  dialogue and negotiation be
tion of violence and our preference for  the language of  dialogue and logic and reas
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the logic of war and confrontation into  the language of  dialogue and cooperation, a
tes, the United Nations has proved that  the language of  dialogue is the only means
 way for peace and stability is through  the language of  dialogue, the rule of law,
outh African regime does not understand  the language of  dialogue, but rather that o
a peace that must always imply choosing  the language of  diplomacy before choosing t
arter must be governed by realities. In  the language of  diplomacy, reality is only
ld be implemented by peaceful means, in  the language of  diplomatic negotiations and
tions for their peoples. We still speak  the language of peace when, in fact, we are
retoria is really prepared to listen to  the language of peace and reason. 16. The r
sident has begun his regime by speaking  the language of peaceful change, we have ev
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Eight of the remaining top 10 clusters pertain to intertextual references to the Charter of the United Nations, which asserts the institutional aim of promoting and encouraging "universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion" (Chapter IX, Article 55, paragraph c). The only remaining cluster unaccounted for is *language of the* (52), which is normally used to refer to a language of the United Nations (e.g. *United Nations,* 11, *Charter,* 4) or the language of a specific nation or people (e.g. [Icelandic] *people/s,* 3, *British,* 1, *Maori,* 1, *Sinhalese,* 1, *Soviet,* 1).

Beyond the top 10 clusters, there are other trends shown in the full list of clusters. For example, there are repeated calls to find or use a common or single language: *a common language* (29), *the same language* (25), *the only language* (14), *a single language* (6). Another category of clusters focuses on language status, especially pertaining to official status (e.g. *official language,* 23) and the United Nations (e.g. *language of the United Nations,* 11). Other language clusters relate to language use (e.g. *the use of,* 12; *to speak the,* 8; *understand the language,* 5; *still speak the language,* 5) and language and culture (e.g. *language and culture,* 16; *language, culture and,* 12; *culture and language,* 7). Less frequent clusters focus on language and international contexts (e.g. *international mother language,* 6; *in the world,* 5; *language in the world,* 5) and language and identity (e.g. *language of our,* 5; *in our language,* 5; *we speak the,* 5). Finally, a number of clusters pertain to specific languages, such as Portuguese, French, German, English, Macedonian, and Latvian (see Table 5). Notably, of these only French and English are official/working languages of the United Nations.

Table 5: *Language* clusters referring to specific languages

CLUSTER	FREQ
THE PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE	29
THE FRENCH LANGUAGE	8
THE GERMAN LANGUAGE	6
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	6
THE MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE	5
THE LATVIAN LANGUAGE	5

An examination of L1 modifiers of *language* is equally revealing. It confirms that in most instances *language* is discussed in a general sense (e.g. *common language,* 44; *same language,* 24; *only language,* 14; *our language,* 13; *their language,* 12), although specific languages are occasionally discussed (e.g. *Portuguese language,* 30; *official language,* 23). The top 25 statistically significant collocates of *language* (using LogDice) confirm previous findings. Collocates such as *sex, religion, distinction, culture, race, peoples, ethnicity, one's* and *regardless* are intertextual references to the UN Charter. Collocates such as *states* and *state* pertain to the context of the United Nations and the General Debates (e.g. *heads of state, state and government*). Other collocates relate to discussions of language generally or language status (e.g. *official, common, plain*), the mechanics of language use (e.g. *speak, spoken*), and categorisations (e.g. *native, mother*). A final set of statistically significant collocates includes *Portuguese, English, Latvian* and *Hebrew,* which are some of the specific languages being discussed by the member states; notably, of these only English is an official UN language.

5.2 Official/working languages of the United Nations

If we return to the frequency and dispersion figures in Table 2, it seems that official languages are not discussed to an equivalent extent. For example, with 1177 occurrences, *French* occurs 24 times more often than *Arabic* (49) and *French* occurs in 8% of texts, whereas *Arabic* occurs in 0.5%. However, further qualitative analysis (see below) showed that this finding is not as clear-cut as the frequencies suggest.

Although *French* is the most frequently discussed search term, relating to official languages in the UNGDC; not all references to *French* refer to language, and *French* collocates with *language* in only 9 instances (see Table 6).

Table 6: Concordance lines with *French* and *language*

```
1    st eminent scholars of the French language, President Sengho
2    my voice. We who speak the French language have particular r
3    which unite peoples of the French language and culture, and
4     are bound together by the French language and culture, with
5    es, making full use of the French language skills she had ac
6     that share the use of the French language: human rights and
7     to say a few words in the French language, which brings tog
8    ernment of countries using French as a common language will
9    ou-Ennedi-Tibesti, and the French language has been banned i
```

A close examination of collocations, clusters and concordance lines shows that language is also discussed in other ways (e.g. *spoke/continued in French, French-speaking*). The collocation between *French* and *speak** is revealing of language contexts, with references to French-speaking countries (e.g. *countries/states/nations*), communities (e.g. *world, community, sectors*), and people (e.g. *peoples, family, speakers*).

The terms *Russian* (808 instances) and *Chinese* (1106 instances) prove to have little relevance to language: there are only two references to *Russian language*, two references to *Russian-speaking* (citizens and populations), and two collocations between "spoke*" and "Russian" (i.e. *spoke in Russian*); only one instance of *Chinese* refers to language. Similarly, few references to *Spanish* (565 instances) refer to language: there are five references to *Spanish language* and 25 collocations between *speak*/spoke* and *Spanish*, of which 22 are relevant to language.

In comparison with the aforementioned terms, *English* is not frequently discussed (246 instances); however, a larger proportion (86.6%, or 213) of these references involve discussions of language. For example, there are 127 instances of "spoke in English" and other instances where the phrase *in English* pertains to language. There are four instances of "speak" or "speaking" English and 33 references to "English-speaking" or "non-English-speaking" contexts/people/issues. There are additional references to English texts, terminology and translations (e.g. *version*). Similarly, although Arabic is the least frequently discussed language (49 instances), a higher proportion (90%, or 44) of instances relate to language. Generally, discussions of Arabic language refer to speaking Arabic and the Arabic language. Thus, the raw frequencies of the search terms shown in Table 2 do not align with the substantive discussions of the languages in reality. Closer examination of concordance lines showed that in reality English was discussed far more than the other official languages, with the next most frequently discussed being (in descending order) French, Arabic and Spanish.

5.3 Translation and interpretation

Due to the important role of translation and interpretation in facilitating multilingualism within the UN, we also examined terms relating to these practices and services. The lemma "interpret*" occurs 790 times, but there are only 7 references to *interpretation from [x language]* and two to *interpretation service/s*. Most instances tend to refer to the (subjective, non-linguistic) interpretation of the UN Charter and various laws, rules, and articles. Similarly, the lemma *translat** occurs 1263 times, but only a small number (12) of instances refer to the act of translating or language issues more generally (see examples of *translation* in Table 7). Almost all other instances are used in a non-linguistic sense to metaphorically convey the act of transforming the abstract into the material.

Table 7: Concordance lines where *translation* pertain to language issues

```
e juridical analysis and translation from Catalan has been c
```

```
n December 1988, and the translation into eight national lan
o has issued an official translation of the Charter of the U
ensure the provisions of translation and interpretation serv
mokratia. which in rough translation means "rule by the peop
he twentieth century. In translation, it reads, "Be of one h
```

Thus, corpus findings indicate that, despite some suggestive frequencies, multilingualism/language is not very topical in the UNGDC either explicitly or implicitly. Most discussions of language are metaphorical rather than referring to specific languages, and single languages seem to be discussed more than multiple languages. Also, not all official languages were discussed to the same extent or even in conjunction with one another, and translation and interpretation services are rarely discussed. To further explore these patterns, in the next section we examine the data above in greater depth through an analysis of extracts from the source texts.

5.4 Source text extracts

Having discarded all metaphorical references to language, we focused only on the instances where there was clearly discussion of multilingualism and official/working languages. As mentioned previously, language issues did not loom large in the speeches overall. Over the 46-year period covered by the corpus, a total of 81 nations drew attention to language issues of one form or another, but the majority (49 nation states) only mentioned anything to do with language once; 15 only twice. The most mentions were made by Portugal (13), followed by Guatemala (eight), Austria, Bangladesh and Mauritius (six) and Spain (five).

We noted three dominant themes relevant to language. First, there were repeated references to the importance of sharing a common language (corroborating the corpus findings previously discussed, e.g. the clusters *a common language*, *the same language*). In the extracts, the notion of a common language was used rhetorically for in-group identity marking both nationally and geo-politically, further aligning with and intertextually marking a common UN discourse of multilateralism. This is sometimes articulated as a special relationship between two countries (e.g. see Extract 1) or as a formal relationship between countries sharing a common language. Our findings show that in 1992 (Session 47) El Salvador drew on the notion of a common language when referring to a (yet uncreated) Iberian-American community of nations, and in 1995 (Session 50) Morocco did the same in reference to the Arab Maghreb Union. In 1996 (Session 51) Mozambique made reference to the Lusophone Community, or the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. Also, as shown in Extract 2 (below), Antigua & Bermuda (Session 45, 1990) refer to the English-speaking Caribbean Community; and in Extract 3, Mauritius (Session 48, 1993) discusses the Summit of French-speaking countries.

Extract 1 (Afghanistan, Session 46, 1991)

We have historic common ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The common language, culture, customs and our common religion have strongly linked us to each other.

Extract 2 (Antigua & Bermuda, Session 45, 1990)

The Caribbean Community, 25 years old this year, now embraces every English-speaking independent country in the Caribbean and three non-independent Caribbean States. As the regional integration movement in the Caribbean gains momentum, our experience has confirmed the assertions made in 1965 by the founders of the Caribbean Community. They had long argued that seemingly intractable common problems within and community nations are best tackled by the multilateral approach.

Extract 3 (Mauritius, Session 48, 1993)

Mauritius will have the honour to host the fifth Summit of French-speaking Countries and by saying a few words about the two principal themes that will be addressed by Heads of State or Government of countries that share the use of the French language: human rights and development; and unity in diversity.

In other cases, member states focus on the role of English as a lingua franca, aligning the country strategically with the international community (e.g. Extract 4).

Extract 4 (Fiji, Session 71, 2016)

Our message to the world is simple: Fiji is open for business. Fiji has attractive incentives for investment and some of the most favourable corporate and personal tax rates in the Pacific region. We have state-of-the-art communications and an educated, English-speaking work force.

In still other cases, a common language is not what unites but rather what *should* unite. Findings show that Northern Ireland (Ireland, Session 28, 1973), the Middle East (Jordan, Session 40, 1985) and Korea (People's Republic of Korea, Session 46, 1991) are all evoked as places where language should but does not unite. In a related vein, a common language does not unite in cases where it is associated with a colonial past. Congo (Session 28, 1973) argues: "we cannot be happy while our brothers […] are still languishing under the yoke of the Portuguese colonialists".

The second major theme in the data consists of positive representations of multilingualism. Multilingualism is linked to democratic values and human rights, thereby diachronically and intertextually alluding to the founding principles of the UN (to promote peace, liberty, justice, democracy and human rights). Andorra (Session 67, 2012) explains how the francophone community is committed to multiculturalism and multilingualism through "openness to democratic values and human rights". In other cases, member states

draw on their own history in order to discuss the need to respect language rights (e.g. Latvia, Session 48, 1993; Georgia, Session 61, 2006). For example, Estonia (Session 46, 1991) states:

Extract 5 (Estonia, Session 46, 1991)

> Between the two world wars, Estonia was unique among the nations of the world community in terms of its steadfast and tolerant approach to minority rights. Estonian statutes on cultural autonomy for minority nationalities were a remarkable exception in a Europe torn apart by hatred and fear. These statutes guaranteed to each national group and religious minority the opportunity for education in their native language

Often the core values and principles of the UN are evoked through the discussion of minorities. For example, Austria (Session 38, 1993) refers to an Italian-Austrian framework for autonomy in South Tyrol where an "important provision" is "the use of the German language". Similarly, Israel (Session 39, 1984) calls on the Soviet Government to respect the rights of Soviet Jews, whose "only wish is to study their ancient culture and their national language and to live as Jews in their historic homeland". Germany (Session 43, 1998) leaves little debate to the matter (Extract 6).

Extract 6 (Germany, Session 43, 1998)

> The rule of law implies absolute respect for international law. That respect is the foundation of policies that are geared to negotiation and agreements rather than to the threat or use of force. The rule of law implies protection of and respect for minorities, be they religious, national or ethnic minorities. All such minorities have a right to develop their identity, to cultivate their language and to live according to their cultural traditions and to exercise their religion, while enjoying equal political and legal rights.

For other countries, such as India, multilingualism is positively represented by its very nature as being a defining characteristic of the country that self-identifies as "democratic and inclusive" (India, Session 67, 2012). Only one example was found where multilingualism was marked as a problem, in this case a problem for social cohesion. Belize (Session 67, 2012) argues that their national situation is "aggravated" by the fact that their small population is "multi-ethnic, multi-faith, multilingual and multicultural".

The third major theme corroborates a finding from the corpus analysis: official languages of the UN. Some instances refer to gratitude for language recognition and use (e.g. see Extract 7); in most cases this pertains to Arabic having been made an official/working language of the UN (as discussed in Section 3, see Table 1 above for chronology).

Extract 7 (Bahrain, Session 29, 1974)

> At the beginning of my statement, I should like to refer to the Assembly's decision to introduce Arabic as the sixth official language of the United Nations [resolution 3191 (XXVIII)]. That decision is a source of gratification to us.

In many instances, however, this theme arises in relation to calls for new languages to obtain official status within the organisation. The data show that in twelve separate instances since 1976 there have been calls for Portuguese to be made an official language of the UN; also, since 2009, there have also been increasing calls for Bengali/Bangla to be made an official language, too (see Appendix).

Over the course of the 46 years covered by the dataset, only 20 nation states made reference to language use/policy within the organisation (see Appendix). However, their concerns were not uniform, nor were they evenly dispersed over the time period covered (although calls for Portuguese to be made an official/working language are consistent throughout the corpus). Instead, their different concerns clustered around certain time frames, which allowed us to identify points at which LPP issues became salient within the organisation and, in retrospect, the extent to which these aligned with changes to UN policy (see Table 1 above) or agendas.

For example, discussions about Arabic occur mainly in the early 1970s, around the time when it was made an official/working language of the UN (1973, as discussed above). We can also map intertextual references to discussions about the Resolution on Multilingualism, adopted in 1995 (and discussed by Monaco) and calls for the introduction of 'Mother Language Day' (see Appendix).

Finally, the member states listed in the Appendix appear to be those most concerned with language practices and policies within the organisation. Portugal and Bangladesh (who first called for and helped establish the annual 'Mother Language Day' in 1999) were particularly vocal. There were also intermittent statements from a diverse set of member states recognising the work of UN language services. Spanish-speaking countries also voiced calls to have greater representation of Spanish within the Secretariat and France and Monaco also called for the protection and preservation of multilingualism within the UN. Notably, though, member states' concerns differed, few issues were consistently discussed over the time period covered, and not all aligned with UN language policies or recent agendas promoted by the Secretariat for reform. None made explicit reference to the dominance of English and, with the exception of Spain, none made reference to inequity of language provision within the organisation.

6. Conclusions

Our research questions sought to explore the extent to which language concerns have preoccupied UN member state debates over a 46-year period and if these concerns aligned with language policy initiatives and changes implemented by the Secretariat throughout this period. In addition, we sought to investigate if and

how the language ideologies of member states served to support the language policy of the United Nations. We explored this by identifying and mapping member states' discussions of language diachronically across the 46-year time period of the UNGDC corpus. Findings showed that member states discussed language issues in a range of ways, but with only a few exceptions (e.g. discussions of Arabic in the early 1970s), these did not tend to align with UN policy or agendas. Perhaps more importantly, languages and language issues were not a common focus of discussion, which shows that member states did not prioritise (at least not in the UNGD) language issues.

As a result, we attribute the inertia concerning multilingualism initiatives in the United Nations to the member states' lack of metalinguistic discussions (and therefore failure to prioritise language issues) over the course of a 46-year time period. Moreover, the (problematic) growing preponderance of English in the organisation is reflected in the fact that this language is discussed more than any other official or working language. In fact, some languages (e.g. Chinese) are almost not discussed at all. Finally, where specific language issues *are* raised (e.g. calls for Portuguese to be made an official language), we attribute the lack of change in policy to (1) the low power status of member states and (2) the fact that these issues were raised only by a very small number of member states. As a result, it would seem that the occasional prioritisation of language issues by a small minority of member states is rather inconsequential, especially when compared to the lack of prioritisation of language issues by the vast majority.

Our findings suggest that, in order for language policies to take effect, the language ideologies of particular organisational membership need to be addressed. Some options here might be to adopt an organisational (ideological) "discourse planning" approach (Lo Bianco, 2005) or a "language management" approach (Nekvapil and Sherman, 2015) wherein the complex relationship between different parties' behaviour toward language (or "metalinguistic behaviour") is addressed. The success of a discourse planning or language management approach could equally be studied through the tracing of (ideological) discourses over time. If a discourse planning initiative resulted in a shift in language ideologies over time, then this would suggest that the discourse planning (and therefore the language policy) was taking effect. In other words, charting the evolution of (ideological) discourse over time *and* against policy developments and initiatives can provide insight into the successes and failures of language policies; this is something corpus linguistics as a method is well-placed to contribute to the field of language policy.

Using corpus linguistics to analyse the UNGDC allowed us to look at the politics of policymaking in terms of how member states interacted with the evolving language policy landscape of the UN. Corpus analysis allowed us to chart member states' changing foci over time: for example, we saw member states who had called for recognition of Arabic shift to a stance of appreciation for its support, once it was made official. The difficulty, however, is the effect of silence in and/or absence from the data (Duguid and Partington, 2018).

When language is *not* the subject of discussion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to tease out an explanation of the underlying language ideologies: we cannot know from our dataset why what is missing is missing (even if we can recognise the ultimately negative effect of that absence). In the case of our data, our inability to explain absence and silence is coupled with another lacuna: the inability to assess which languages were *in use* in the General Debates. The fact that the UNGDC exists only in English meant that we were not able to access the subtler ways in which language ideologies were figuring in, for example, language choices and code-switching. We were therefore faced with the conundrum of studying the topic of multilingualism through the medium of English. The inability to explore multilingual practices in the data meant that it was difficult to ascertain the nuanced ways in which multilingualism is relevant in the General Debates and impossible to explore the enactment of language policy agency through multilingual practices (cf. Bonacina-Pugh, 2012 on "practiced language policy").

Additionally, further investigations of member state language ideologies are needed in order to fully explore their organisational sector-specific nature. Future studies may wish to address this at the UN by examining datasets drawn from other categories of organisational membership, such as the Secretary General speeches delivered at the General Assembly (in which the annual work of the Organisation is reviewed and critiqued) and discussions in the General Assembly with regard to the Resolution on Multilingualism. Moreover, more direct methods of investigation (observation, questionnaires and interviews) may elicit further data on member attitudes to contemporary language policy.

As argued in the introduction, attention to the absence of references to language problems/language policy is just as important as an exploration of language problems themselves. Our findings have indicated that the language ideologies of member states, which both (1) de-prioritise language issues with relation to other national and international affairs and (2) favour some languages above others, has contributed to bottom-up inertia and "benign neglect" (Wright, 2016) with regard to the (top-down) multilingual priorities explicated in the language policies of the United Nations. Thus, we propose that organisational language policy must incorporate an alignment of values between different levels of membership for the explicitly stated policy of the organisation to take effect. If organisations wish to make changes to language policies, and/or work more vehemently on their implementation, it seems critical that organisations should attend more closely to the language ideologies of their membership and/or to reasons for their apparent inattention to language issues.

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Appendix

Year	Theme	Language	Member state
1970	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Arabic	Syrian Arabic Republic
1970	Appreciation of work of the language services	n/a	Gambia
1972	Appreciation of support for Arabic as a UN Language	Arabic	Libya
1974	Appreciation of introduction & support for Arabic as a UN Language	Arabic	Libya
1974	Appreciation of introduction & support for Arabic as a UN Language	Arabic	Tunisia
1976	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
1977	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
1980	Calls for greater geo-political representation of Spanish speakers in Secretariat + for protection of Spanish	Spanish	Ecuador
1980	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
1983	Appreciation of work of the language services	n/a	Senegal
1984	Appreciation of work of the language services	Bengali/Bangla	Bangladesh
1987	Recognition of economic constraints but need for protection & preservation of multilingualism within the UN	Multilingualism	France
1988	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
1989	Praise - 40th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights - translated into 8 languages - noted as significant event	n/a	Benin
1990	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
1995	Recognition of economic constraints but need for protection & preservation of multilingualism within the UN	Multilingualism	Monaco
1995	Calling on members in Nairobi to use conference services	n/a	Kenya
1996	Recognition of economic constraints but need for protection & preservation of multilingualism within the UN	Multilingualism	France
1999	Expressing desire to work in own language (French) in UN (bodies + agencies)	French	Niger
2000	Appreciation of work of the language services	n/a	Congo
2001	Recognition of economic constraints but need for protection & preservation of multilingualism within the UN	Multilingualism	Monaco
2002	Appreciation of work of the language services	n/a	Suriname
2008	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal

2009	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Bengali/Bangla	Bangladesh
2009	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
2010	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Bengali/Bangla	Bangladesh
2010	International Mother Language Day	n/a	Bangladesh
2011	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Bengali/Bangla	Bangladesh
2011	Appreciation of work of the language services	n/a	Denmark
2011	International Mother Language Day	n/a	Bangladesh
2012	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Bengali/Bangla	Bangladesh
2012	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
2012	Appreciation of work of the language services	n/a	Dominica
2013	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Bengali/Bangla	Bangladesh
2013	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Cape Verde
2013	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
2013	Recognition of economic constraints but need for protection & preservation of multilingualism within the UN	Multilingualism	Spain
2013	International Mother Language Day	n/a	Bangladesh
2014	Calls for greater geo-political representation of Spanish speakers in Secretariat + for protection of Spanish	Spanish	Spain
2014	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal
2014	International Mother Language Day	n/a	Bangladesh
2015	Calling for Recognition of Languages as Official/Working language at the UN	Portuguese	Portugal