

Original Paper

Insights and Inspirations from Attempts of the EU to “Rebuild the Tower of Babel”

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Abstract

Based on the historical characteristics of Europe’s linguistic diversity, the EU has implemented a pluralistic language policy, aiming to “Rebuild the Tower of Babel” within its organization. However, the language governance in the process of the EU integration has not been smooth. The conflicts between linguistic legislation and linguistic practice, between efforts to preserve multilingualism and the reality of English monolingualism, and between the multiple participants in language governance and their varying interests are still nagging at the EU language policy-makers. The underlying reasons are those difficulties to reconcile administrative efficiency with multilingual equality, the pragmatic instrumental value of one language with its national symbolic value, and the interests of many countries behind languages race. Insights into the EU language governance provide good inspirations for China’s language policy and planning, which will help China better present Chinese language and culture to the world, telling China’s stories well and making China’s voice heard.

Keywords

the EU language governance, multilingualism, China’s language policy and planning

1. Introduction

Language is a communication tool used by everyone in their daily life as a means to convey information and arguments to others. Therefore, a sound multi-language policy is more conducive to minimizing disputes and winning mutual respect among ethnic groups, as well as transmitting cultural, educational and artistic assets of human beings. A new concept known as “language governance” has recently gained traction in field of linguistics. Language governance places more emphasis on equitable interaction and coordinated cooperation among various subjects than the top-down policymaking dominated by governments. Global language governance refers to the coordinated behavior of

governments, international organizations, multinational corporations, individuals and other international actors to solve language problems faced by mankind. In this way, a harmonious language community can be constituted, language conflicts be resolved, and language barriers be removed. Since its inception, the European Union has gradually developed a system of language governance with language equality at its core, and multilingual education and the protection of majority languages as its two wings. Its original intention was to safeguard linguistic diversity and the principle of multilingualism through linguistic equality, but objectively it has also resulted in the dominance of English. In 2020, the Brexit made the number of people in the EU who speak English as a first language drop significantly from 12.8 per cent to 1.2 per cent, with only two countries, Ireland and Malta, seeing English as an official language. However, by virtue of its long-established global predominance in international business, education, media, diplomacy and the Internet, English continues to play a role as the language of day-to-day administration in the European Union and as the medium of communication in the Member States, and it is still the most preferred language for foreign language learning in the EU. English, who is dominant in the EU linguistic life, has not “exited”. As it is no longer the official language of the large EU countries, no longer represents the linguistic interests of the large EU countries, and theoretically does not harm the linguistic rights and interests of other countries within the EU, English is becoming the optimal choice for reconciling linguistic demands among EU countries, especially the smaller ones. Even faced with certain challenges, the EU’s language governance can still serve as a model for China’s global language management because it involves numerous languages and participants, and began earlier with remarkable progress. At present, it is difficult to shake the status of English in the EU language market and the multilingual community. The language, which is the most convenient for multilingual Europeans to communicate other than their mother tongue, is still English. The widening gap between the concept of multilingual equality pursued by the EU and the reality of English dominant status has featured the EU’s language governance dilemma in the post-Brexit period.

2. The Dilemmas Facing Language Governance in the EU

2.1 The Conflict between Linguistic Legislation and Linguistic Practice

The most distinctive feature of the EU language policy is the language equality, meaning that the EU provides for a large and growing number of official languages, which are legally equal. Initially, there were only four official languages in the European Community, representing the official languages of the six founding countries: Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. As the EU continued to expand, each newly admitted member state was able to exercise its right to elevate its national language to an official EU language. As of today, the EU has 24 official languages (Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and

Swedish).

The principle of linguistic equality in the EU is reflected in its issued regulations. Firstly, all Member States are equal in terms of language use; secondly, all citizens of the Member States are granted the right to communicate with the EU institutions in their official language. The *Regulation No. 1 Determining the Languages to be Used by the European Economic Community* emphasizes that documents which a Member State or a person subject to the jurisdiction of a Member State sends to institutions of the Community may be drafted in any one of the official languages selected by the sender. The reply shall be drafted in the same language; documents which an institution of the Community sends to a Member State or to a person subject to the jurisdiction of a Member State shall be drafted in the language of such State; regulations and other documents of general application shall be drafted in official languages; the institutions of the Community may stipulate in their rules of procedure which of the languages are to be used in specific cases; the languages to be used in the proceedings of the Court of Justice shall be laid down in its rules of procedure; if a Member State has more than one official language, the language to be used shall, at the request of such State, be governed by the general rules of its law. This earliest legal framework for the EU's multilingualism policy done at Brussels at 15 April 1958 has been in use since its inception.

However, beneath the appearance of linguistic equality in the EU lie many inequalities. Firstly, there is inequality between EU official language and local minority language. The official languages of the European Union are mostly languages with a large and stable number of speakers, which are the mother tongues of many countries and do not face an existential crisis. However, majority languages, which refer to the official languages of some small countries, and those not included in the official languages are limited by the size of their speakers and its popularity, only being used by a very small number of native speakers. In the process of European language integration, the official languages of the European Union will be learnt and used by more people, while the minority languages will face the risk of language erosion, language rights not being guaranteed, and even the demise of the community culture. It was argued for Luxembourgish to be made an official language of the EU for it is the only unrecognized official language of an EU member state. However, Luxembourgish is the language of the Rhenish and Frankish immigrants to Germany in the 4th century A.D., and the long period of ethnic integration has resulted in a mixture of German and French pronunciation and vocabulary. German and French are also official languages in Luxembourg, and even the laws of Luxembourg are written in French. Considering this fact, Luxembourgish has so far failed to become an official language of the European Union. In 2019, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Luxembourgish an endangered language, which indicates that Luxembourgish has been greatly squeezed by other official languages and is at the margin of disappearing.

Secondly, the implementation of multilingualism is inconsistent across the EU. Major countries in the European Union tend to use their mother tongues more often than foreign languages; while small

countries with thinner populations are constrained and influenced by large countries in all aspects, resulting in the need for them to learn and use major countries' languages, and becoming those that have implemented the European Union's multilingualism to a greater extent. Taking the six EC founding countries as an example, the three larger countries, Germany, France and Italy, have been able to maintain the stable use of their own mother tongues, and the proportion of nationals who master a variety of foreign languages is relatively low; whereas in the three smaller countries, say Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, the first two, with the exception of the Netherlands, which is still adhering to a de jure monolingualism, have long been de jure and de facto multilingual countries.

Thirdly, the choices of working language in the official EU institutions also breeze inequality. The *Regulation No. 1* gives the EU institutions the freedom to choose their working languages. Due to the lack of multilingual awareness among the staff of the EU institutions, they tend to choose their own more commonly used and more convenient language for communication in their work, which ultimately leads to the inequality in the use of working languages in the EU institutions. Although the EU has 24 official languages, but in the day-to-day work of the EC and the Council of Europe, English, French and German are more widely used, having the higher status of "procedural" languages. A study by the Centre for Research on Multilingualism, a group of EU linguists, shows that in 1970, 60% of EC documents were in French and 40% in German. In 2017, only 2.58 per cent of documents were in French, 2.02 per cent in German, 11.02 per cent in other languages and 84.38 per cent in English.

2.2 The Conflict between Efforts to Preserve Multilingualism and the Reality of English Monolingualism

The EU asserts that it is in favor of linguistic diversity. This principle is enshrined in the EU Charter of fundamental rights (art. 22) and in the Treaty on European Union (art. 3(3) TEU). In the EU, language policy is the responsibility of member states, and the EU does not have a common language policy; EU institutions play a supporting role in this field, based on the principle of "subsidiarity"; they promote a European dimension in the member states' language policies. The EU encourages all its citizens to be multilingual; specifically, it encourages them to be able to speak two languages in addition to their native language, believing that learning the languages of other Member States is conducive to strengthening the sense of identity as EU citizens and cultivating the language ecological space needed for EU integration. EU policy on multilingual education is directly influenced by the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe, which is more loosely organized than the EU, is particularly concerned with intra-European linguistic, cultural and ideological issues, and in 1954 it adopted the European Cultural Convention, which requires member states to encourage their citizens to learn about the history, languages and cultures of other countries. To this end, since 1962 the Council of Europe has been developing a series of policies to promote multilingual education, the most influential of which are the 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the 1998 document Language Learning and European Citizenship.

In its multilingual education policy, the European Union has been working with the Council of Europe to explore a standardized and regulated model of foreign language education and to build a European assessment system for the teaching and learning foreign languages. In 1975, the European Union, together with the Council of Europe, launched *The Threshold level*, the European Basic Standards for Language Learning, and in 2001 they jointly issued the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which evaluate the foreign languages learning into part of lifelong education. In addition to exploring with the Council of Europe the assessment criteria for foreign language education, the EU has also launched a number of action programs to promote citizens' ability in multilingualism, such as the "M+2" principle proposed in 2002, which requires future EU citizens to master at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue, and 2003 approved *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006*. In 2005, the European Commission issued a New Framework for a European Strategy on Multilingualism, which encourages citizens to learn foreign languages, supports the multilingual economy and upgrades a number of existing exchange learning programs. The EU has also created the post of "EU Commissioner for Multilingualism" to promote the learning and use of foreign languages by EU citizens. Over the years, the EU has been shifting the focus of its language planning towards a multilingual education policy, with a view to providing linguistic and cultural support for EU integration.

However, the EU's encouragement of multilingualism among its citizens actually had a limited effect on consolidating multilingualism, and has largely fueled the rise of English in the EU, triggering a crisis of multilingualism. Since the UK's accession to the EU in 1973 and the inclusion of English as an official language of the EU, English has continued to expand its sphere of influence, overtaking French as the EU's number one language in the 1990s. Following the EU's eastward expansion in 2004, most of the newly-acceded Central and Eastern European countries adopted English as their working language. The year 2011 saw a rapid increase in the proportion of EU translations done in English as a source language, to more than 60 per cent, but at the same time, only 3 per cent of texts were translated into English. In 2018, 81 per cent of all EU documents were drafted in English.

At the social level, 79% of EU citizens consider English to be the most useful language, according to the Eurobarometer in 2012. The popularity of English language teaching in elementary school in EU countries rose from 35% in 2000 to 80% in 2020, and English is a compulsory subject in junior and senior secondary schools in almost all EU countries. More than 50% of the EU population speaks English in addition to their mother tongue. The trend of non-native English speakers learning English in the EU is so prevalent that it has evolved into a new language called "English as a lingua franca". Its advocates are calling for it to replace the multilingualism that already exists in the EU as the only lingua franca in the EU.

The European Union's goal of "M+2", i.e., the acquisition of two foreign languages in addition to the mother tongue, continues to be hampered by the predominance of English. The target has not

significantly boosted multilingualism among EU citizens, with only less populated countries such as Belgium and Luxembourg meeting the target, while the multilingualism of citizens from large populated countries such as France and Germany are far from being met and is not sufficiently motivated to improve, with the majority of EU citizens believing that “M+1”, i.e., learning only one foreign language, is better. This also suggests that the EU is overly optimistic about the development of multilingualism in its citizens. Not every citizen is gifted in multilingualism, and languages are inherently subject to “use or disuse”, with those that are used more often gaining a stronger foothold and those that are used less often being pushed out of favor. The concept of “multilingualism at all levels and in all contexts” proposed by the European Union’s language program does not take into account language acquisition mechanisms.

2.3 The Conflict between the Multiple Participants in Language Governance and their Varying Interests

Compared to vertically managed “language planning”, “language governance” emphasizes the participation of multiple actors at the horizontal level. EU language governance has diverse entities, with the EU, the European Commission and EU member states all being important participants at the macro level, the institutions such as communities, schools, and companies at the meso level, and individual EU citizens at the micro level. These multiple governance entities play their respective roles and influence each other, forming a hierarchical relationship that is closely interdependent and mutually restrictive.

As a regional international organization with the highest degree of integration, the European Union has greater binding force on its member states, but at present it still focuses mainly on the political and economic fields, and its activities in the field of language and culture are mainly aimed at strengthening the collective identity of the European Union so as to advance the economic and social integration of the European Union. The Council of Europe is an important institution created in the process of European integration, and plays an important role in the formulating European language education policy and the shaping education concepts. The language issue has been one of the Council of Europe’s main concerns since its inception. As early as 1957, the Council held its first intergovernmental conference on language education to explore approaches to achieving a European cooperation program in language education. The Council of Europe has two bodies dedicated to languages: the Language Policy Unit and the European Centre for Modern Language. The Language Policy Unit is committed to encouraging linguistic diversity through the designing program and setting standards, which have become essential references for modern language education in Europe. The European Centre for Modern Languages is dedicated to the carrying out European language policy and to promote the reform and innovation of modern language teaching. It is active in assisting member states in language teaching experiments, localization studies and teacher training. However, the European Commission is a relatively loose organization and is less binding on member states. The packages it issues to promote

a European multilingualism are only seen as reference frameworks, and whether they can be implemented or not depends on the EU member states.

Due to the fact that all EU Member States have autonomy in choosing the language policies introduced by the EU and the European Commission, all member states will take into account their own interests to manage language, so it is difficult to form a unified opinion in EU language governance, which has been exacerbated by the Brexit. Taking France, a founding and important member of the EU, as an example, when the EC was first established, the French language had a significant advantage, with three of the six founding members being French-speaking countries (i.e., France, Belgium and Luxembourg). At that time, France tried to popularize French within the Community under the banner of promoting multilingual education, but after the UK's accession in 1973, English began to legitimately challenge French as an official language of the EU. Thus, since the 1990s, France has gradually shifted to a protective language policy, beginning to make use of the EU's principle of "language equality" to safeguard French's status. On 31 January 2020, the UK officially left the EU. However, in September of the same year, the European Commission organized an hours-long meeting on updating the Immigration Bill, with the full meeting materials available only in English, and a short two-page communiqué in French for the French media. This EU *modus operandi* triggered an outcry from francophone defense groups. The French press corps immediately submitted a collective complaint to the EU institutions, and French non-governmental language protection group protested against the EU through social platforms and other channels, calling this issue "Too Much English". In October 2021, Julien Aubert, a member of French parliament, submitted a motion to the French Parliament proposing that French be made the sole working language of the EU on the grounds that the Brexit has excluded large numbers of native English speakers from the EU, so English now accounts for only 1% of the EU's population, while French, as many member states' second language, is the second most commonly used foreign language in the EU after English. Despite France's desperate attempts to raise the status of French in the EU after the UK's departure, it must admit that although Brexit has lowered the proportion of English-speaking persons, it has not altered the fact that English being popular in European countries. Among the 450 million people in Europe, 370 million people can use English to varying degrees, accounting for 82%.

In addition to international organizations and sovereign states, multinational corporations also play an important role in EU language governance. As main entities in the EU market and even the world market, multinational companies may hire multilingual employees for business needs. In order to improve employment competitiveness, employees may learn a new language before being recruited and receive language training after becoming staff. Those choices consciously or unconsciously affect the pattern of language development in the EU. Multinational companies can be divided into intra-EU multinational companies and trans-EU global companies based on their business distribution. The former, only developing business in a few EU countries, is smaller in scale and easily affected by the

EU's multilingual policy. The latter operates globally and on a much larger scale. Considering the fact that English has the largest number of speakers in the world (1.4 billion speakers globally, of which only about 370 million are native speakers and the rest of the 1.03 billion speak English as their first foreign language), and in order to reduce communication costs and improve work efficiency, English is often used as the first working language both among and within multinational corporations, which forces employees in multinational companies to spend more time and energy learning English so as to speak English fluently and accurately. At the dimension of the schools, the communities and the individuals, despite the seeming autonomy of linguistic choice, these meso- or micro-subjects is in fact largely influenced by the external environment and government policies when facing language choice. For individual citizens of the European Union, there are two main factors affecting their autonomous language choice: one is the convenience of daily communication, and the other is the cultural identity behind languages. In the first aspect, English, as the world's lingua franca, is easier to be an "Interlanguage" for transnational communication than other languages, which is the main reason why most EU citizens choose English as their first foreign language. Taking the non-native English-speaking countries in the EU as an example, the highest level of English proficiency among the EU countries belongs to Netherlands, where 72 per cent of Dutch people are fluent in English. The overall level of English in the Nordic countries is also relatively high, with Denmark, Sweden and Finland all having English prevalence rates close to 70 per cent. Even in France, which is resistant to speak English, 39 per cent of the population is fluent in English.

Overall, the EU's diverse language governance entities have different interests. The EU considers language governance more in terms of integration; the European Commission attaches more importance to pan-European linguistic and cultural exchanges, the EU Member States prioritize their own language status and national identities, multinational corporations choose more profit-generating languages, and individuals focus on the ease of language exchanges.

3. The Underlying Reasons for Language Governance Dilemma

3.1 Difficulties in Reconciling Administrative Efficiency with Multilingual Equality

Maintaining linguistic diversity is a core value of the European Union, but multilingualism is also, to a certain extent, one of the obstacles to the advancement of the EU integration. Some scholars believe that multilingualism hinders Europeans' understanding of each other and makes their political debates lack a basis for mutual understanding and linguistic diversity profoundly affects the EU's public discourse space and hinders the formation of an integrated identity and a sense of citizenship for the whole of Europe. In addition, language barriers increase the cost of communication between countries, which has a negative impact on the operation of the European Union's single market and other coordinated policies.

The pattern of linguistic diversity in the European Union is difficult to change in the short term. In order to maintain linguistic equality among member states and steadily promote European integration, the EC had to put forward the policy of linguistic equality and multilingualism at the early stage of its establishment with purpose to maintain stable friendly linguistic relations among member states. However, once the principle of language equality has entered into effect, its internal dynamics must continue to demand the preservation of linguistic diversity in the EU, which in turn will get in the way of the EU integration process.

Increasing multilingual translation is the most effective way to overcome communication barriers in a language-diversified environment. To this end, the EU has taken steps to increase its investment in translation. According to 2019 data, there are 39,130 permanent civil servants in the EU, of which nearly 20% are engaged in translation and related language service jobs, such as terminology compilation, information technology, legal language consultation, administrative affairs and business training. There are nine translation departments under the EU institutions, of which eight institutions, including the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Auditors, the European Bank, the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions, each have an independent translation department, and the rest of the institutions share the Translation Center for the Bodies of the EU. The translation departments of most EU institutions are divided into 24 language groups according to the official EU languages, each group has 15-40 translators.

However, translation is not the best solution for multilingual communication barriers and has two major limitations. First, it is costly and inefficient. There are currently 24 official languages in the European Union, with more than 500 combinations of mutual translations, which requires huge human, financial and material resources, coupled with the complicated work procedures, and it is also difficult to guarantee timeliness. The total number of EU citizens in 2017 was about 512.5 million, with a total budget of €137 billion, of which the total amount spent on translation was about €1.3 billion, corresponding to an average of more than €2 per EU citizen per year for this purpose. The EU has three main institutions, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council, with a total of about 60,000 civil servants. The Commission's translation service is the largest in the world, with 1,750 linguists and 600 support staff, as well as 600 full-time and 3,000 part-time interpreters. The European Parliament also employs a large number of translators and sometimes has to hire many outsourced translators to cope with the mountains of paperwork. On average, each page of the document costs £20.27 to translate, and some of the minority languages cost even more. The most expensive is Irish, which costs £38.85 per A4 page to translate. As a result, spending on translation in the budgets of the EU institutions has often shrunk in response to economic downturns and other factors. For example, in November 2012, the European Parliament decided to cut its budget for translating speeches and documents of plenary sessions into all official languages, resulting in a further

reduction in the use of minor languages. Besides, the complexity of inter-language translation makes it difficult to accurately translate the same text into other texts, and the loss of information due to inter-textual translation makes it difficult to ensure the accuracy of the message. No one was more troubled than the European Court of Justice, which was responsible for interpreting European Union law, for the reason that accuracy is of paramount importance in legal texts.

3.2 Difficulty in Reconciling the Pragmatic Instrumental Value of One Language with its National Symbolic Value

Language has a variety of values for human beings, including both pragmatic and symbolic values. In the case of minor and weak languages, the two are sometimes difficult to reconcile and can even be opposed to each other. From perspective of language as a practical instrument, language is an important medium for promoting economic and cultural exchanges between EU countries, and language barriers will be hindrance to EU integration. From the view of language as a symbol of national identity, European languages are also an important link for European countries to maintain their national cultural identity. As a result, the dilemma facing language governance in the EU is how to reconcile the contradiction between the language benefiting the integration at the instrumental level and the language being part of the European multicultural heritage at the symbolic level.

In order to safeguard the linguistic equality of its member States and language rights of minorities, the European Union advocates the principle of multilingualism and has put in place a series of language protection policy, like funding linguists to prevent endangered languages from being swallowed up by the dominant language in the context of the EU integration and the brutal linguistic competition, which really work for memorizing languages and cultures of minority communities. On the other hand, a review of the language evolution history reveals that languages have become fewer in the course of their development. There is a growing momentum of linguistic assimilation, absorption and integration in the context of ongoing language contacts and cultural exchanges. In this process, the more populous and culturally developed national languages tend to be on the active side of the interaction. In the “M+1” model of foreign language learning, which is common in the European Union countries, English is the first foreign language preferred by the majority of citizens, and even English native speakers prefer major languages, such as Spanish and French, to minor ones. With the continuous integration of the European Union, the symbolic value of minor languages may be gradually eroded by the instrumental value represented by major languages. The dominance of English is a phased phenomenon in the current EU socio-linguistic integration and development, and it also reflects natural consequence of language development.

English priority in the linguistic education markets threatens multilingualism in the EU, but it cannot be denied that widespread use of English brings benefits such as more efficient communication and administration. If English were to be fully implemented as a single common language, the headaches of miscommunications caused by multilingualism in the EU could be significantly alleviated. This

explains why the EU, aware of the negative impact of foreign language education on language equality and the fragmentation of the multilingual landscape, has continued to promote various foreign language education initiatives that encourage the expansion of English without correcting them. The real aim is to leave a strategic ambiguity or decision-making flexibility so as to give underlying support to English literacy in the EU, thereby achieving the implicit aim of changing disorganized multilingual landscape the EU.

3.3 Difficulty in Reconciling the Interests of many Countries behind Languages Race

Language is an important tool for defending and expanding national interests. Although there are many different language governance entities in the EU, it is most difficult to reconcile the interests of the EU member states. In the process of EU language governance, the game between great powers is mainly about whether they can maximize their national interests and improve their international status by strengthening their own language presence.

As the origin of modern nation-states, EU member states have different national identities. The national language is an important symbol of national identity. Once the national language is assimilated and integrated by other languages, it may shake the sense of national identity and threaten the legitimacy of the existence of the nation-state. Therefore, language identity is the core benefits that countries cannot give up and cannot compromise. However, European countries have similar cultural origins, and it is possible to seek common ground while leaving aside differences so as to achieve a supranational collectivism. In a sense, the fact that countries respect each other's national identity and language interests while supporting multilingualism is the result of seeking common ground while reserving differences in the EU integration process. Multilingualism undoubtedly moves the EU integration forwards when it was first established, but its "preservation of differences" have potential risks. That is, under the framework of observing multilingualism, EU countries are destined to fight endlessly to safeguard the interests of their own mother tongues. When EU integration advances smoothly, such conflicts will be diluted by the existence of common interests, while once thwarted, such latent conflicts may immediately intensify. At present, with the Brexit, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, and the rise of right-wing populism in many countries, the EU is facing greater challenges to its integration, and the problem of national identity, as reflected in the language issue, has come to the surface. In January 2022, the "Institut de France" expressed dissatisfaction with the use of English and French in the new version of the French ID card and filed an appeal protesting that the bilingual identity card format was unconstitutional; in May of the same year, the French Government amended the rules for the use of video game terminology to prohibit the use of English term in the field of gaming, and officially issued a French-language vocabulary for terms such as "jeu video en nuage", "jeu video de competition" and "joueur-animateur en direct", and required government workers to lead the way in their use. In July 2022, the introduction of English as a second administrative language in German departments in order to facilitate various procedures for immigrants was met with displeasure by the

spokesperson for the Federation of German Civil Servants, Ibard, who argued that only German is the official language according to the applicability of German laws and regulations, and if English is used for communication at work in the future, it will only lead to more inconvenience.

Brothers of Italy, a national-conservative political party in Italy, has labelled the phenomenon of the proliferation of English vocabulary in daily communication in Italy as “Anglophile fever”, which it considers to be demeaning and insulting the language of Italian. The party proposes to legislate against the use of foreign languages in official contexts, requiring the strict use of Italian in the workplace for public sector workers such as the Italian government and state-owned enterprises, as well as the use of Italian exclusively in the curricula of Italian public universities and educational institutions at all levels. Violators would be subject to fines ranging from 5,000 to 100,000 euros, depending on the severity of the case.

From the examples of the rejection of English language influence in Italy, France, Germany and other countries, it is clear that linguistic national identity and linguistic national interests have always been at the center of concerns in the process of language governance in each country. The dominance of English as a “foreign language” in the EU’s internal linguistic life may become a pretext for populist xenophobic activities, and the possibility that the linguistic contradictions and conflicts surrounding it may spread to the EU in the future cannot be ruled out.

4. Inspiration for China’s Language Policy and Planning

4.1 From the Perspective of Political Linguistics

Language is a symbolic system that carries the will to power, with the function of regulating the social order. Language in international organizations reflects the will of sovereign states and embodies international power relations. International organizations tend to adopt mono-lingual system to achieve high organizational efficiency. Yet as international organizations, they have to implement multilingualism, at least nominally, to present language as a symbol of national sovereignty. In practice, choosing which language to be used as the working language by an international organization is a result of repeated competitions between administrative entities and major powers based on organizational characteristics and language value. Generally speaking, more countries in international organizations means more sensitive geopolitical relations, which leads to more complicated relations between language and power. EU members seek to maximize their own language interests under the premise of observing EU language policy. This shows that if a country wants to participate in the development of the language of international organizations and enhance international discourse, it will definitely engage in the language policy-making in through the gambling in power.

At present, the language game in international organizations highlights the contradiction between the traditional universally used languages and the emerging international languages. English, as a symbol of power, status, and identity is still widely used in the world, and its dominant advantage will not be

wavered in the short term. As international organizations are mostly dominated by the United States and Europe, China's language governance in international organizations should be fully prepared for the long-term, complex and intense language competitions among the major powers. China should lead the global language governance on the basis of respecting the equal rights of other countries' languages. China should lead the global language governance on the basis of respecting the equal rights of national languages of all countries, taking the construction of a global language partnership as a traction, appropriately dealing with the relationship between the linguistic efficiency of international organizations and language equality of all countries, and maintaining the balance between the instrumental and symbolic values of languages. The use of language by the staff of international organizations is an important part of the language governance so attention should be paid to the Chinese language learning and training of the staff in international organizations. Chinese-speaking staff in international organizations should also be highlighted to give full play to the linguistic and cultural influence, through which the leading power and discourse power of the Chinese language can be enhanced in the language governance of international organizations.

4.2 From the Perspective of Language Economics

Language functions as a form of capital, with different languages possessing unequal value as capital, resulting in disparities in acquired resources and market access. The language governance of the EU indicates that the amount of resources obtained, the scope of usage, and the market value directly result in different language hierarchies. The higher the language hierarchy, determined by factors such as more resources, greater market demand, and better functional performance, the greater its power. Conversely, languages with fewer resources, less market demand and poorer functional performance have lower hierarchies and less influence. The hierarchical language relation is referred to as linguistic order, and a language's position in the global linguistic order depends on factors such as a country's overall strength, language vitality, language function and application range, the number of speakers as well as the history and culture. Linguistic order reflects a country's strength, especially its soft power, since cultural diplomacy is underpinned by overall national strength.

For Chinese language education developing on the global stage, it's crucial to broaden its impact in fields like trade, investment, science, technology, and finance, which involves approaches such as language services, cultural trade, economic cooperation, and technological innovation. Besides, developing language resources, expanding language markets, accumulating language capital, and promoting language economics are essential steps in this direction. For Chinese to become an international language, it's crucial to harness China's status as the world's second-largest economy, expanding the global influence of the Chinese language. Moreover, it's imperative to seize the opportunity presented by the changing dynamics of emerging economies, which could reshape the global language landscape. It is also important to have a keen understanding of audience needs and global market conditions, responding swiftly to meet the global challenges through language and

cultural services. In the near future, Chinese language internationalization should attach great importance on expanding global language resources, increasing language market value, and extending its scope of use.

4.3 From the Perspective of Cultural Linguistics

Language, as a key element of human civilization, reflects the unique cultural, historical, and psychological characteristics of a national community. It is not only a crystallization of collective values and ethnic identity, but also a social psychological phenomenon and a historical cultural process, directly related to national sovereignty and ethnic dignity. A language's standing in the global language landscape is intricately connected to its cultural influences and agenda-setting power. The comparative advantage of a language is the result of the ability of the culture behind it to grasp the zeitgeist and development trend and to provide more theories, frameworks, and pathways for the human progress. Although Brexit has deprived English of the support of the UK within the EU, its establishment advantage in global information flow and international discourse still dominates the EU's linguistic and cultural preferences.

In this context, the Chinese internationalization requires not only strong economic support but also a profound cultural accumulation. Hence, it is essential to cultivate stronger cultural confidence, engage in proactive language diplomacy and establish an independent Chinese knowledge system so as to take a leadership role in global language and cultural development, and consequently secure interpretive rights for Chinese language and culture. In addition, it is imperative to prioritize the substance Chinese conveys and emphasize the values it propagates. To achieve this objective, there is a necessity to intensify the exploration, organization, and dissemination of high-quality Chinese cultural values and deliver better language and cultural services tailored to the diverse needs of various audiences, steadily bolstering the international influence of the Chinese language. Furthermore, vital steps for achieving Chinese internationalization also involves crafting an image for the Chinese language that is open, inclusive, and diverse, along with elevating its reputation, thus leading Chinese to be a symbol of its own national system and culture.

5. Conclusion

Wilhelm von Humboldt, a famous philosopher and linguist in Germany, compared language to the "breath" (Odem) necessary for the survival of a nation. Language, as an important symbol of national culture and statehood, has always been an instrument for national games. As an important part of global governance, language governance plays an important role in enhancing China's national soft power and diplomatic discourse as well as constructing a new type of international relations. China's participation in global language governance can draw on the experience of EU language governance, exploring the balance between economic value of language and the symbolic significance of language culture, the communication efficiency in international organizations and the member states' language equality, the

national language governance and international language regulation so as to enhance the international influence of Chinese language and culture.

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