

EUROPAIO:

A BRIEF GRAMMAR OF THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE

Vol. 1

Writing System

Phonology

Morphology (1)



Dnghu

Carlos Quiles Casas

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By [Carlos Quiles](#)

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Europaio has been introduced as the answer to the present communication and cultural obstacles of today's Europe, and Dnghu's *Europaio: A Brief Grammar of the European Language* is the most thorough reference to this important modern (old) language.

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Preface

According to dutch sociologist Abram de Swaan, every language in the world fits into one of four categories according to the ways it enters into (what he calls) the *global language system*.

- **Central:** About a hundred languages in the world belong here, widely used and comprising about 95% of humankind.
- **Supercentral:** Each of these serves to connect speakers of central languages. There are only twelve supercentral languages, and they are **Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Malay, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish** and **Swahili**.
- **Hypercentral:** The lone hypercentral language at present is English. It not only connects central languages (which is why it is on the previous level) but serves to connect supercentral languages as well. Both Spanish and Russian are supercentral languages used by speakers of many languages, but when a Spaniard and a Russian want to communicate, they will usually do it in English.
- **Peripheral:** All the thousands of other languages on the globe occupy a peripheral position because they are hardly or not at all used to connect any other languages. In other words, they are mostly not perceived as useful in a multilingual situation and therefore not worth anyone's effort to learn.

De Swaan points out that the admission of new member states to the European Union brings with it the addition of more languages, making the polyglot identity of the EU ever more unwieldy and expensive. On the other hand, it is clearly politically impossible to settle on a single language for all the EU's institutions. It has proved easier for the EU to agree on a common currency than a common language.

Of the EU's current languages, at least 14 are what we might call a 'robust' language, whose speakers are hardly likely to surrender its rights. Five of them (English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish) are supercentral languages that are already widely used in international communication, and the rest are all central.

In the ongoing activity of the EU's institutions, there are inevitably shortcuts taken - English, French and German are widely used as 'working languages' for informal discussions. But at the formal level all the EU's official languages (=the language of each member state) are declared equal.

Using all these languages is very expensive and highly inefficient. There are now 21 official languages: **Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish Gaelic, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish**, and three *semiofficial* (?): **Catalan, Basque and Galician**. This means that all official documents must be translated into all the members' recognized languages, and representatives of each member state have a right to expect a speech in their language to be interpreted. And each member state has the right to hear ongoing proceedings interpreted into its own language.

Since each of the twenty one languages needs to be interpreted/translated into all the rest of the twenty, 21×20 (minus one, because a language doesn't need to be translated into itself) comes to a total of **420** combinations. So interpreters/translators have to be found for ALL combinations.

In the old Common Market days the costs of using the official languages Dutch/English/French/German could be borne and interpreters/translators could be readily found. But as each new member is admitted, the costs and practical difficulties are rapidly becoming intolerably burdensome.

The crucial point here is that each time a new language is added, the total number of combinations isn't additive but multiplies: $420 + \text{one language}$ is not 421 but 462, 22×21 since every language has to be translated/interpreted into all the others (except itself).

It is not hard to see that the celebration of linguistic diversity in the EU only lightly disguises the logistical nightmare that is developing. The EU is now preparing for more languages to come: **Romanian and Bulgarian**, with the incorporation of these two countries to the EU; **Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian** (the three formerly known as Serbo-Croatian, but further differentiated after the Yugoslavian wars) if they are admitted to the EU; and many other regional languages, following the example of Irish Gaelic, and the three *semi-official* Spanish languages: **Alsatian, Breton, Corsican**

and **Welsh** are likely candidates to follow, as well as **Scottish Gaelic**, **Occitan**, **Alsatian**, **Low Saxon**, **Venetian**, **Padanian**, **Sardinian**, **Neapolitan**, **Asturian**, and many others, depending on the political pressure they can put on EU institutions. It will probably not be long before **Turkish** (and with it **Kurdish**, too) is another one of the official languages, and this could bring the number of EU languages over 40. The number of possible combinations are at best above 1000, which doesn't seem within the reach of any organization, no matter how well-meaning.

Many EU administrators feel that to a great extent this diversity can be canceled out by ever-increasing reliance on the computer translation that is already in heavy use. It is certainly true that if we couldn't count on computers to do a lot of the translation 'heavy lifting', even the most idealistic administrator would never even dream of saddling an organization with an enterprise that would quickly absorb a major part of its finances and energy. But no machine has yet been invented *or probably ever will be* that can produce a translation without at the very least final editing by a human translator.

The rapidly increasing profusion of languages in the EU is quickly becoming intolerably clumsy and prohibitively expensive. And this doesn't even count the additional expense caused by printing in the Greek alphabet and soon in the Cyrillic (Bulgarian and Serbian). Everyone agrees that all languages must have their 'place in the sun' and their diversity celebrated. But common sense suggests that the EU is going to be forced to settle on a very small number of working languages, perhaps only one, and the linguistic future of the EU has become the subject of intense debate.

Only in public numbers, the EU official translation/interpretation costs amount to near 10.000 M€, and it comes to more than 13% of today's administrative expenditure of the EU institutions. There are also indirect costs of linguistic programmes aimed at promoting the learning of three or more languages since the *Year of Languages* (2001), which also means hundreds of millions of euros, which haven't been counted in the EU's budget as linguistic expenditure, but are usually included in budget sections such as Cohesion or Citizenship. It is hard to imagine the huge amount of money (real or potential) lost by EU citizens and companies each day because of communication problems, not only because they *can't* speak a third party's language, but because they *won't* speak it, even if they can.

Preserving the strict equality is the EU's lifeblood, and it is a very disturbing thought that the strongest candidate for a *one-language EU* is the one with an established dominance in the world, **English**, which is actually only spoken by a minority within Europe. Latin and Artificial languages (as Esperanto, Ido or Interlingua) have been proposed as alternatives, but neither the first, because it is only related to romance languages, nor the second, because they are (too) artificial (invented by one person or a small group at best), solve the linguistic theoretical problems, not to talk about the practical ones.

The **Europaio** or European language that we present in this work, on the contrary, faces not only the addressed theoretical problems (mainly related to cultural heritage and social proud) but brings also a practical solution for the EU, without which there can be no real integration. European nations are not prepared to give up some of their powers to a greater political entity, unless they don't have to give up some fundamental rights; among them, the linguistic ones have thus proven harder to deal with than it was expected, as they are issues which raise very strong national or regional feelings.

Europaio is already the grandmother of most of the EU's languages - probably more than 97% of its population have an Indo-European language as their mother tongue, and the rest can generally speak at least one of them as second language. Adopting Europaio as the main official language for the EU will not mean giving up linguistic rights, but enhancing them, as every other official language will have then the same status, under their common ancestor; it won't mean loosing the own culture for the sake of unity, but recovering it altogether for the same purpose; and, above all, it will not mean choosing a *lingua franca* to communicate with foreigners within an international organization, but accepting a National Language to communicate with other nationals within the EU.

Bibliography:

Abram de Swaan, *Words of the World: The Global Language System*. Cambridge: Polity, 2001.

- The above information is mainly copied (literally, adjusted or modified) from two of Mr. William Z. Shetter *Language Miniatures*, which can be found in his web site:

<http://home.bluemarble.net/~langmin/miniatures/Qvalue.htm>

<http://home.bluemarble.net/~langmin/miniatures/eulang.htm>

- EU official expenditure numbers can be consulted here:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/10&type=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/library/publications/budget_in_fig/dep_eu_budg_2006_en.pdf

Official information about EU languages can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/languages/index_en.html

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/languages/langmin/euromosaic/index_en.html

Who This Book Is for

This book is a reference grammar on the modern Europaio language system. It is not a textbook on Comparative Indo-European Linguistics, nor is it some kind of scholar publication. It is indeed not intended for IE scholars or students wanting to have a thorough approach to the Indo-European languages or to the Proto-Indo-European.

It is not *The* definite Grammar, either. In fact, this is the first volume to be published, and only deals with the Europaio Morphology, leaving Word Formation and Syntax issues for the second volume. If you want to follow (or participate in) the newest developments made by Dnghu and the other institutions conforming the Europaio consortium, they will be posted on Dnghu's and Europaio's web sites.

What's New in This Edition

This is *Europaio: A Brief Grammar of the European Language, vol. 1, First Edition*, with Europaio in *version 1.0*, already in Beta phase. The timetable of the next changes is still unclear, but news can be followed at Dnghu's and Europaio's web sites and official centres.

We have changed some features of good old Europaio 0.x (2004-2005), especially:

1. The old alphabet, which followed the traditional **c-k-q** distinction (and special characters for palato-velar and labio-velar *g*), is impossible to maintain after the decision not to differentiate the - traditionally written - palatal pronunciation of the velars. The **c** is then now used with its oldest phonetic value, g-like.
2. The laryngeals' (not supported by more traditional views) question has been solved, as the -later, northern- Third Stage selection avoids any further discussion. Those words for which a schwa-sound is reconstructed after the (supposed) laryngeal's time will be written with an **a**. So, version 0.x **phter** becomes version 1.0 **pater**, although the pronunciation remains the same, /pəter/.
3. The more phonetical writings of the Alpha phase, with **j** and **w** always written for consonantal **i**, **u**, has proven a very difficult and (surprisingly) too artificial way of representing the Europaio. The possibility of writing always and only **i,u** has been discarded altogether for the artificial (more *Latinized*) feeling it gives up, and the practical problems that arouse, especially when followed by sonants. They will be maintained, then, in certain cases, in which the use of **i** and **u** would be especially confusing or *artificial*.
4. The historically alternating cases *Oblique / Dative-Locative-Instrumental-Ablative*, shown on a declension-by-declension basis, was more difficult than a simple five-case system for all declensions and for singular and plural alike, like in the Northern Dialects. Whether an innovation or (more probably) an archaism, the five-case system is more clearly reconstructed, easier to use and more similar to modern languages, than the (mainly southern) eight-case system.

5. The Aorist has been eventually replaced, and its stem is now called (and used for the) Imperfect. The Northern dialects influence is again stronger than the general inclination towards looking for older, obscured, unitary formations.

6. The Dual reconstruction is abandoned, as it is a doubtful feature of the oldest IE, very difficult to reconstruct and indeed not too important for the modern language.

7. The use of loan words, such as *photo*, *fides* (*faith*) or *mille* (Latin *thousand*), has been reduced, as we have decided to translate every possible word to Europaio, as **bhawtos** or **bhidhes**, and even in cases where the reconstruction is not sure, as in **mli** (possibly derived from IE **smgheslo** > mghesli > mihili > mille in Latin) or in **seros**, *hero* (*heros* in Greek), because -s is the normal reconstruction of the initial -h in Greek dialects.

Comments and Questions

Please address comments and questions concerning this book or the main Europaio project to our provisional location:

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<http://www.dnghu.org/en/grammar/>

To comment or ask technical questions about this book, send email to:

grammar@dnghu.org

For more information about books, downloads, conferences, Resource Centers and the Dnghu Network, see the Dnghu and Europaio web sites at:

<http://www.dnghu.org/> and <http://www.europaio.org/>

For new official developments in the Europaio language, please visit the Europaio consortium web site at <http://www.europaiom.org/>

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To my good friends and the others, even to those who are not with me anymore, because every single one of them has given me something which eventually ends in this work.

Conventions Used in this Book

1. We use *Europaio* instead of *European*, because thus the terms *Indo-European*, and *European* (of Europe or of the EU), the *European Dialects* (i.e., the Northern IE Dialects, those developed within Europe) and the language system called *Europaio* are easily distinguished. In English, the suitable names for the language are *European language* and *Europaio*. It is similar to the pairs *Basque language* or *Euskera*, *Irish language* or *Gaelic*, etc., in which the use of the English adjective alone could be confusing.

We don't use the correct form *Europaion*, however, because it is an inflected form which means "the European" in *Europaio*.

In the beginning of the book, we talk about IE III and *Europaio* as different concepts, as the first is the language spoken in its prehistoric community, and the second the modern revived language. This distinction is not always made, however, the term *Europaio* being used constantly instead of IE III to refer to the old language, usually when talking about the features of the old language in the new system.

2. Accentuated vowels, semi-vowels or sonants are in **bold** type, while the long vowels and sonants are underlined. We avoid the use of accents and special phonetic characters to facilitate the printing of copies in different formats.

3. For zero-grade or zero-ending the symbol \emptyset is sometimes used.

4. In phonetics (usually between slashes or brackets), a capital G is used for labio-velar g.

5. In Romance languages, *Theme* is used instead of *Stem*. Therefore, when *Theme Vowel* or *Thematic* is employed, it refers to the Stem endings, usually to the e/o endings. More on this can be read on the corresponding sections.

6. For the phonetic representation of sonants we put an apostrophe before it, and not (as it is usual in phonetic representations) a different character.

7. The following abbreviations apply:

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IE	: Indo-European
PIE	: Proto-Indo-European
alb.	: Albanian
arm.	: Armenian
bal.	: Baltic
bsl.	: Baltoslavic
cel.	: Celtic
eng.	: English
ger.	: Germanic
got.	: Gothic
gr.	: Greek
i.-i.	: Indo-Iranian
lat.	: Latin
o.-u.	: Osco-Umbrian
ohg.	: Old High German
oi.	: Old Indian
osl.	: Old Slavic
toc.	: Tocharian
ved.	: Vedic Sanskrit