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Indo-European: a common language for the European Union



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DNGHU ADSOQIATION

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PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE REVIVAL FOR A COMMON EUROPE

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I. Modern Indo-European or the Revived Proto-Indo-European language

The idea arose in Easter 2004. I was studying at the Public Library of Badajoz with Mayte and some friends, and I kept reading some books about the Pre-Roman peoples of the Iberian Peninsula. The Lusitanians draw my attention, not only because they lived in our south-western Iberian lands some millennia before us, but also because their old inscriptions were easily understood for somebody with little knowledge of Latin, and still it was classified as a “*Celtic-like Indo-European dialect*” by the author. I took some more books about Proto-Indo-European history, culture and language, and made my first notes about how could it be to inflect nouns and conjugate verbs in such an old language... and it didn't sound that strange.



Figure 1. European Union depicted as a single country.

Three years later, after months of (irregular) study and work, the enterprise I eventually decided to undertake is finished, the basis for a complete grammatical system is more or less done, and the websites are working. It doesn't matter whether Indo-European revival succeeds or not, my personal objective is achieved; at least the farthest I've been able to carry it.

However, I can't stop thinking about how to make good use of this work, how to benefit those who worked, work and will work on this project, as well as the European Union, turning this personal project into different not-for-profit businesses (*job-maker corporations*, so to speak), e.g. in the Badajoz-Elvas Eurocity, mainly for specialized workers, philologists, translators and interpreters, computer engineers, etc. I can only imagine two possible situations of success for the Indo-European language revival: either some regional, national or European public or private institutions support the project, and it is implemented and institutionalized in order; or, as it was originally planned, this turns to be an Open Source social movement, and consequently everyone tries to make a better project, with many different independent groups – institutions or individuals with limited resources –, which somehow manage to lead a disorderly revival.

I think that, if it eventually succeeds, and if Europe manages to profit from these first confusing moments to keep all possible niches of this future market of Modern Indo-European, the output could be a radical change in the situation of the European economy in relation with the United States and other English-speaking countries, and especially a change in the perception that Europeans have of their Community and its peoples.

If we had to compare this project with traditional investments, we should say that, while the investment of public institutions in agrarian and industrial projects – or the investing of time and efforts of an individual in public competitions to become a civil servant – is like a guaranteed fixed deposit; to bet on this project – as an individual or an institution – is like investing in tiny and risky securities of a local Asian Stock Exchange. In the first case, the benefit is certain and well-known, whilst the second is a lottery, in which the amount invested can be completely lost or doubled with – apparently – the same probability.

The only reason why people would invest in such a lottery is because it is not only a matter of chance. We at Dnghu have believed in it, and still believe, investing a lot of time and money. I hope you believe in it too.

Carlos Quiles

Co-founder of Dnghu

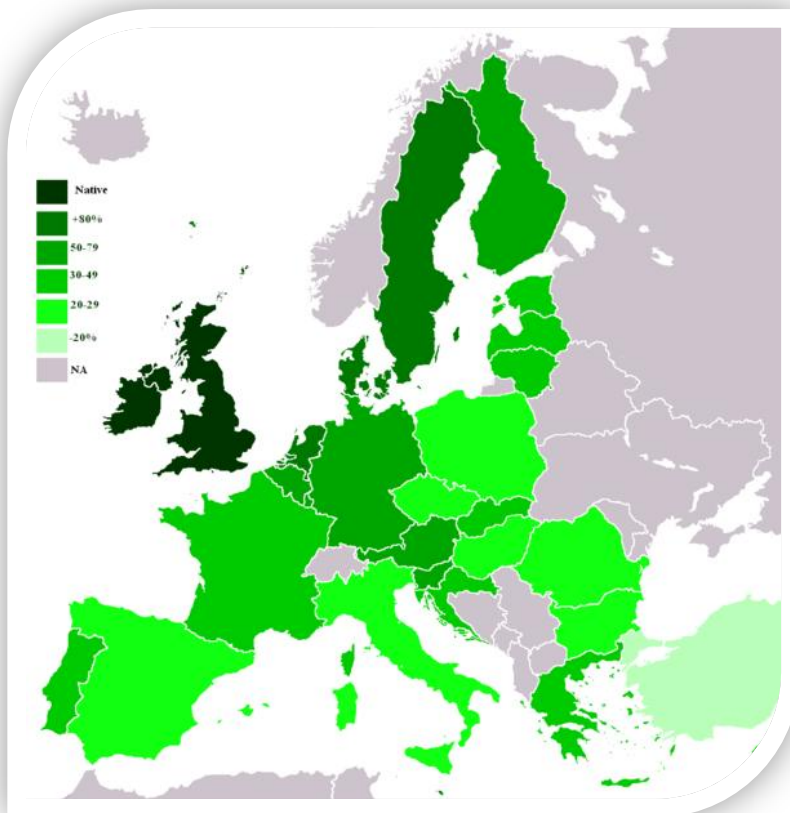


Figure 2. Real knowledge of English within the European Union. Differently as what happens in Israel or the United States, the “common” language studied in almost every school and high school within the EU, English, is not learned as well as the own language. Whatever the sociological, cultural, anthropological, political and/or psychological reasons behind such behaviour, it is clear that Latin or artificial languages as Esperanto couldn’t solve this situation, either. Modern Indo-European, on the other hand, is a new possibility which could change completely our concept of a united Europe.

II. European Union Inefficiencies

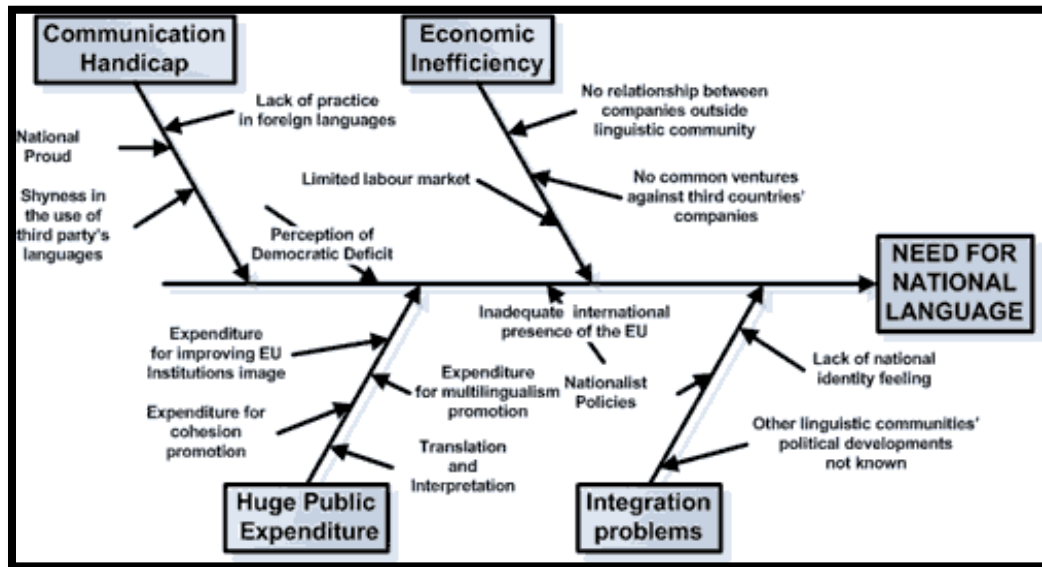


Figure 3. Simplified Cause and Effect Diagram of Present-Day European Union Problems'

Some of the problems derived from the lack of one national language for the EU can be seen in this cause and effect diagram. This inefficient situation, already pointed out long ago, hadn't until recently any stable solution.

The revival of the Proto-Indo-European language makes it possible, with adequate linguistic policy and planning, to put an end to many of these problems and to open a new horizon for integration and collaboration between the citizens and regions of the European Union.

Since the very beginnings of the EEC, the three main languages (*working languages*), English, French and German, were used for every communication, while English was unofficially the *lingua franca* used by all in direct conversations and other immediate communication needs.

This model, the most logical and simple in the initial small European Community after WWII, has become obsolete, with the increase in the number of official languages and, at the same time, the growth of political demands for more presence in European institutions among defenders of national and regional or co-official languages.

It seems today that every hope of achieving a USA-like system – where English is the only official language for the Federation – is discarded: while in US history English has won in every Federal State – although there is also co-officiality in some of them, like Spanish in New Mexico or French in Louisiana –, in Europe the Union does not lay its foundations on some English-speaking colonies of immigrants. On the contrary, the only reason why English is spoken as the

European Union *lingua franca* is the predominant position of the United States within the international community since the foundation of the ECSC until today.

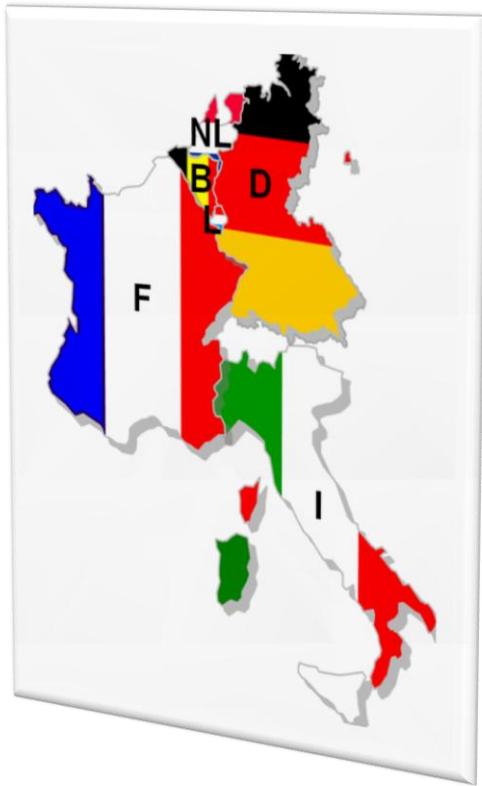


Figure 4. In the beginnings of the EEC, English as a *lingua franca* was the best linguistic policy.

The choice of English as the only official language for a future EU Federation is discarded; countries like France or Germany – and possibly Spain, Italy or Poland –, among others, would not accept it, as it would mean to abandon legitimate linguistic rights in favour of other States, without a sufficient justification in terms of population, political or economical relevance. The existence of a Nation with at least 25 official languages where none is over the others is a beautiful idea, and also an obvious utopia. At present, 23 languages – and four at least to come – are official, some semi-official (like Basque or Catalan), 3 of them *working languages* - i.e., *officially more important than the rest*-, and one, English, serves (unofficially) for general communication. This does not seem the best of the possible solutions: it lacks the European spirit necessary for correct integration between the different nations in a common country, and is clearly inefficient.

To date, only some isolated proposals had claimed to be intermediate solutions, as the adoption of Latin, or the use of supposedly ‘neutral’ invented languages (as Esperanto, Ido, Interlingua, etc.). In both cases, the main supposed advantage consists in not being any of the present European Union languages and, because of that, not having theoretical cultural barriers for its acceptance. Latin has been Europe’s *lingua franca* for centuries – before being substituted by French in the 18th century –, while Volapük and its following clones and remakes (as Esperanto and the like) were invented by individuals with an international vocation, aimed at (above all) being easy to learn. However, as both solutions are not living languages, and because they are obviously unable to become EU’s national language, the Europeans’ answer has been at best of indifference to such proposals, thus accepting the deficient linguistic *statu quo*.

Modern Hebrew and the Land of Israel

The language of Israel is Modern Hebrew: it is not their only language, as many old Israelis still speak better their old languages – like Judeo-Spanish or Yiddish (Judeo-German) – than modern Hebrew, and it is certainly not a very practical language from an international point of view. However, the Land of Israel needed a language, and even though they also had the possibility of choosing between different alternatives, as international languages (like French, English or Turkish), death languages (like Latin or its *equivalent*¹ to Hebrews, Aramaic), or even artificial language systems (as Volapük or Esperanto), they chose the historical language of Israel, Hebrew, a language after the conquest of Babilonians under whose texts, mainly very formal religious years older. Hebrew reconstructed with first opposition to the mainly because of practice, it was a tradition and ease of jews learned (and still texts in old Hebrew, just countries still have Latin subjects in High School.



Figure 5. 11th century Targum. Mediaeval remains are the oldest writings of Old Hebrew.

Europe faces today a similar decision. We don't have to defend more European integration; the current customs union is maybe all we can achieve in our Union of countries, just a supranational entity with some delegated legislative powers. But if we want, as it seems, to achieve a Confederation-like State (like Switzerland) or even a European Federation (as the US or Germany), then the only linguistic non-utopic solution, which unites tradition and ease of use and learning, is Modern Indo-European or the revived Proto-Indo-European language, because it is the *grandmother* of the languages of almost all citizens of the EU. Modern Indo-European is free of regional meaning –that could hurt the national proud of the others –, and, at the same time, full of European common significance.

¹ Before the Jews were expelled from their homeland, they spoke Aramaic, which substituted Old Hebrew after the fall of Jerusalem. Aramaic (a living language) would have then been a more rational choice for the Israelis than Latin, given that it had been spoken in the old Land of Israel for six centuries, and that it belongs to the same linguistic family, the Semitic one.

III. Modern Indo-European: More than just a *Lingua Franca*, a National Language for the European Union

The game theory is a branch of applied mathematics that studies strategic situations where players choose different actions in an attempt to maximize their returns. It studies optimal strategies of foreseen and observed behaviour of individuals in such games; it studies, then, the choice of the optimal behaviour when costs and benefits of each option are not fixed, but depend on the choice of the other players.

The following table is based on "Special Eurobarometer 243" of the European Commission with the title "Europeans and their Languages" ([summary](#)), published on February 2006 with research carried out on November and December 2005. The survey was published before the 2007 Enlargement of the European Union, when Bulgaria and Romania acceded. This is a poll, not a census. 28,694 citizens with a minimum age of 15 were asked in the then 25 member-states as well as in the then future member-states (Bulgaria, Romania) and the candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey) at the time of the survey. Only citizens, not immigrants, were asked.

The first table shows what proportion of citizens said that they could have a conversation in each language as their mother tongue and as a second language or foreign language (only the languages with at least 2% of the speakers are listed):

Language	Mother Tongue	Not Mother Tongue	Total Proportion
English	13%	38%	51%
German	18%	14%	32%
French	12%	14%	26%
Italian	13%	3%	16%
Spanish	9%	6%	15%
Polish	9%	1%	10%
Dutch	5%	1%	6%
Russian	1%	6%	7%
Swedish	2%	1%	3%
Greek	3%	0%	3%
Czech	2%	1%	3%
Portuguese	2%	0%	2%
Hungarian	2%	0%	2%
Slovak	1%	1%	2%
Catalan	1%	1%	2%

Languages spoken within the European Union (more than 2%). Data for EU25.

The European Union’s Linguistic Policy game is depicted here in extensive form, with a decision tree, where each vertex (or node) represents a point of choice for a player. The player is specified by a number listed by the vertex. The lines out of the vertex represent a possible action for that player. The payoffs are specified at the bottom of the tree.

In this simplified game there are 2 players. Player 1, who represents any linguistic community within the EU, moves first and choose between two options; one, (E) *Egoistical*, consists in favouring the own language, and the other (R) , consists in *Renouncing* the own language in favor of any other option. Player 2, who represents other linguistic community within the EU, sees the move of player 1 and choose in turn E or R. For example, if player 1 chooses E and then player 2 chooses R, player 2 obtains 2 points and player 1 obtains 5 points; if he chooses E, both obtain 3 points each. The payoff of being able to speak the own language with better status than the other is then 5 -due to, say, national proud-, and the contrary -for the same reason- has a value of 2, while speaking both languages at the same level has a payoff of 3.

This – simplistically depicted – game is constantly played within the EU by the different linguistic communities: UK and Ireland for English, Germany and Austria mainly for German, France and Belgium for French,etc.

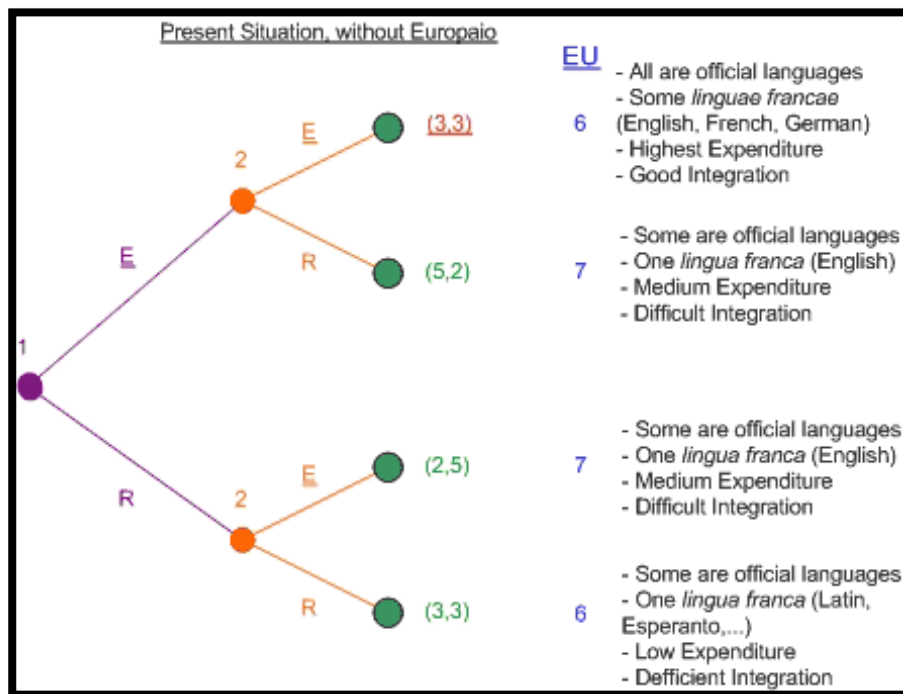


Figure 6. Present Situation of the linguistic policy in the EU, without Modern Indo-European.

The equilibrium obtained in this game is always the same, as every pair of players has in the *Egoistic* the best of their possible decisions. Player 1, which is the first to decide – let’s say he

decides first because he represents an important linguistic community, like the English, or a majority, like the German – obtains 5 or 3 points if he behaves *Egoistically*, but 3 or 2 points if he *Renounces* his linguistic rights. The first option (underlined) is the best in any of the possible events. For the second player, the payoff of behaving *Egoistically* is 3 or 5, while *Renouncing* his rights would give him 2 or 3 points. Again, the *Egoistical* behaviour is the best.

It is obvious, however, that this output (3,3) is inefficient for the EU, which would benefit from the sacrifice of some linguistic communities to obtain a better situation, although none is prepared to give up. Hence the unstable equilibrium, where everybody has an interest in changing the final output, in negotiations where the EU looks for the optimal punctuation of the scheme (7 points), with less languages – in the real world the EU chooses unofficially English as *lingua franca* and French and German for some other *working issues* –, while every community has an incentive to behave *Egoistically* to be, in a hypothetical situation, the one to enjoy the maximum output of 5 points.

After the introduction of Modern Indo-European (a systematized Proto-Indo-European), the payoff of the option in which both players renounce their linguistic rights change, but the solution of the game (at least in theory), paradoxically, not.

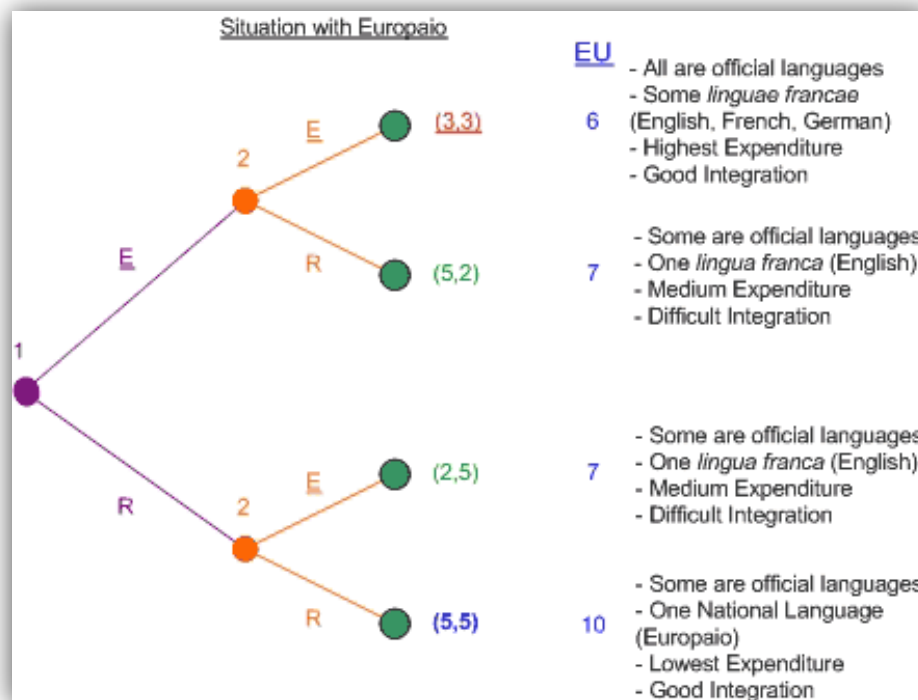


Figure 7. European Union linguistic policy after the introduction of the Modern Indo-European system

The payoff of behaving *Egoistically* for both players is 3 or 5 points, while that of *Renouncing* is 2 or 5. Then, even after the introduction of Europaio as the alternative, the output of the game will still be the *Egoistic* one.

The global situation is completely different, though, as the equilibrium sought by the European Union is that which will give the maximum global payoff, 10; once obtained this equilibrium, no player will have incentives to change his decision, because his situation will not be better off. The game has, then, only one Nash Equilibrium, Pareto optimal, and the players (which are, in general, rational) will choose the strategies that agree with it.

Figure 8. The European Parliament. Can you imagine how Europarliament sessions are driven and followed by its multilingual members without a common national language? How can we expect a more democratic Europe without a common language for the legislative, for the executive, for justice, for the administration?



IV. DNGHU Adsoqiation, *The Indo-European Language Association*

Language planning refers to the deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of language. Typically it will involve the development of goals, objectives and strategies to change the way language is used. At a governmental level, language planning takes the form of language policy. Many nations have language regulatory bodies which are specifically charged with formulating and implementing language planning policies.

Language planning can be divided into three sub-dimensions:

Corpus planning refers to intervention in the forms of a language. This may be achieved by creating new words or expressions, modifying old ones, or selecting among alternative forms.

Corpus planning aims to develop the resources of a language so that it becomes an appropriate medium of communication for modern topics and forms of discourse, equipped with the terminology needed for use in administration, education, etc. Corpus planning is often related to the standardization of a language, involving the preparation of a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a speech community. Efforts at linguistic purism and the exclusion of

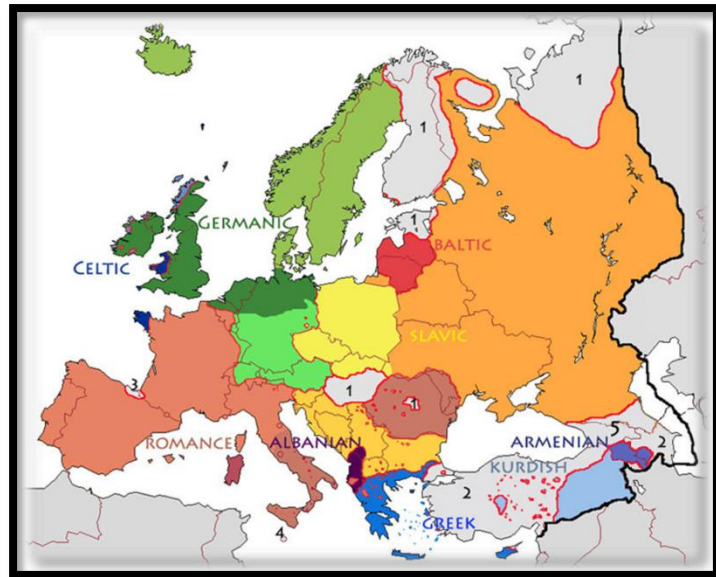


Figure 9. European subcontinent. In color, Indo-European languages; in gray, Non-Indo-European languages.

foreign words also belong to corpus planning, and for a previously unwritten language, the first step in corpus planning is the development of a writing system.

Status planning refers to deliberate efforts to allocate the functions of languages and literacies within a speech community. It involves status choices, making a particular language or variety an 'official language', 'national language', etc. Often it will involve elevating a language or dialect into a prestige variety, which may be at the expense of competing dialects. Status planning is part and parcel of creating a new writing system since a writing system can only be developed after a suitable dialect is chosen as the standard.

Acquisition planning concerns the teaching and learning of languages, whether national languages or second and foreign languages. It involves efforts to influence the number of users

and the distribution of languages and literacies, achieved by creating opportunities or incentives to learn them. Such efforts may be based on policies of assimilation or pluralism. Acquisition planning is directly related to language spread. While acquisition planning is normally the province of national, regional, or local governments, bodies such as the British Council, Alliance française, Instituto Cervantes and Goethe-Institut are also very active internationally promoting education in their respective languages.

The main objective of the Dnghu Association is exactly to make use of its pioneering role in reviving the Indo-European language to become the reference institution for the development of Modern Indo-European or the revived Proto-Indo-European language, a set of grammatical rules necessary for proper communication in present-day Europe. This role includes:

A. Administering a group of experts in Indo-European linguistics, who should develop thoroughly the Corpus linguistics of Modern Indo-European, through a Consortium of universities and other renowned linguistic institutions, establishing guidelines and recommendations to be accepted by all. The Consortium should be located in some clearly Europeanist city, like Brussels, Strasbourg, Bologna, or otherwise where the first important university of Central Europe joins.

B. Also, as many resources as possible should be used to promote the birth of a social movement for revival: we called those projects “Europaio” – which is the easily recognizable name of the language system –, comprising Open Source software and other works and Wiki websites’ content under *Copyleft*

licenses, to attract everyone to participate and join; and also – being consistent with real *Copyleft* premises – allowing everyone to develop their own projects in case they don’t like ours. This way, Indo-European revival is the only secured beneficiary of the community efforts (whether united or dispersed), and Indo-European has a bigger chance to become the future official language of the EU.

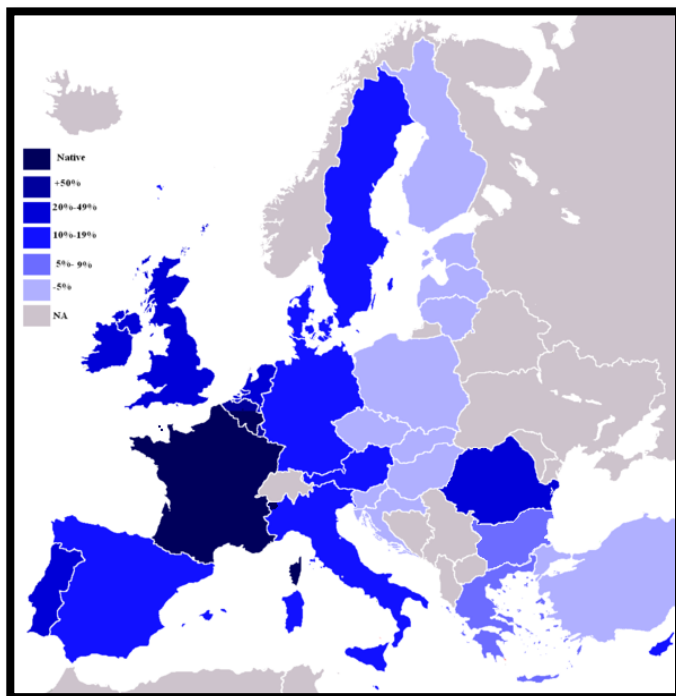


Figure 10. Knowledge of French in the European Union. Along with the knowledge of German, Spanish or Russian, all those who know at least English and French have it easier to learn the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European. If they learn Latin and Greek, they will have it still easier.

C. Lastly, incorporating a legal framework, the **Indo-European Language Association**, to manage and administer the aforementioned projects of language planning, dividing its activities into different zones, and trying to:

1. Publish grammars, referent guides, dictionaries, specialized reviews in Indo-European linguistics, collaborating with experts in Proto-Indo-European, and also arranging conferences and workgroups. Dnghu would be, then, a reference for works in or about the Indo-European language.

2. Publish learning methods, whether official or not, either free or proprietary, like manuals for school, high school or university students; CD-ROMs and other multimedia learning tools; distance courses through e-learning; translation software for individuals and professionals, etc.

3. Translate literary works, promote literary or general artistic creations, work in subtitles and dubbing of films, and all kinds of promotional activities addressed to the public, with a market of more than 400 million Europeans.

4. Organize language courses for individuals and companies, taught in every Dnghu center, with some special locations for intensive and summer courses under a only-Indo-European-spoken-here rule.

5. Broadcasting of news, television and radio programs in Indo-European, making use of the Internet and new multimedia technologies, trying to become a reference source for independent news, the way the BBC and the Deutsche-Welle are in their languages.

6. Receive public subsidies from the EU and the regions that host the Indo-European revival projects. Promote donations of individuals as a logical means to fund new technologies and free licences.

7. Function as Think Tank in Brussels, influencing the policies of the European Union with legal and legitimate means, pushing for a more pro-Europeanist approach and the Indo-European language adoption as the national language.

Figure 11. However detailed the European Union budget is, one cannot actually calculate the annual costs of not having a common national language as Modern Indo-European.

EU budget 2007 in figures

Expenditure estimates for EU policies (in billion EUR)	Budget 2007	Change from 2006
Sustainable growth	54.9	15.4 %
Competitiveness, including:	9.4	18.6 %
Education and training	0.9	31.0 %
Research	5.5	3.1 %
Competitiveness and Innovation	0.4	53.6 %
Energy and transport networks	1.0	32.9 %
Social policy agenda	0.2	8.6 %
Cohesion, including:	45.5	14.8 %
Convergence	35.3	16.8 %
Regional competitiveness and employment	9.0	11.5 %
Territorial cooperation	1.1	-11.7 %
Natural resources, including:	56.3	1.0 %
Environment	0.2	17.9 %
Agricultural expenditure and direct aids	42.7	0.6 %
Rural development	12.4	3.0 %
Freedom, security and justice (including fundamental rights and justice, security and liberties, migration flows)	0.6	12.8 %
Citizenship (including culture, media, public health and consumer protection)	0.6	0.8 %
EU as a global player, including:	6.8 (*)	4.5 % (*)
Pre-accession	1.3	16.5 % (*)
European neighbourhood	1.4	11.1 %
Development cooperation	2.2	-5.4 % (*)
Humanitarian aid	0.7	3.1 %
Democracy and human rights	0.1	9.6 %
Common foreign and security policy	0.2	55.2 %
Stability Instrument	0.1	143.6 %
Administration, including:	6.9	5.1 %
European Commission	3.3	5.3 %
Other institutions	2.6	4.8 %
Compensations to new EU countries (*)	0.4	-58.6 %
Total	126.5	5.0 %

(*) Including Emergency Aid Reserve
 (**) Excluding Bulgaria and Romania
 (*) Includes also the exceptional amounts allocated in 2006 to the past tsunami, flood and reconstruction efforts.
 (*) Areas still faced by the accession states.

European Union Expenditure

The actual costs that the European Union bears because of not having a common national language (apart from some selected *lingua franca*) is incalculable; just compare how businesses, politics, students and people behave within the United States, and how they function within the EU. Without a common language, the Union is nothing more than a customs union, whatever the intention of its member states. There are some limited and intentionally obscure statistics, though, as to how the direct expenditure of the EU institutions are:

Beginning with the *Lingua programme* in 1990, the European Union invests more than €30 million a year (out of a €120 billion EU budget) promoting language learning through the *Socrates* and *Leonardo da Vinci* programmes in: bursaries to enable language teachers to be trained abroad, placing foreign language assistants in schools, funding class exchanges to motivate pupils to learn languages, creating new language courses on CDs and the Internet and

projects that raise awareness of the benefits of language learning.



Figure 12. Can you see which of these direct expenses are due to the lack of a common language? Neither we, it is obviously intended to be hidden among other usual expenses of a public institution like the EU.

Also, 13% of the annual budget for administration (6% of the European Union total) is dedicated to translation and interpretation, with more than 2.000 public employers working to translate and interpret – whether immediately or not – the most they can to every language pair. Recent statistics talk about 1.123 million euros invested in translation and interpretation, a total of 1% of the total budget, “2,28 euros per capita”, as the European Union likes to point out, i.e., 1 of each 100 euros that we pay in

taxes for the Union is dedicated exclusively to the translation of papers, websites, to the Europarliament sessions, etc. Furthermore, we are paying 25 million euros for each language made official; however, only English is really promoted within the institutions, French is sometimes also used, and Germans

complaint because they want their language to be at least as important as French... And all this for “just 2,28 euros per capita” annually; wow, what a bargain!

François Grin, specialist in economics of linguistics and linguistic policy, published in 2005 a report in which he pointed out that Great Britain, because of the predominance of its language within the Union, had between 17.000 y 18.000 million euros a year for language learning, thus profiting from the need of the other member states (imposed by our public institutions) to learn English. Not to talk about the other English-speaking countries (as the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc.), which profit from Europeans because of our own choice!

V. Conclusion

As a conclusion, we can only say that, paradoxically, even if this simple study was correctly made, there are three main factors which have determined the success of the Hebrew language revival, whilst other revival attempts (as Latin, Koine Greek, Coptic, etc.) or artificial language adoptions (as Esperanto, Ido, Interlingua, Lojban, etc.) have completely failed:

1. The **real necessity** of a common language (not just a *lingua franca*) among tiny workgroups – as in the first schools of Israel, which needed a common language other than English or French to teach to multilingual pupils. Such immediate necessity could show the real need for a common language in Europe, and help boost the Indo-European language revival. As an example, compare that, even if mobile phones seem to be now a need for most people, fifteen years ago it was a luxury good, only owned by those who needed it the most, as brokers; it was because of that first step – with big economic efforts for a then still inaccurate technology – of those who needed it the most, that the rest realized the advantages of the new technology, and that it spread to reach everyone.
2. The **individual will** of people to learn such a language. Unlike Esperanto, Latin, French or English, the Jews of Palestine learnt the reconstructed Modern Hebrew as an own language, not because of some external imposition, but mainly because of the thousands who (one-by-one) decided freely to learn it and use it openly with others. After more than a century of unending invented languages, there are still people who think that a language can be imposed by way of asserting the social advantages of its adoption – *viz.* ease of use, cultural ‘neutrality’, or even supposed “number of speakers”. However, their obvious lack of success, along with the boom of national and regional languages’ revival during the same period, shows that – whatever the underlying sociological and psychological foundations for such a behaviour –, it is not only cold reason and perfect philosophy what makes people learn and adopt a language as an own one, but also passion and desire, love for the own, interest for the old, maybe also fear for the foreign, etc.
3. The **support of public institutions**, from some point on, will also be necessary. However, we are convinced about its secondary role in the adoption of Modern Indo-European in Europe. With the television, the Internet, and other modern technologies, as well as *libre* culture and licences – and maybe also the growing culture of small private donations –, the support of the institutions of the European Union is not necessary in these first steps of the linguistic revival, until it becomes a language really used by young people within the Union.

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