The politics of language can be studied either from the standpoint of the speaker or from that of the language. What is in the interest of the speaker may not be in the interest of the language and vice versa. Academics and politicians may want to preserve a language that its speakers consider to be a jail from which they want to escape. Inversely, leaders may want to see a language disappear that the speakers value to a greater or lesser extent.

I shall answer the question regarding language strategies from the point of view of ‘language’ that I reify in order to facilitate the analysis, as we reify religions, social classes, and nation states.

Having thus made my task easier, the question becomes: In the age of globalization, at a time of expanding and increasingly dense communications that flow increasingly freely across space, what are the optimal strategies of a minority language that faces the intrusion, if not the invasion, of more powerful languages with which it is in closer and closer contact? I shall consider the Canadian case in the light of foreign examples.
The Need for Territory

The first, the dominant, the cardinal rule that should guide a minority language is the territorial imperative: territorialize and keep territorializing. By that I mean concentrate geographically into homogeneous language areas.

Societies tend to do that naturally. In the absence of migrations, languages produce a pattern resembling a Klee painting by the juxtaposition of distinct language areas under the impact of what I have called the law of Babel, a law stating that, in a closed multilingual system, a dominant language will emerge and will eventually put on the sideline then eliminate the other languages. A minority language can erect an obstacle to the Babel effect by giving itself a specific geographical niche and by controlling its borders.

The territorial concentration of a language within a homogeneous area has one immediate advantage: it favours language maintenance since the speakers can do their shopping and friend gathering, their doctor's calls, their meetings with bankers and administrators in their own language. A less obvious but equally fundamental protective effect of concentration comes from the fact that territorial concentration restricts language exogamy, especially in democratic, inclusive societies.

The Exogamy Effect

Outside the two areas of French homogeneous concentration (Quebec and New Brunswick), the French rates of exogamy endanger the minority language because, outside Quebec, exogamy has a considerable impact on language use. Consider an example drawn from the family census of 1991 to seek an answer to the question: what is the language of the home of an Ontario woman born in the province, who is at least 35 years old, whose mother tongue is French and who has one of three types of husbands: a) ‘French mother tongue’ b) ‘allophone mother tongue’ c) ‘English mother tongue’?

The answer ranges from: a) 82% to b) 19% to c) 10%.

Projecting similar rates into the future shows the minority language disappearing over two or three generations. In the absence of a highly positive birth rate, the maintenance of French in an Anglophone province requires the in-migration of francophones.

1. The common language remembers a Babel that had ceased to exist, its inhabitants having been, according to the Genesis, scattered the world over for having been unilingual. For the Babel effect see Laponce (2001).
2. The percentages given here are those based on a single language answer to the census question about the language of the home (either French or English). Adding the answer ‘English and French’ to the French scores hardly changes the picture; they become a) 86% b) 20% c) 13%. The 1991 statistics are very similar to those of 1981 (Laponce, 2003). I restricted the analysis reported here to women over 35 years old in order to give time for the marriage to settle its language communication system and to pick up the effect that children have on that system. For additional statistics and discussion of what I called the ‘love that kills effect’, also referred to by Van Parijs as the ‘Laponce law’ of political linguistics, see Laponce (1984, 2005) and Van Parijs (2004).
who become subject to an assimilation which is accelerated by exogamy. It is as if the English tectonic plate kept pushing the French plate down under.

As expected, the negative effects of exogamy on the less numerous language are more pronounced in the case of a francophone in English Canada than in the case of an anglophone in Quebec where a ‘mother tongue English’ woman retains English as a home language at the level of 96% if her husband is ‘mother tongue English’, and 58% (64% if one adds the answer ‘French and English’) if the husband is ‘mother tongue French’.

Clearly, moving outside the French area of concentration in Quebec and New Brunswick puts French at the risk of disappearing fast (see Table 1). The root cause rests in the kind of society the speakers of French want to live in. The German speaker of a very small Hutterite community can maintain his or her language in a sea of spoken English because the community satisfies the rule of geographical concentration and has only limited contact with the outside. But French, the second major international language after English, being a language of secularity, modernity, and globalization, is unlikely to produce a scattering of isolated language islands of the Hutterite type. Some well-intended policies that would try to create local networks of dispersed globalizers would be unlikely to have much success.

**A Digression Comparing Language and Religion**

At this point, may I make a small but relevant digression to emphasize the specificity of language compared to religion in order to show the greater sensitivity of language to geographical concentration. Admittedly, the census statistics are not strictly comparable. We lack a ‘mother religion’ question that would match ‘mother tongue’. *Faute de mieux*, let us compare ‘language spoken at home’ to the religion of both husband and wife. A very small denomination, Jewish, with 1% of the total population of Canada, and the largest, Catholic, with 45% at the time of the census used for the comparison, have a similarly high level of religious concordance (Table 2). If we restrict the comparison to British Columbia where both groups (‘Jewish’ and ‘couples speaking French at home’ have the same low population weight (under 1%), the difference still holds: In 1981 the BC ‘French mother tongue’ rate of endogamy was 41%, while for Jews the likelihood of the spouse having the same religion stood at the much higher level of 75%.

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3. A recent study of English speakers in Quebec indicates that their rate of endogamy is now 60% compared to 67% in 1971 and that 25% of Anglophones have French speaking partners and 15% partners speaking another language (Jack Jedwab as reported by the Economist of January 8, 2005). My 1991 family census study indicated that a ‘mother tongue English’ woman in Quebec had a 22% chance of being married to a ‘French mother tongue’ if she was over 35 years old, 29% if she was under 35. This difference fits the increase of exogamy reported by Jedwab (2004), but the major change appears to have been in the greater frequency of intermarriage with allophones: 6% in the above 35 category of 1981, 8% in 1991; 15% in the recent Jedwab study.

4. For the source of the language data see note 2. For religion see Laponce, 1980, 1983)
considerably more affected than religion by the social environment. In Canada, as in the rest of the Western world, language is triggered by very high levels of social and cultural interactions.

It would be interesting to have time budgets of language and religious thoughts and activities across time and across societies. I do not know of any such studies. We would probably find that a few societies can manage with few words and grunts; and find that, even in Canada, some people spend more time at non verbal religious involvements than in secular language activities. But the latter must be a small minority. Modernity requires an increasingly frequent use of words.

The point of the digression was to lead me to the observation that – while a small religion can be well protected by transportable individual rights – a minority language, unless very isolated, cannot normally rely for their protection on the natural tendency of speakers of speakers of a given language to congregate together in space because they are typically subject to penetration by the more powerful languages with which they are in contact. Hence the need for group rights, hence the need for the involvement of a protective political authority.

In the matter of minority language protection, an interventionist public policy must take over from a policy of laissez faire. The saying of the 19th century politician regarding the poor and the weak applies to minority languages equally well: between the rich and the poor, it is freedom that oppresses and legal restraint that sets one free.

Language, Territory, and Collective Rights

The intervention of politics will lead to two major types of language boundaries: The Finnish type and the Swiss type. The flexible Finnish internal language border creates bilingual districts protecting Swedish wherever the minority population accounts for at least 8% at the last census. The protective boundaries are thus subject to change. Finland uses an 8% criterion, a different legislator might set it lower, but it would still remain that the protection would not be permanent, the borders being affected by unpredictable migration patterns.5

The second, the more effective boundary system is offered by Switzerland who provides an excellent case study of the problems posed by globalization. Over the past 150 years, at the very same time it centralized then internationalized its economy, far more so than Canada6, it decentralised its culture, notably in the field of language. The

5. Unlike the rest of Finland, the Aaland islands have a fixed protective boundary of the Swiss type described below. For comparisons of Canada, Finland, Switzerland and Belgium, see McRae (1984-) Laponce (1987), Domenicelli (1999).
6. See the studies prepared for the MacDonald Royal Commission in the 1980s.
country is not only divided into cantons, it has not only distinct French, German and Italian TV networks, it is also, and most importantly from the language point of view, divided into unilingual regions. The three major official languages, French, Italian, and German, are separated by fixed historical boundaries that had para-constitutional strength long before being written into the revised constitution of 2000, boundaries that run, in some cases, through a given canton and even through a city, as in the case of Fribourg. These boundaries are maintained by the cantons to which the federal government has given the de facto sovereign power in language matters.

The boundaries are not marked by visible signs, there is no border control; everybody can go through but the language landscape changes in the public domain. On one side of the border the street signs, the public schools, the cantonal documents, are in German, on the other side of the border they are in French or Italian. Crossing from Bern into Vaud is like crossing from Germany into France. The migrants from other cantons have to ‘convert’, in their public life, to the official language of the area. They are treated like the migrants from outside Switzerland when it comes to language matters falling within the jurisdiction of the canton, a wide jurisdiction because of the practice of administrative federalism according to which the rules made at the level of the federal government are administered by the corresponding ministries of the cantons.7

Such a constraining system raises serious objections from the point of view of individual rights.8 On the occasion of a complaint, based on the ground of individual freedom and equality of all citizens, the Swiss Federal Tribunal had the occasion to specify the political and philosophical grounds for the constitutionality of internal language borders. A businessman from Ticino had complained that a cantonal law obliging him to advertise his products in a language other than that of his choice violated the equality provisions of the Swiss constitution. In its justification for ruling against the plaintiff, the court had this to say:

“The (internal) linguistic borders of our country, once fixed, must be considered unchangeable. The certainty for each original segment (souche) of the population of the integrity of its territory throughout which its language is spoken and over which its culture extends, constitutes the safeguard of the harmonious relationship of the various parts of the country, and the right of each of these to forestall any encroachment must be recognized” (my translation from Héraud, 1963).

The major argument is one of public order, of a type that the Greeks, at least Plato, would have made for the ‘good civic life’, the life of a polis that needs security

7. The one major exception to the principle of juxtaposition rather than superposition of languages occurs in the canton of Grisons where the local language, Romansh, has so lost territorial compactness in favour of Italian and German that unilingual territoriality would not be feasible. The canton has delegated to the municipalities its power over language. The municipalities have typically opted for bilingualism, German being the dominant language (See Grin’s chapter in this volume).
8. For a study of language rights in the context of ethnicity and nationality see May (2003).
fences. Beyond justifying fences that maintain harmony and public order, another ruling of the same Federal Tribunal addresses the more general problem of migrations, a problem rendered all the more important by the declining birth rate of all industrial nations, those that are the natural target of migrants, those most in need of in-migration to maintain their labour force and their social security systems. The court ruling says bluntly:

“The risks of foreign migration... is controlled by the linguistic assimilation of the immigrants... and it is there that the school has an important role to play: it becomes its duty to communicate to its students the knowledge of the languages of their new home” (my translation from Héraud, 1963).

Read from an American or English Canadian point of view, this last justification may sound almost shockingly unnecessary. If it so appears it is because of the assimilating power of the English language that can rely on a free language market to give it the advantage.

Canada may have come close to adopting a Swiss territorial solution when the Pépin-Robarts Task Force of the late 1970s proposed that the provinces be given sovereign authority in matters of language in the domains of their competence. Unfortunately (unfortunately from the point of view of the minority language I have adopted in this paper) the proposal was in contradiction to the national ideology of then Prime minister Trudeau who thought that the crisscrossing of identity cleavages was needed to tie a nation together.9 Such tying together is obviously necessary at the central level, and the tying is done in Switzerland at the level of the Executive, Parliament, and Central civil service, but the tying together at the lower geographical levels increases language contacts hence becomes a more frequent source of de-stabilisation and conflict. I side here with Pépin-Robarts against Trudeau.

Having said that rigid borders set to protect unilingual areas in he public domain are the first and best line of defence of a minority language, let us consider now some mistakes, some perverse effects that result from too extreme an application of the principle.

**Avoiding the Perverse Effects of Territorialism**

Two anecdotes taken from the academic field will help illustrate the need for rational flexibility, the need for à la carte exemptions. In the 1980s, the French Parliament passed a law, known as the law Toubon after the name of its sponsor, that made it an obligation for academic meetings held in France and subsidized by French public institutions to offer written abstracts and oral summaries of the papers presented in another language than French. Translating short written abstracts is not that easy and often leads to mistranslations when it is not done by a professional, but it is a minor nuisance compared to oral translation. Professional immediate translation is prohibitive and would usually be better done by the presenter or a colleague. In the latter case, the successive translations or summaries slow down the proceedings to the annoyance of a captive audience. My
experience of meetings held under these regulations is that the oral summaries became shorter and shorter and less and less useful. The logical effect of this rule, if applied seriously, would have, and may have, driven away international meetings in disciplines so dominated by English that all participants have at least passive knowledge of that language. Reducing the number of meetings held in France would restrict the impact of French scientific culture by increasing the cost of attendance by French scholars, hence affecting indirectly the perceived worth of the language. That type of extreme territorialism is dysfunctional.

The second anecdote concerns France as well as Canada. In the late 80s, the Paris Institut Pasteur decided to publish its prestigious Review in English. The outcry against this very rational decision, in a field which is dominated by English, reached the level of the Canadian Prime Minister who, about to attend a meeting of La Francophonie, decided to reset the linguistic balance to Canada's advantage by asking the Royal Society of Canada to sponsor a well funded bilingual scientific publication. The Society accepted although its Science Academy predicted that there was no future for the enterprise. The Academy was right: after a few issues, the very expensive publication was discontinued. The effect of this well intended measure was to make it all the more evident that French, with rare exceptions, had ceased to be the language of the hard sciences. By contrast, the Quebec Universities and departments that teach in French are right to encourage their staff to publish in English. And the organizers of this meeting were quite right to ask me to write this communication in English in order that I be understood by all.

Territoriality, yes; but not to the point where it has perverse effects on the very language one wants to protect. Once inside the security borders of a language, one needs ladders that one will climb from time to time to communicate with and be heard by the outside, and that will typically mean having to use a regional or a world-wide lingua franca. While Switzerland enforces the rigid separation of its unilingual areas, it encourages its citizens to become bi or trilingual. It is revealing that the Swiss unilingual areas produce a much higher level of bilinguals than does Canada. Approximately 30% of Francophone and Germanophone Swiss say that they know the other language either well or fluently. In Canada, by contrast, the overall level of declared bilingualism is only 17%, with more than half that figure being contributed by Quebec. Public unilingualism, with the appropriate exceptions required by circumstances, is not an obstacle to learning other languages. France appears to have seen the light. Having amended its constitution

10. By contrast, I find justified the use of the obstacles that the Toubon law puts to the pressures coming from the European Commission and the EU Court of Justice (see Bernier's chapter in this volume); pressures to make exceptions to the rule that goods and products sold in France must be labelled and have relevant information and instructions written in French. Here the conflict of interest is not of culture versus culture, as in my academic translation example, but of economic efficiency vs language maintenance and consumer protection; hence my making a difference of evaluation justified by my continuing to reason the case from the language point of view.
to make French its official language in 1992, it is now proposing to reform its school curriculum to expand the teaching of foreign languages, mostly English, starting in the early grades.

**Diglossia**

The second line of defence of a minority language takes the form of diglossia, taken here to be a specific form of bilingualism that mixes two languages or two forms of the same language at the level of the individual but specializes them to cover different roles. Switzerland offers again a good current example. In the Alemanic cantons, the local Swiss German is used within the family, with friends and neighbours, and is sometimes spoken in the cantonal assemblies, while High German is the language of schooling, the language of formal written communication. The two languages define roughly a local area on the one hand, a national and international area on the other. In Luxembourg the language division of labour is even more complex. Luxembourgish covers the private domain, German and French the public, with German prevalent in economic matters while French predominates in Church and politics\(^\text{12}\). Diglossic bilingualism can be quite stable because the languages in contact are functionally separated. The diversity of their usage renders them essential to the definition of self. They contribute to a single identity rather than pull that identity in different directions.

Diglossic bilingualism offers a good strategy for French outside its core area, for Aboriginal languages, and for some so-called ‘heritage languages’ of recent immigration. The key to maintaining a local identity language is that the language be used within the family and by the school or at least by one of the two. The need for knowledge of each of the two languages and their functional separation will vary considerably from case to case. In British Columbia with minimal use of French in the home, one can nevertheless succeed in maintaining it through the schools because, in addition to being the language of identity for very few, it is also official language of the country and a still powerful international language with significant political, economic as well as cultural payoffs. None of the Aboriginal languages are in that category, but even without family support, they can have minimal identity survival value as does Irish in Ireland, and they may even have some instrumental rewards as illustrated by the case of Musqueam Indians who have only one fluent L1 speaker.

After the University of British Columbia, which is built in part on Musqueam territory, decided to give some school instruction to Musqueam children in their nearly dead

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\(^{12}\) It will be interesting to follow the evolution of large bilingual systems such as those of Catalonia and the Ukraine in terms of territoriality and diglossia. That evolution will best be studied by distinguishing the abilities to understand, to speak, to read, and to write. The latter is likely to be the key to the evolution of the system toward territoriality. For the present situation in the Ukraine, see the chapter by Kulyk in this volume.
language, one of the first requests of the children was to be taught the basic vocabulary of soccer in order that they be on level ground with a nearby Greek team who would hide behind Greek to shout their game plans during play. All languages have a double function, that of communication and that of exclusion. With a minimal vocabulary, a language can survive as a mask, at least for a while, in the absence of family support, and by so doing retain an ethnic quality.

**Diglossia and Perverse Effects**

As in the case of territorialism, the diglossic solution is subject to perverse effects. The use of the school to revive Mohawk has been successful, as it was for Hawaïan, Maori, and Welch; but Calvet (1999) reports that, after Guinée obtained its independence from France, president Sékou Touré failed to reform the educational curriculum so that a local language would be used at the primary level in the public schools (that is Unesco’s recommendation). The reform failed for a number of reasons, including the opposition of the populations concerned who did not see the point of having the school teach the family language that the students knew already rather than French, the language of social ascension. A diglossic system too far bent to the side of the local language risks creating the kind of internal colonialism denounced by Michael Hechter (1975) and provoking the reject of that language by speakers who perceive it as a means of forced marginalisation.

**Conclusion**

In short, the two main strategies of protection outlined here – territorialisation and diglossia – both aim at restricting the contact between dominant and minority languages, and both strategies risk having perverse effects if they are not subject to exceptions and adjustments. Who will decide on the principle, the applications, and the exceptions? None better than the political system since, for its survival, a minority language in the grip of globalization should not rely solely on its own internal governance; it needs the support of a political authority. That takes us back where we started since both languages and states are territorial animals.
Bibliography


**TABLE 1**

Language endogamy (in bold) related to the home language (in parenthesis) in Canada by province. In percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.F</td>
<td>99 (99)</td>
<td>5 (-)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>95 (97)</td>
<td>50 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>97 (96)</td>
<td>59 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NB</td>
<td>91 (65)</td>
<td>87 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>65 (11)</td>
<td>96 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ont</td>
<td>92 (86)</td>
<td>59 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>89 (89)</td>
<td>58 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sask</td>
<td>93 (94)</td>
<td>36 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alb</td>
<td>92 (92)</td>
<td>33 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>91 (90)</td>
<td>32 (-)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Less than 1%

Source: 1991 Family census tape (individual level data) deposited at UBC (Laponce, 2003).
The endogamy measures pertain to married women born in the province who were at least 35 years old (see note 2).
TABLE 2
Percent of married males whose spouses have the same religion.
Family census of 1981.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Concordance in %</th>
<th>% of the population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehovah witness</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mennonite</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Church</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Laponce (1983) based on individual level data of the Family census of 1981 deposited at UBC.