

Is a linguistic regime necessary for North America ? Lessons from the European Union¹

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Introduction:

Although language should naturally be a core element in International Relations studies, it is generally overlooked. Maybe the reason lies in this evidence of its necessity to communicate internationally, thus the language problem as well as its solution is taken for granted. It also lies in the fact that there is no crisis, not even a serious threat to international communications posed by the generalized use of English at the International or regional levels.

This does not mean that this question should not be discussed by academics and politicians. Language is not a self contained, fixed system. Language acquisition and use have social, cultural and political implications². For both NAFTA and the EU, the real question is whether English will and should be the language of communication or all languages will and should continue to be treated, on an equal footing with English. Actually this equal treatment is partly formal, almost fictional. In both regions, English is by far the most extensively used language for international negotiations. If there is no firm policy to counteract what is often perceived as an unavoidable and irresistible trend, English will prevail for a range of, objective and subjective reasons:

1. It is already the most used language on earth³.
2. In the UE it is by far the most important second language and the reasons for a prevalent use of English in NAFTA are even more overwhelming. Two of the three NAFTA members have English as an official language. It is the mother tongue of more than 80% of its population⁴

¹ This research project was developed thanks to the support of the Canadian Government, the Jean Monnet Center at the School of Law of New York University (NYU) and the Fulbright Comexus commission.

² Donaldo Macedo, Bessie Dendrinis and Panyota Gounari *The Hegemony of English* Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, Coplorado, 2003, p. 96.

³ The number of people speaking English as a mother tongue or foreign language could reach one billion persons. In terms of number of speakers, it is thus challenged only by Chinese and Hindi. But Chinese is the official language in only three countries, China (including Hong-Kong where English is widely used), Singapore (where English is in fact the official language too) and Taiwan. Hindi (and its Pakistani sister language Urdu) is official language in two countries, both using widely English as a national language with an official status. On the other hand, English is official language in fifty seven independent countries

⁴ Trade with the US accounts for more than 92% of the total for Canada and approximately 80-85% in Mexico and has increased more than 100 percent with both neighbors since 1994 . Last but not least,

3. The power of the English speaking countries, both military, economic and cultural
4. The logics of neo liberalism and globalization, considered as inevitable, as is thus inevitable the use of one language, English, language of globalization⁵
5. Basic socio-linguistic behaviours in international settings such as should strengthen its position. These behaviours are described by with its *maximin* rule⁶ described by P. Van Parijs⁷.

Thus, the *laissez faire* and the “invisible hand” would spontaneously lead us to an optimal linguistic equilibrium responding to the needs of both the European and the North American projects.

For all practical purposes English already is the main communication language in all world international organizations, with very few exceptions for French. For the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), it already is the only official language. It also is for several international institutions that don't even have English speaking member country whatsoever, such as the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations⁸), the BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation⁹) or the European Central Bank¹⁰, none of these international organizations having an English speaking country among their members.

Mexico's GDP is only just about 4% that of the United States or expressed another way, the Mexican economy is roughly the size of the economy of New Jersey or the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Even Canada's 1996 GDP of \$585 billion is only 8% of U.S. GDP, most of it produced by English speaking firms.

⁵ Financial markets, international trade, electronic communication, International mass media and film industries now use the language of the biggest economic and military power in the world. Much has been said written about this unique quality for a language for the first time in history. English speaking countries account approximately for one third of the world production. English is the almost exclusive medium for high diplomacy or important economic transactions worldwide. In consequence, a good knowledge of English is a job requirement for the diplomatic services and in almost all big companies in the world. In 1992, almost half of the world's million foreign students were enrolled in institutions of six English mother tongue countries, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. To counteract this trend and attract good students, universities of other countries do in turn ever more often offer programs in English, strengthening the importance of this language. To illustrate this unprecedented power of a language in the modern times, around eighty per cent of the content posted in internet is in English even though an estimated 44 percent of online users speak another language at home. This means an unprecedented power as well.

⁶ When confronted with the choice of a language for an audience, a speaker will not ask himself what is his own best language but rather what is the language which is best known by the members of the audience who knows it least. This *maximin* criterion will tend to maximize the minimum competence. Van Parijs accepts exceptions for political reasons. such as education of children, aversion for a language even if better known which in Europe works in favor of English against German and above all Russian in Eastern Europe, the bilingual or multilingual countries like Belgium, Switzerland or Canada

⁷ “Europe's Linguistic Challenge” *Archives of European sociology*, XLV, 1 (2004),113-154.

⁸ ASEAN member countries are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. We saw that English is one of the four official languages of Singapore although mother tongue to almost no Singaporean. English is still one of the two official languages of Philippines too, along with Filipino which is also the national language of the country.

⁹ Whose members are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. None of them is English speaking. Russian, along with English is the official language of the organization.-Macedonia, Montenegro and Cyprus were at some point candidates too.

¹⁰ In 2009, fifteen members of the EU are member of the ECB, as a consequence of having adopted the Euro for currency. Although Ireland is a member of the ECB, the United Kingdom is not.

Nevertheless, most of the political groupings, including the European Union or the United Nations have adopted different linguistic policies. It could be argued that it was because these policies were adopted in the fifties, when English seemed less dominant in the International forums.

But in 1994, NAFTA also adopted three official languages, all the official languages of its members¹¹. Doing so, it emulated the European Union fifty years ago, notwithstanding the difference in scope, objectives, period and geo-linguistic situations.

The aim of this paper is to examine the linguistic regimes of NAFTA and the European Union, its efficiency and legitimacy. It also poses the question of the use of culture and its more evident manifestation, language, as tool of influence to promote not only some particular interests but also a specific project

We shall adopt an International Relations point of view, although we are well aware that these debates in international relations have solid antecedents with thinkers like Gramsci, Foucault or Bourdieu, to quote just the most relevant. In our field, the constructivist school has studied this question while the neo realists also have grasped this problem with the idea of “soft power” developed by Joseph Nye in the eighties.

We ask two questions:

Are the linguistic challenges facing NAFTA and EU comparable?

Can the EU experience shed some light on the debate in North America and other regions?

To both questions, our answer will be yes.

1- Comparable linguistic challenges:

We shall here contradict two generally accepted assumptions that we consider wrong.

The first one is that NAFTA and the EU are two different projects that could not be compared. It is true that NAFTA is limited to a Free Trade Agreement, but the unavoidable spill over towards non economic issues occurred even before the trade negotiations were finished. Labor and environment issues were included as well as two institutions, ironically called commissions. On another hand, the European Union started with a custom union and is still in many aspects an intergovernmental grouping. There are of course fundamental differences, about the supranationality, subsidiarity and the institutional framework, very substantial in the European case, almost non existent in NAFTA.

The second one is that the EU has a complex and well studied linguistic regimes while NAFTA does not. Actually, both regimes are very similar, almost identical. The European Union has not developed a regime that is up to its institutional complexity. It has not either developed a linguistic common policy although it has set up many relevant programs in the area. On the other hand, NAFTA does have a precise linguistic regime.

1.1- Two blocks with political implications:

¹¹ Although neither the USA, nor the Mexican constitution formally mention an official language for the country.

NAFTA objectives and institutional structure look quite basic compared with the EU's and the decision process is exclusively intergovernmental. As we mentioned, NAFTA objectives and aim at creating a North American Community if any, are only implicit.

Not only trade but also International Politics played an important role in the decision to start negotiations and to determinate the final form that the Treaty would take¹². NAFTA does now in turn influence Politics, International Relations and culture in the three member countries. On another side, the evolution of the three societies, their growing common economic interests add to the geographical proximity to increase the political aspects of the NAFTA Alliance. This assertion is confirmed fifteen years after NAFTA's entry in vigor. The debate has moved from the Free Trade Area to the constitution of a genuine North American Community¹³.

The first sentence of the preamble of the agreement, before the Trade and Economic development reads as follows "(the three governments resolved to) strengthen the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations". More importantly, non trade considerations existed from the very beginning of the negotiations with the adjunction of environmental and labour agreements, and in the expectations of the three members. The concepts of Intelligent Frontiers or the "SPP (Security and Prosperity Partnership) for North America" all bear witness to a scope that goes well beyond trade liberalization. Such expectations are well described in the book of Robert Pastor's about the "North American Community¹⁴".

So NAFTA does not have explicit political ambitions, let alone cultural ones but it took forty years to the European Union to explicitly but timidly set cultural ambitions. Culture itself remains a competence of the member States although the EU has taken some important steps to define a common European identity. The objective is to promote further integration by democratizing the European integration process and bridging the so criticized "Democratic deficit" of the European construction.

1.2- EU and NAFTA linguistic regimes are comparable

NAFTA has a incipient, almost non existent institutional framework. It nevertheless has a very precise linguistic regime. On another hand, EU has much less explicit and confused linguistic regime that one could have thought. So both block converge towards a same situation.

¹² The very decision not to sign a customs union or to exclude a migratory agreement, the cultural exception for Canada, the protection of State intervention in the energy sector in Mexico are political decisions.

¹³ This author already mentioned the inevitability of this debate in his PhD. Thesis "L'intégration nord américaine a la Lumière de l'expérience européenne" Université de Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle-Institut des Hautes Etudes de l'Amérique Latine, 1996. Robert Pastor "Towards a North American Community, lessons from the old world to the new" Institute for International Economics, 2001 y more recently Robert Pastor "The Future of North America Replacing a Bad Neighbor Policy" *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008 and Mark Aspinwall "NAFTA-ization: Regionalization and Domestic Political Adjustment in the North American Economic Area" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 2009 Volume 47. Number 1, pp. 1–24.

¹⁴ Robert A. Pastor *Toward a North American Community: Lessons from the Old World for the New* Institute for International Economics, 2001, Washington.

NAFTA's linguistic regime of is explicitly expressed by various elements.

The first is the adoption of a trilingual version of the agreement.

The second is the dispute settlement procedure. The procedure stipulates that "If a claim is against Mexico, the notice of intent and any accompanying documents should be submitted in Spanish or together with a translation into Spanish if they are submitted in English or French. If a claim is against the United States, the notice of intent and any accompanying documents should be submitted in English or together with a translation into English if they are submitted in Spanish or French. If a claim is against Canada, the notice of intent and any accompanying documents should be submitted in English or French together with a translation into English or French if they are submitted in Spanish¹⁵".

Finally, both trilateral commissions (Labour and Environment) do have an explicit linguistic status. In the final agreement, the United States was attributed the labor office; Canada would host an Environmental Secretariat, and Mexico was offered the main institution, the Trade Secretariat¹⁶. The linguistic balance in the sieges of the few NAFTA institutions, one in a French speaking, one in an English speaking and one in a Spanish speaking city was thus better respected than in the EU where the three main institution cities, Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg are French speaking. Nevertheless the main institution that should have been located in Mexico City was eventually deemed superfluous and thus never saw the light¹⁷. But there still is what was finally called the "Commission for Environmental Cooperation" in Montreal and the Commission for Labour Cooperation in Dallas.

In its article 19, about official languages, the North American Commission for Labour Cooperation stipulates that "The official languages of the Commission shall be English, French and Spanish. The Council shall establish rules and procedures regarding interpretation and translation". The Environment Commission has the same status.

In both cases, this legal rule is in general strictly respected as far as official documents and declarations are concerned. In both cases, nevertheless, negotiations, debates and non official documents and studies are overwhelmingly redacted in one language, English.

NAFTA does not possess the heavy institutional or juridical apparatus of the EU, there are three ways to measure the balance of languages and the way it works: In a first step of this research I spent several weeks in Montreal to observe the daily linguistic operating balance in one of NAFTA's two institutions.

Another way of analysing the linguistic regime of NAFTA is the analysis of the NAFTA dispute panels and the way they might or might not be biased¹⁸. As a matter of fact the

¹⁵ Statement of the (US) Free Trade Commission on Notices of Intent to Submit a Claim to Arbitration (although unofficial since subject to verification in all three NAFTA languages, which is another way to recognize trilingualism anyway)

http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Trade_Agreements/Regional/NAFTA/asset_upload_file212_3601.pdf

¹⁶ Allen Myerson "Dallas Gets Three-Nation Labor Office" *New York Times* March 19, 1994.

¹⁷ The concept of a NAFTA Secretariat remains but it is in fact divided in a Canadian Section, a Mexican Section and a United States Section, responsible for the administration of the dispute settlement provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). See http://www.nafta-secretary.org/DefaultSite/index_e.aspx

¹⁸ For general discussions about the biases in these panels see Matthew Stevenson "Bias and the NAFTA Dispute Panels: Controversies and Counter-Evidence" *American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 30, 2000, Sher, Marc Dispute Resolution under NAFTA, Fact or Fiction? *George Washington International Law Review*, 2003 .

one controversy that involved (indirectly) the Linguistic knot in North America was carried by the US government and resolved by the WTO not under the NAFTA dispute settlement auspices¹⁹.

So whereas NAFTA has a much more developed linguistic regime than expected, the EU has a much less developed regime. The UE has not such a developed linguistic regime: There is no policy to define the way the Union must constitute a common linguistic space, and no rule about how it should speak in international forums. Even the linguistic rules for the internal functioning of the Common institutions are brief, incoherent and ill-defined. To that heterogeneity of treatment corresponds an ever wider heterogeneity of terms about the object of the policy in official texts (official language, Community language, languages of the Union, European Union languages that could give way to different interpretations.

Just like in NAFTA, the linguistic status of the European Community stems from the equality of the different language versions of the Treaty of Rome²⁰.

¹⁹ “In 1996, USTR initiated a Section 301 investigation and requested consultations with the Government of Canada to address certain discriminatory practices used by the Government of Canada to unfairly protect Canada’s domestic magazine industry. Subsequently, USTR used WTO dispute settlement procedures to challenge these discriminatory practices. Specifically, USTR requested that a WTO panel be formed to consider Canadian measures prohibiting or restricting the importation into Canada of certain periodicals; tax treatment of so-called "split-run" periodicals; and the application of favorable postage rates to certain Canadian periodicals. Canada prohibits imports of "split-run" editions of magazines (regional editions that include advertising and some content aimed at the regional audience). During 1994, in response to the launch of a Canadian edition of "Sports Illustrated," which was electronically transmitted to and printed in Canada, the Canadian Government "clarified" its investment policies on split-run magazines, defining new magazine titles as "investments" subject to review under the Investment Canada Act. Moreover, in 1995, the Canadian Government enacted an excise tax on split-run magazine editions such as "Sports Illustrated" on a per-issue basis at a rate of 80 percent of the amount charged for all advertising appearing in that issue. The WTO panel's report, entitled Canada --Certain Measures Concerning Periodicals, was circulated to WTO Members on March 14, 1997. The Panel's findings support the United States on nearly all claims. The panel recommended that Canada bring its practices into conformity with GATT 1994". from the USTR'S 1997 national Trade estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, pp. 31-38 <http://wehner.tamu.edu/mgmt.www/NAFTA/spring98/notes/Notes-US-CA-1a.htm>

²⁰ Concretely though, it consists in a short article of the Rome Treaty and a directive issued by the Council the following year. Article 217 of the Treaty which reads as follows “the rules governing the languages of the institutions of the Community shall, without prejudice to the provisions contained in the Rules of procedures of the Court of Justice, be determined by the Council acting unanimously”. So the institutions could not establish their own linguistic policies. The Parliament and the Commission depend on a unanimous decision of the Council

The following year, in April 1958, the Council issued a directive regulating the language question for the EEC. It was the very first Council regulation. Only eight articles were deemed sufficient to define the linguistic status in such a complex linguistic situation, with such an ambitious goal as political integration. These eight articles were supposed to address the question, both externally and internally.

These eight articles are ::

Article 1. The official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Community shall be Dutch, French, German and Italian.

Article 2. Documents which a Member State or a person subject to the jurisdiction of a Member state sends to the 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.

Only eight articles define the European linguistic regime, of which two are menial precisions²¹ and with only the first one, really defining a linguistic policy. This article established a distinction between official and working languages, without defining what was understood by working languages. It even let it be understood that all four languages were working languages. This notion of working language is not to be found anywhere else in the Treaties. It is just mentioned in this Council regulation and thus cannot be considered as a principle of the EU (or to tell it in juridical terms cannot be regarded as deriving from primary Community legislation²²). Irish for example was a language of the Treaty, that could be used in the Court of Justice and Irish speakers could write and receive answers from the Institutions in their own language but was neither an official nor a working language of the institutions of the Union until 2005.

Moreover there is no mention whatsoever of another policy that the linguistic regime of the European institutions.

Half a century, many debates and many other official languages after this first formulation, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe did not add anything to that brief article²³. The fact that with the successive enlargements, the number of official languages has grown from four to twenty three has not triggered a fundamental debate. The growth of official language has accelerated but the debate has constantly been postponed although there were many good opportunities in 1957, 1972 and especially 1995.

3- A same need to develop a real multilingual policy:

Since several years now, the EU has reiterated the need for a multilingual region. It has developed many instruments and policy to promote it. Enumerate and evaluate them all goes beyond the scope of this paper, as does an in-depth reflexion on the real objectives of the EU and the progression of multilingualism not only in the European institutions but also in the European societies. This would require mentioning the education policies and also the status of the minority languages in the EU.

Article 3. Document 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.

Article 4. Regulations and other documents of general application shall be drafted in the four official languages.

Article 5. The official Journal of the Community shall be published in the four official languages.

Article 6. The institutions of the Community may stipulate in their rules of procedure which of the languages are to be used in specific cases.

Article 7. The language to be used in the procedure of the Court of Justice shall be laid down in its rules of procedure.

Article 8. 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.

²¹ which define for the Court of Justice what was already set for the other institutions.

²² Miquel Strubell "The political discourse on Multilingualism in The European Union" in Dario Castiglione and Chris Longman eds. *The language question in Europe and diverse societies* O-Nate institute for the sociology of Law, Oxford and Portland Oregon, 2007 p.161.

²³ In the Article III-433 of the new treaty the text went as follows "The Council of Ministers shall adopt unanimously a European regulation laying down the rules governing the languages of the Union's institutions, without prejudice to the Statute of the Court of Justice of the European Union"

From the perspective of North American inhabitants also, multilingualism has become a reality. One of the side effects of NAFTA has been the significant increase in bilingual or even trilingual labelling on products, for simultaneous distribution through retailers in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico in French, English, and Spanish, something usual in Canada at least in two languages but new in Mexico²⁴.

So the debate about multilingualism in North America has not been dodged, despite the apparent simplicity and forwardness of both the Treaty and the geo linguistic situation in the region.

Moreover, the Canadian government is very attentive to this cultural and linguistic debate and has already taken several steps to ensure that if and when necessary the question will sooner or later be put on the negotiation table. Canada plays in this area a role similar to that of France in the European Union. The natural tendency would be to attribute it to the sharing of the language, French, which claims to be a *lingua franca*. It is true that both Canada and France have used French as an instrument of Foreign policy to project their soft power. Nevertheless, both positions also have different origins and motivations. Both English speaking and French speaking Canadians see their identity threatened, but in a different way: the Francophone Canadians fear an exclusive use of English which would prefigure the situation in the country. The Anglo-Canadian fear that the free trade of cultural industries in NAFTA could wipe their on national industry off. The U.S. successfully challenged certain Canadian measures adverse to imported periodicals under GATT rules. Canada could not defend her policy under NAFTA Article 2106 about cultural industry protection making it void.

Although all the documents are translated in the three languages, all official high level meetings and conferences have interpreters and our own research in the Environment Commission in Montreal tended to prove that trilinguism was respected, Canada remains watchful.

It initiated a reflexion, mainly through the Quebec provincial government. As early as 1986, with the Free Trade agreement with the United States, the *Conseil Supérieur de la Langue Française* published a report on “Free trade Canada/United States and the French language in Quebec²⁵” In 2001, a document was published which was called Language Issues in the Integration of the Americas²⁶ “, the Council of French Language in Quebec addresses directly the question of multilingualism in the Americas.

Departing from this report, the Council the first “Inter American Language Management Seminar” was organized in August 2002, in Quebec City. It was followed by a second seminar in Asuncion (Paraguay) in June 2003.

The Third Inter-American Language Management Seminar took place in Rio de Janeiro in May 2006, with the- "Inter-American Language Policies in a Multipolar World" as a

²⁴ “Wal-Mart is a prime example of a NAFTA compliant organization. From what I have observed, products sold have labels and instructions in three languages. This includes household items, hardware, beauty supplies, hygienic needs, baby products, school supplies and the list goes on”
<http://dr1.com/forums/spanish-101/73899-nafta-its-impact-language.html> .

²⁵ <http://www.cslf.gouv.qc.ca/publications/AVIS108/Avis108.htm> exists only in French.

²⁶ <http://www.cslf.gouv.qc.ca/publications/avis125/A125ang.PDF> by Christine Frechette, in French with translations in English, Portuguese and Spanish.

topic²⁷ and was organized by the Latin Union. So far, this action to promote awareness over Linguistic questions with North America from the Canadian and Quebec government has not bear fruits. No prominent politician and few participants from the USA and Mexico have supported this effort. The fourth Seminar should have taken place in Ottawa in October 2008 but was postponed due to the Canadian general elections. But the foundations to an in-depth debate over this issue are now laid in North America. This debate has not yet started and several reasons could be invoked. Outside Canada, the North American sensibility is not yet ripe for it, maybe because of the particular geo linguistic situation of the United States and Mexico, or maybe simply because the necessity of a debate has not come yet. The practical problems are not serious with only there languages and a modest institutional setting. In these conditions, it is hardly surprising that no debate has appeared if we remember than in Europe, but for the numerous practical problems, the debate is not much more advanced.

4- Lessons from Europe for a linguistic management:

Although Europe is still developing its own linguistic regime, its seniority as an integration project and its more complex situation could allow it to be referential for NAFTA. Some basic statements would allow to better direct the debate in North America.

4.1 Cost is not the main issue

The imposition of English as the main or only communication language has often be legitimized by the cost effectiveness it entails. The European Union with the largest translation and interpretation services in the world is often used a repellent. The issue is not the size of these services but their *relative* size. For 2007, the cost of translation in the Commission is estimated to be around EUR 302 million. This represents a cost to each citizen of around EUR 0.63 per year²⁸. The Commission nevertheless claims that the introduction of three new official languages will not increase the cost for the public thanks to the new translation strategy. In 2006, the overall cost of translation in all EU institutions is estimated at EUR 800 million. The total cost of interpretation in the EU institutions was almost EUR 190 million in 2005, the equivalent of EUR 0.42 per citizen per year. The cost of interpretation per citizen was not expected to rise either with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania and the addition of Irish, still according to the European Commission. The total cost of all translation and interpretation in all EU institutions is less than 1% of the total EU budget²⁹. So having 23 official languages might not be a problem in itself. It becomes one when the spending is impossible to control because there is no assumed policy. The very absence of choice opens the door to all the criticisms without leaving to the EU institutions the possibility to respond.

²⁷ http://dti1.unilat.org/tercer_seminario/index_en.htm

²⁸ Commission ready to welcome three new official languages on 1 January 2007 IP/06/1854 European Commission, Brussels, 20 December 2006

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

According to European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats MEP Alexander Stubb in a report on the translation costs of the EU institutions adopted by the European Parliament, some €26 million is wasted annually only through booked but unused translation services in the EU institutions³⁰.

4.2- There is no hope whatsoever that the problem would decrease in the future.

Many times the debate has presented itself and be postponed by the EU instances. Europe went from four to 23 languages without engaging a fundamental reflection. Now, the necessity for the Council to take any decision unanimously is a more and more difficult condition to fulfil with twenty seven members and more to come. Delaying the debate did not help. It is not bound to help in the future³¹.

In the EU just as in North America, that the language issue is so fundamental, so politically loaded that it has been deemed counterproductive to raise it before having achieved some more concrete and easier goals. This is the classical neo-functional arguments about creating functional solidarities and integration before going to the core of the political debates.

³⁰ “Cost in translation: expense awareness duty to taxpayers” *EurActiv* Thursday 12 July 2007. However a. Stubb also underlined in his report that “multilingualism is one of EU's main assets: "The EU's language services, including both translation and interpretation, amount to only less than one percent of the total costs of the EU. Not such a high price to pay for democracy and efficient co-operation”.

³¹ Other official languages should soon be added to the existing ones, multiplying exponentially the languages combinations needed and also the costs. Just to take some immediate challenges, two countries with two different official languages are negotiating their adhesion, Turkey with the Turkish language, and Croatia with Croatian. Moreover Luxemburgish was granted the status of official language in the country in 1984, and with Irish and Maltese already official languages, with some restrictions though. For Maltese, a three years' derogation for translating texts into Maltese ended on 1 May 2007. Under a derogation proposed by the Irish authorities in 2005, only regulations adopted jointly by the European Parliament and the Council under the co-decision procedure and correspondence with the public will be translated into Irish for a period of five years from 2007 on. It wont be long until some political party in Luxemburg demands the same. Nothing could be opposed to this demand, not even that Luxemburg already has its official language as an official language and most used working language in the EU with French and German since Ireland and Malta also have English as an official language beside Irish and Maltese. It will also be impossible to argue that since Luxemburg did not ask it before, it is hardly justified to ask it now, as Luxemburgish was declared official language much later than the Luxemburg adhesion to the EU and since Ireland, which already had Irish as an official language at the very moment of its adhesion had it recognized as an official language thirty years after.