



Language advocacy in times of securitization and neoliberalization: The *Network LanguageRights*

Mi-Cha Flubacher¹ · Brigitta Busch^{1,2}

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Abstract

In this contribution, we aim to address the following questions: What does it mean to do language advocacy in 2022? Under which conditions does it operate? What are the fights, aims, and challenges? On the one hand, answering these questions heavily depends on the political, social, cultural and linguistic context, as well as on the interests, stakes and positions of the advocacy actors. On the other, we argue that recent political economic transformations are conditioning language advocacy more than ever. In the following, we will outline two transformations we consider particularly prevalent, i.e. neoliberalization and securitization, discuss what language advocacy actually means, and exemplify this with the case of the *Network LanguageRights (NLR)*, a language advocacy group based in Vienna, dedicated to language rights of minorities and minoritized speakers in the Austrian context, and with a focus on language policies. We will further zoom into one particular discussion occurring at the heart of the NLR, which will lead us to a concluding discussion of possible ways of rethinking language advocacy, in particular in paying attention to the notion of linguistic citizenship.

Keywords Language advocacy · Securitization · Neoliberalism · Austria · Linguistic citizenship · Multilingualism

✉ Mi-Cha Flubacher
mi-cha.flubacher@univie.ac.at
Brigitta Busch
brigitta.busch@univie.ac.at

¹ Department of Linguistics, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

² Department of Linguistics, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Introduction

Recht auf Sprachen statt Deutsch als Pflicht (“A right to languages, rather than German as an obligation”): This is the *leitmotif* of the *Netzwerk SprachenRechte* (Network Language Rights; henceforth NLR), a Vienna based language advocacy group dedicated to language rights of minorities and minoritized speakers in the Austrian context. As the *leitmotif* implies, the *right to languages*—i.e. multilingualism in all its (lived, social, institutional) forms—is threatened by assimilationist language policies that enforce societal monolingualism or, in other words: mandatory German competences for migrants, refugees, and other minoritized speakers. The name of the network—or rather: its spelling (“LanguageRights”)—is, however, indicative of yet another advocacy focus: “Rights” in German (*Rechte*) implies a ‘right to’ but also legal provisions that touch on language issues, in particular by linking the access to rights and resources with language requirements in the official language. This explains the network’s repeated forays into legal issues of new regulations, stipulations, and policies. It is based on these two foci that the NLR can be considered an advocacy group in language policies.

Taking the NLR as an exemplary starting point to study advocacy in language policy in today’s times, provokes a set of questions: What does it mean to do language advocacy in 2022? Under which conditions does it operate? What are the fights, aims, and challenges? On the one hand, answering these questions heavily depends on the political, social, cultural, and linguistic context, as well as on the interests, stakes, and positions of the advocacy actors. On the other, we argue that recent political economic transformations are conditioning language advocacy more than ever. In the following, we will outline two transformations we consider particularly prevalent, i.e. neoliberalization and securitization, discuss what advocacy and language policy actually mean, and exemplify this with the case of the NLR. We will further zoom into one particular discussion occurring at the heart of the NLR, which will lead us to a concluding discussion of possible ways of rethinking language advocacy in the realm of policies, in particular by paying attention to the notion of linguistic citizenship. It is the aim of this article to offer a theoretical frame of current conditions across Europe and to thus contribute to critical discussions on both the necessity and limits of language advocacy.

The neoliberalization and securitization of language policies in Austria and beyond

The processes of both neoliberalization and securitization as enforcing and contributing to particular forms of governmentality are common across the European continent; their repercussions are experienced and critically contested especially in the countries formerly known for their welfare systems. Emblematically, Austria followed wide-ranging developments adopted in other European nation-states, most importantly transforming social services into a privilege for its population for which it has to work (hence *workfare* instead of *welfare*, cf. Peck, 2001) and be *activated* (e.g. only ‘active’ job-seekers receive unemployment benefits). These processes of

activation, pushed by supranational economic organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are usually considered as part of the *neoliberalization* of the public sector, parallel to transformations in education, social security, etc. that entail not only the withdrawal of the state to the cost of responsabilizing the subject but also its economization and marketization (cf. Harvey, 2005). Linking these political economic developments to specific forms of governmentality (*sensu* Foucault, 1982; cf. Fraser, 2003; Martín Rojo & Del Percio, 2020), consequences for society and individuals are deeply structural: services, institutions, and the population are categorized and segmented first and foremost according to their productivity and economic ‘worth’. Co-occurring with the recalibration of the public and the state, ‘neoliberal’ transformations are also happening on a ‘lower’ scale, i.e. in the guise of technologies of the ‘self’ (Foucault, 1982) that aim for ideal, self-optimizing subjects in charge of their own destinies, i.e. activated in line with the new workfare regime.

The tenacious effects of multi-scalar neoliberalization on language policies, language education, and language learners have been documented in several publications (e.g. Bernstein et al., 2015; Block et al., 2012; Flubacher & Del Percio, 2017). The empirical work of these researchers has shown “how neoliberal thinking influences the unequal access people have to valued resources and how it affects the maintenance (or contestation) of legitimacies, inequalities and relations of domination” (Del Percio & Flubacher, 2017: 4). It is thus not by chance that language and education—and language policies for that matter—are at the center of neoliberalization processes: language is introduced as a measure of optimization (especially in migration contexts) alongside education (keyword: lifelong education). Thereby, neoliberal requirements contribute to a deepening social divide: whereas global multilingualism becomes an asset for elites, other social groups are urged to adopt the official language in its standard variety and to abandon their devalorized ways of speaking, thus being pushed into a specific kind of monolingualism.

On a larger scale, the free movement of people and goods within the territory of the European Union has blurred what used to be the external borders of the individual member states. Yet, in a process described as *securitization* (Bigo, 2008; cf. Khan, 2016), these borders have not disappeared but rather shifted to *within* European nation-states and their societies. This means that in this process, societal ‘threats’ are regularly detected as well as measures to counter them. More often than not, immigration is perceived as such a threat, i.e. migrants are discursively constructed as potentially disruptive to the hegemonically existing societal order. This discursive construction becomes visible precisely in the increased amount of legislation, regulations, and mechanisms that are in place to curb—or at least regulate—migration, categorizing mobile populations in neoliberal fashion to select potentially productive ones while keeping others away, and erecting barriers that guarantee the selection process (Yeung & Flubacher, 2016).

The elements drawn on to construct these particular barriers are manifold, with ‘language’ emerging as a particularly powerful element, resulting in a variety of (new or revised) language policies (cf. Flubacher, 2014; Van Avermaet, 2009): this starts with requiring local language competences prior to entry, continues to requirements related to residence, settlement, and work, and (until now) ends with stipulations for

public services formerly unrelated to such issues, such as public housing and social welfare. Language, in these circumstances, turns into a gate-keeping device. Yet, as discourses and related political practices neither appear randomly nor materialize in isolation, they are part of larger discursive shifts as well as of interrelated political economic transformations. In this case, the linking of security and integration with language issues has been on the political agenda of most western European countries since the 1990 s. In Switzerland, for example, the first mention of obligatory language learning for the sake of improving the integration of the migrant population explicitly evoked issues of security and, *ex negativo*, to religious/political radicalism and fanaticism, criminality, deviance, as well as isolation, marginalization, etc. (Flubacher, 2014: 124). As a result, *integration* became a political field in Swiss legislation in its own right, with language learning at the center from the beginning on the grounds of internal security. As Khan (2016: 307) states, this is exactly what securitization *does*: it “moves an issue from ordinary politics into security”. He explains this in more detail, critically discussing the increasing links between security and British language policy: He identifies the 2001 riots in North England of British-Asian youths who clashed with far-right *National Front* supporters as a trigger factor for the implementation of a new citizenship test within the UK for naturalization purposes, including the demand for sufficient knowledge of the English language. Following the logic that “projects a lack of English as a cause for community tension” (Khan, 2016: 303–304), language competences came to be increasingly seen as an indicator of integration—or, at least, as an indicator of the willingness to integrate. In its negative interpretation, this logic translates to the following assumption: “A failure to learn English is viewed as a failure to integrate and a weakness of identity, potentially leading to a predisposition towards terrorist acts against the state” (Khan, 2016: 304). As Rampton et al. (2020) further document, in the domain of education, securitization policies translated to the increasing marginalization of so called ‘mother tongue education’ and sociolinguistic variability in favor of standard English as the central concern.

Elaborating this argument further, Kraft (2020: 33; drawing on Charalambous et al. 2015: 2) highlights securitization as an “institutional process[, in which] discourse plays a crucial part, both in declaring a particular group, phenomenon or process to be an existential threat, and in persuading people that this warrants the introduction of special measures”. This approach to securitization clearly resonates Foucault’s understanding of governmentality as *biopower*, i.e. as “a political strategy for governing an entire population” (Martín Rojo & Del Percio, 2020: 6). As Kraft (2020: 33; our emphasis) further elaborates, “[t]o take [securitization] measures necessitates the identification of *risk* groups and processes, and subsequently the introduction of regulations”—which is exactly what has been happening in the form of tightened language policies for migration. For specific regulations targeting language learning, Kraft thus proposes the term “linguistic securitization”. As similar developments have been observed across Europe in terms of increasing linguistic requirements for migrants, i.e. language policies that target the regulation of entry, residence, and social benefits—with the apparent aim of securitization (e.g. Charalambous et al., 2015; Extra et al., 2009; Khan, 2016; Yeung & Flubacher, 2016)—, we propose to speak of the emergence of *linguistic securitization policies*. As we will discuss in

this paper, current linguistic securitization policies require and produce new forms of language advocacy, since language advocacy and language activism so far were mainly linked to the idea of claiming and defending rights of particular language communities.

A brief note on terminology

Before we turn to the concrete example of the NLR to discuss language advocacy in current times, we deem it helpful—necessary even—to briefly engage in a terminological clarification of language advocacy and language policies.

Language advocacy

Advocacy seems to belong to the kind of terms that are used in everyday language without necessarily being treated as a theoretical concept—even in scholarly literature within applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. For a general terminological discussion, we thus draw on sociology for a first definition: “*Political advocacy* in the strict sense focuses on governmental decision makers, while *social advocacy* attempts to influence public opinion, to encourage civic and political participation, and to influence the policies of private institutions such as corporations, private schools, universities, and other nonprofit organizations” (Jenkins, 2006: 308; our emphasis). Considering both the political and social as elementary, “[a]dvocacy is a question of articulating a position and mobilizing support for it” (Jenkins, 2006: 309).

Applying this to *language advocacy* then means that the ‘positions’ advocacy groups are articulating and mobilizing support for are related to issues around language. Education scholar Faltis (2015: 70) summarizes accordingly that “an essential feature of language advocacy [...] is that it seeks to promote a particular understanding of language, and in doing so takes a stance that not only favors, but also challenges, certain shared practical understandings of language, language use, and language users”—and language policies, we haste to add.

In linguistic anthropology, language advocacy is typically associated with social, regional, and anti-colonial movements committed to defending and promoting indigenous or minoritized languages and to claiming official recognition of previously unrecognized languages such as sign languages, non-territorial languages, or creoles (Hill, 2002; Hinton, 2002). As such then, advocacy is often understood as undertaken *for others*. Referring to ‘endangered languages’ Hinton (2002) offers a contrastive differentiation between *community-external* and *community-internal* advocacy, which “are very different from each other because the intended audiences are different and the reasons those audiences might want a language to survive may be different as well” (Hinton, 2002: 153). Hinton argues that “[c]ommunity members have the right to advocate *within* their community for the survival of their language; someone from *outside* the community does not. The right to language choice includes the right to choose against a language” (Hinton, 2002: 151; our emphasis). What Hinton calls community-internal advocacy is sometimes framed as *language activism* aimed at impacting directly on speakers’ language use and practices. The terms advocacy and

activism often appear as a pair whereby the distinction between the two is not necessarily clear cut. Rather than making a simplifying distinction between community-insider activists and community-outsider advocates, De Korne (2021), in her detailed ethnographic study on strategies and imaginaries in minority language activism, suggests examining how actors participate in fluid forms of activism, advocacy, and language politics across multiple communities of practice.

To conclude, language advocacy “refers to types of acts or processes that aim at recommending, promoting and influencing policies to stakeholders in order to realize societal change” (Shohamy and Van Avermaet, introduction to this special issue). This is also why “language advocacy cannot be separated from larger issues around language and language users that exist in contemporary society and have histories based on the extent and nature of contact between peoples of diverse origins” (Faltis, 2015: 70). As a political and social issue, advocacy is a hotbed of negotiations and, with different and differing opinions, aims and goals, and ideologies striving for the undoing of the *status quo* and, eventually, the transformation of society according to a particular set of ideals.

Language policies

In terms of *language policies*, we propose a broad understanding—in line with Jenkins’ formulation above of advocacy addressing political stakeholder as well as social actors—that goes beyond policies as top-down official acts, decrees, and regulations. The relevance of language advocacy for the negotiation of language policies on different scales is acknowledged in approaches to language policies that address power relations and social inequalities in terms of *language planning from below* (Alexander, 1992), *micro language planning* (Alimi, 2016), or *engaged language policy and practices* (Davis, 2014). As Pennycook (2010: 54) reminds us, a policy “often builds on small local actions, on decisions made in communities, on local publications”. Language policies, therefore, go beyond the textual, objective level and are enacted, embedded and reproduced in practices by individuals, collectives (e.g. families), and institutions (e.g. schools), i.e. in spheres traditionally not considered ‘public’. Importantly, a policy “is not least an ideological phenomenon that constructs, transports, and recontextualizes ideologies about the value of languages and their speakers” (Barakos & Unger, 2016: 2).

We thus consider language policies as multi-scalar, socially distributed, discursive, and highly ideological phenomena that aim to regulate language, language use and speakers according to specific beliefs within a specific domain. In the end, language advocacy seeks to impact language policies by challenging unequal power relations that translate into discrimination related to languages and language use. Yet, whereas language advocacy and activism originated in the 20th century primarily from anti-colonial, regional, feminist and other social movements, and claimed recognition of and language rights for particular language communities or groups of speakers—more often than not in the form of official language policies—, today there is a certain skepticism vis-à-vis advocacy that takes languages as bounded units and fails to address inequalities, let alone change them (De Korne, 2021; Cameron et al., 1993). Instead, concepts as *linguistic citizenship* (Stroud & Heugh, 2004; Stroud,

2018), to which we will come back in the concluding discussion, have come to the fore that emphasize communicative repertoires and plurilingual practices. This recent development was characterized by Jaffe (2012: 83) as

a movement away from static/essentialist models of identity and language towards process-oriented models of identification and communicative practice; an emphasis on linguistic repertoires rather than languages as fixed and bounded codes and a focus on the role those repertoires play within participatory frameworks of democratic practice in the public sphere.

On advocacy in times of neoliberalization and securitization: the example of the Austrian *Network LanguageRights*

The Austrian *Network LanguageRights* (NLR) is the particular case of advocacy in language policy we discuss in this paper. In our view, it is a highly suitable example of the political and social challenges language advocacy is confronted with in current times, marked both by neoliberalization (i.e. the responsabilization and activation of individuals) and securitization (i.e. marking ‘foreigners’ as threats that have to be regulated), jointly resulting in linguistic securitization policies. In this section, we will first introduce the network, its history and structure, before turning to a specific debate within the network, which will lead us to a concluding discussion of both limits and possibilities for language advocacy in current times.

For the sake of transparency, it needs to be stated that both Brigitta and Mi-Cha are members of the network, albeit with different degrees of involvement across time: Brigitta was one of its driving founding members at the beginning, bringing in academic expertise and a personal history of language activism and language advocacy (among others as an expert for the Council of Europe). Mi-Cha, in contrast, was a ‘visiting’ member from 2012 onwards, after a research stay at the University of Vienna. Since moving to Vienna in 2016, she has become an active member, e.g. in the organization of events as well as in media work. Both can thus be considered as ‘academic’ network members, approaching the issues in question from a critical theoretical framework, which can be at odds with the more practice-oriented stance of the members who work as teachers, consultants, or administrators. Therefore, the following portrayal of the network’s history, structure and activities bears the marks of our own standpoint and involvement. It is, however, also based on statements, media work, and text from the network (available on its website: www.sprachenrechte.at), and draws on an interview (in December 2019) with Verena Plutzar, one of the main initiators and coordinators of the network, as well as on informal conversations with other network members involved in various activities and initiatives across the years.

The history behind the *Network LanguageRights*

The NLR was initiated in January 2003 in response to the fact that language was introduced for the first time as a key element in the Austrian legislation on natural-

ization, residence, and immigration of foreigners. Most importantly, the year 2000 had marked a political turn: the Austrian conservative party (ÖVP) and the extreme right-wing ‘Freedom party’ (FPÖ) formed their first coalition government. Legal changes under this government aimed at restrictions regarding migration, which was increasingly portrayed as a threat to majority values and the majority language—hence introducing the first set of linguistic securitization policies. A particular critical element in the new migration law was the introduction of *Integration Agreements* in 2003: language requirements were introduced as an essential criterion for the granting and renewal of residence permits (Busch, 2009; Plutzar, 2013), thereby making use of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001), originally developed as a tool for the comparative evaluation of specific skills in foreign language learning (i.e. speaking, listening, writing, reading).

The foundation of the NLR can be seen in connection with the then massive protests by civil society against the new coalition government and its policies, and with the growing involvement of NGOs, professionals and academics who took a critical stance towards migration policy issues. In the wake of these events and on the occasion of the *European Year of Languages* 2001, the *Austrian Association for Applied Linguistics (verbal)* organized a workshop to respond to these new restrictive policies. In taking stock of language policies in Austria, academics and language practitioners compiled an extensive catalogue of demands (cf. Busch & de Cillia, 2003), explicitly addressing policy makers. One of the main concerns was the planned implementation of a linguistic securitization policy that turned language requirements into a gate-keeping device, not only for citizenship but also for long-term residence permits.

Another critical moment was the law passed in 2019, again under a right-wing coalition government, which can be regarded as a paradigmatic example of the neo-liberal orientations that impose on individuals the obligation to ‘optimize’ their selves for the labor market: This law decreed that the full payment of social welfare benefits should be made conditional on the proof of German (or English) language skills. This provision was heavily contested by the NLR and other actors/organization, and, finally, repealed by the Austrian Constitutional Court. Thus, while critical linguists had been wary already of the neoliberalization and securitization of integration politics, the creation of the network ultimately offered them an opportunity to join forces with representatives of NGOs working with refugees and immigrants, with lawyers, interpreters, teacher trainers and teachers (from elementary to adult education), with other academics from different disciplines (translation studies, law, German studies, sociology, etc.), and, occasionally, with people working in the public administration.

The network structure

The decision to form a *network* was based on the advantages of its flexible and dynamic structure, able to adapt to changing players and actors, to the transformation of issues, and to related needs. Fraser (2003: 169) explains that as “[a] ubiquitous buzzword of globalization, the term ‘network’ names both a form of social organization and an infrastructure of communication. The hallmark of networks is their ability to combine rule-governed organization with flexibility, open-endedness, decenteredness, and spatial dispersion”. And, indeed, the NLR has seen personal and

topical changes over its 20 year-long history. Still, to this day, there are meetings about five times a year, even if the availability of meeting locations has to be negotiated on a regular basis, as the NLR does not have a spatial base or fixed locality; events, campaigns or conferences are staged whenever information or positioning is deemed necessary, each financed by private donations or raised contributions. The website is a core piece of the NLR, as it documents and accounts for the network's activities, members, and positions regarding language rights (i.e. integration agreements, language requirements for naturalization, language and asylum, international language rights, minority languages, and various language-related topics in schools). In the end, it appears as if these rather informal network structures, advantageous for adapting to changes in conditions and needs, actually are necessary in current neo-liberal times, with resources (increasingly) becoming scarce, trajectories fragmented and jobs precarious, while neo-conservative and punitive politics are operating in overdrive.

While network members have different professional backgrounds, they are united by the daunting dominance of political discourses that postulate competences in the German language as a yardstick for the willingness to integrate. Concerned about the problems their students and clients are confronted with, but also about their own professional ethics and working conditions, German as a Foreign Language-teachers have played a central role in the network from the very beginning. In fact, the legal pressure to learn German according to constantly raised standards has become the most pressing issue for the NLR: The network had started out with the intention to document and collect problematic legal instances related to these new language policies that reproduced the idea of 'integration problems', on the one hand, and their negative correlation with language competences, on the other (Plutzar, 2013 for more detail). The network has analyzed and criticized these language policies as misusing language in the sense of linguistic securitization for the justification of restrictive migration policies.

The network's advocacy and its challenges

Not surprisingly, what is on the agenda of the network is to a large extent imposed 'from outside', especially by the successive tightening of legislation and administrative measures on the provincial and the federal level. The network's focus here is on raising awareness in the public sphere and on impacting political decision making. Repeatedly, the introduction of language tests, implemented as gate-keeper *par excellence* at every turn, have been subject to criticism: supposed to be objective and fair but actually an instance of *linguicism*, i.e. the hiding of racist discourse beneath seemingly objective and measurable criteria (cf. for a thorough critique Shohamy, 2006; McNamara, 2009; Dorostkar, 2014). Due to the daily experience of the practitioners in social and legal counseling and in education, the network is able to demonstrate on the basis of exemplary cases the concrete effects of these policies with ever increasing language requirements for vulnerable groups—e.g. persons who for various reasons are not able to pass the required tests. Statements and policy papers by the network have also included issues such as interpreting in asylum procedures, the rights of signers and of minority groups recognized in Austria. The network has been

significantly involved in a wide range of interventions; for example the successful fight against a the law with which the province of Upper Austria wanted to prohibit pupils from using languages other than German during school breaks; the thorough criticism of the so called *Language Analysis for the Determination of Origin (LADO)* used in asylum procedures (Ammer et al., 2013), which led to the disqualification of the Swedish company *Sprakab*, previously mandated with this task by the Austrian authorities; or finally, the collaboration with representatives of the UNHCR (*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*) on the production of guidelines and training modules for community interpreters¹.

Despite these and other successful examples of the network's advocacy efforts, the need to respond to the rapid pace and pervasive degree of securitization and its policies has had the effect of relegating the consideration of longer-term language policy strategies to the background (cf. Flubacher, 2021). To counter this tendency, discussions have been launched periodically within the network about fundamental questions, i.e. what the network can achieve, on whose behalf it is acting, and what the limits of its scope of action should be. A paradigmatic instance of such discussions occurred in 2010, when NLR members involved in adult education asked the network to support their initiative: the production of a brochure on family language policy in multilingual families. The main thrust of this initiative was to counter the dominant discourse and the related societal pressures on parents to speak only German with their children, even at home, that had been reframed in securitization terms (as elaborated above). In this vein, the planned brochure aimed at encouraging parents to speak 'their' languages with their children at home. It was thus the intention of the initiators to recognize and valorize the multilingual repertoires of parents, children, and families in their entirety. In other words, this promotion of the right to one's family language (particularly on the side of children) was meant as an empowering move, embedded in a more general and further-reaching critique of adapting learners to schools with a monolingual habitus—instead of adapting schools to the multilingual learners—and as a critique of policies that have led to the successive marginalization of languages of migration within the school system. Yet, while agreeing with the basic line of critique, debates within the network emerged with diverging positions: The main counter-argument held that parents could be trusted to know what was best for their children and should not be influenced in their language choices—in either direction. Moreover, the loyalty to the 'culture of origin' assumed in this brochure was considered conservative, and, finally, the attempted advocacy was criticized as an act of paternalism.

Considering the current conditions framed by securitization and neoliberalization, we argue that this particular debate within the network points to (at least) two language ideological positions that seem to be inherently present in any language activism and advocacy: while one position can be considered to represent a paternalistic stance of 'benevolent' advocates who 'know what is best', the other seems to embody a *laissez-faire* attitude very commonly associated with (neo-)liberalism. The latter position could thus inadvertently but ultimately lead to a prevailing of the

¹ Cf. for more information on this particular project QUADA: <https://www.unhcr.org/dach/at/was-wir-tun/asyl-in-oesterreich/trainingshandbuch>. Accessed 20 February 2021.

law of the strongest—namely, to leave unchallenged the discursive and legal pressure repeatedly exerted on migrant parents to give preference to German ‘in the interest of the children’ even in the private sphere. Both positions are in this sense less than ideal for advocacy purposes. As a result, and as a way of steering clear of this ideological dilemma, the network not only withdrew its support for the brochure, but it also agreed to limit itself in the future to activities that directly concerned legislation involving language (rather than social practice by individual actors). This basically means addressing advocacy activities only for policy makers, administration, and public opinion but not for specific groups of speakers. Drawing on Hinton’s (2002) terminology, this means sticking to *external advocacy* and abstaining from *internal advocacy*. Recognizing being caught between increasingly nefarious and sweeping effects of securitization policies and neoliberal technologies, the network thus (re-) defined its sphere of action.

Concluding thoughts on language advocacy today (or: now more than ever!)

Summarizing the activities in retrospective, we propose the following diagnosis before opening up the discussion to issues of advocacy in language policy on a broader scale: Even if it is undisputedly at the forefront of the NLR’s self-defined concerns to monitor measures taken by legislators and authorities that result in discriminations on the basis of language, a certain malaise has nevertheless repeatedly emerged within the network: the sentiment of carrying out a never ending Sisyphean task to defend an unjust *status quo* against further worsening—without being able to counter policies of securitization and neoliberalization with long term advocacy strategies and imaginaries of social change. As states with restrictive language policies are the main actors in securitization policies, it is currently mainly the state level that language advocacy comes up against. However, the network as a loose structure that defines its priority in rapid response to *ad-hoc* issues on the level of governmental policies, understands itself as acting within a larger context of and in complementarity with other (language) advocacy initiatives that act on different scales, from the local and particular to the supranational at the European level. Many of those who participate in activities of the NLR are also involved in organizations and initiatives that operate on other scales ranging from a particular school to international bodies. This development is in line with what scholars working in the domain of language activism and advocacy, e.g. De Korne (2021) or Davis (2014), discuss as most effective forms of language advocacy today: i.e. relying on multiple actors addressing different scales. According to Davis (2014: 91), “engaged language policy/practice” should develop awareness of power relations and operate “on the intersection of micro, meso and macro levels of conceptualizing and enacting policy-making”. Similarly, De Korne (2021: 25) stresses that strategies must be considered across initiatives and scales as “it is clear that there are no ideal nor one-size-fits-all-strategies, but that activists employing a repertoire of adaptable strategies have the potential to resist inequalities and imagine new linguistic futures”.

Even if language advocacy initiatives that critically address the consequences of securitization and neoliberalization policies, differ in language ideological assumptions they share the following basic idea: Language policies should be conceived of to meet the needs of linguistically heterogeneous societies and of people with complex linguistic repertoires and language practices. Despite different language ideological orientations, activists agree that the idea of enforced *linguistic homogenization*, echoing ideologies of nation-state building in the 19th century, offers no suitable solution to current challenges. They further criticize that policies which deny or denigrate societal linguistic diversity, contribute to social inequalities, divisions and fragmentations rather than to pursuing the alleged aim of strengthening social coherence (Roter & Busch, 2018).

In the end, what does this mean for language advocacy in today's times? For an outlook in this concluding discussion, we will briefly turn to central concepts discussed by critical thinkers, namely *politics of recognition*, *redistribution* and *status model*, and close with proposing *linguistic citizenship*.

First of all, the philosophical and political concept of *politics of recognition* (Taylor, 1994; Honneth, 1995) has been widely acclaimed in its aim to acknowledge (i.e. *recognize*) the existence of particular disadvantaged groups of speakers and to promote their rights. It emerged from social movements around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality—or language—, as a response to experiences of discrimination, socio-economic exclusion, and unequal power distribution, raising questions of how to align difference with equality. Yet, it has not remained uncontested among (language) activists and advocates who argue that it has, in the form of *identity politics*, contributed to reifying the tenacious concept of collective identities without achieving the reduction of social and economic inequalities. Most importantly, Fraser (2000) argues that—ironically—recognition can result in *misrecognition*, e.g. when putting moral pressure on individuals to prove loyalty and to conform to an imagined group culture, thus imposing drastically simplified group identities that do not take into account the complexities of life. It is precisely this principal questioning of identity politics that surfaced in the debate within the *Network LanguageRights*.

Conversely, Fraser (2000: 113; our emphasis) advocates the *status model* which, in her words, is not committed *a priori* to any one type of issue, as she understands that “what requires recognition is not group-specific identity but the *status* of individual group members as full partners in social interaction”. Rethinking misrecognition as status subordination (or recognition as status), “allows for a range of possibilities, depending on what precisely the subordinated parties need in order to be able to participate as peers in social life” (Fraser, 2000: 115). Put in a nutshell, her status model simultaneously allows the right of individuals to the recognition of difference, to social justice and economic welfare *despite* difference, and to social interaction and cooperation on an equal level *across* difference. In terms of language advocacy, the idea of such a threefold approach has found its way in the last decade into policy papers issued by the *Council of Europe* on the (re)conceptualization of language and minority rights (Council of Europe, 2012; 2016).

In the context of advocacy in language policy in times of linguistic securitization and neoliberalism, approaches such as Fraser's status model could be considered as an invitation to rethink language rights and policies in the sense of *linguistic citizen-*

ship (Stroud & Heugh, 2004; Jaffe, 2012; cf. Stroud, 2018 for a historical overview of the concept's development). This originally "Southern and decolonial concept" (Stroud, 2018: 18) is closely aligned with Fraser's thinking. It is intended to highlight that the starting point for any concerns of language and multilingualism should not be the assumedly pre-given distinct languages and speech communities but rather the (ever changing) needs, desires and aspirations of speakers involved in multiple, sometimes contradicting, life worlds, language ideologies, and communicative practices. Reading 'citizenship' through a lens of participation rather than nation-state, Stroud (2018: 20) contends that the concept "allows us to see language and citizenship as two sides of the same coin—citizenship as mediated by forms of language, while forms of language in turn emerge out of the fluid and shifting entanglements of social engagement".

Following this argument, advocacy in language policy above in the Global North in current times implies challenging the much-invoked dichotomy between the 'language of origin' and the dominant language of the country of residence—a dichotomy systematically reinforced by the implementation of linguistic securitization policies and the concurrent imaginaries of fear, threat, and hostile others. This dichotomy further goes hand-in-hand with the discursively constructed and legal categories of 'foreigners', 'migrants', and 'refugees' who are *a priori* suspected as not submitting to neoliberal technologies of the ideal, active citizen. In broadening a social understanding of both language and citizenship, linguistic citizenship thus offers "remedies that attempt to deconstruct and restructure the political economic status quo and its institutions, and to bring about new social relations" (Stroud, 2018: 22); remedies much needed for advocacy in post-migration Europe. Finally, then, instead of "falling back on a 'Herderian' conception of the world as composed of individual language-and-culture units" (Hymes, 1973: 59), language advocacy aims at fighting against all kinds of barriers and inequalities that prevent people from the "freedom to have one's voice heard" (Hymes, 1996: 64)—or, according to the *Network LanguageRight's* motto, fighting for the right to languages.

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Mi-Cha Flubacher is a post doc assistant in Applied Linguistics at the Department of Linguistics, University of Vienna, Austria with a doctorate in sociolinguistics from the Department of Linguistics, University of Bern, Switzerland. Questions of social inequality and social exclusion through language are of particular concern in her sociolinguistic research on the labor market, the education system and language policies. She is the co-author of *Language investment and employability: The uneven distribution of resources in the public employment service* (Palgrave Macmillan) and co-editor of *Language, Education and Neoliberalism: Critical Studies in Sociolinguistics* (Multilingual Matters).

Brigitta Busch is an applied linguist. She works and teaches at Vienna University and is also affiliated to Stellenbosch University (South Africa). In 2012 she was granted a Berta-Karlik research professorship for excellent female scientists by the University of Vienna. She has also been working for many years as an expert for the Council of Europe's Confidence-Building Measures Programme and was a member of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Her main interests focus on: sociolinguistics, multilingualism, biographic approaches in linguistics (<http://www.heteroglossia.net>).