

## Concluding Remarks

It is a great pleasure to have the opportunity to add some final words to this compilation of contributions made at the symposia held by Linguapax-Asia (Japan) over the last six years.

Let me begin these concluding remarks by suggesting that a new perceptive intelligence is needed now more than ever in order to see the already thriving new cartographies emerging from globalising territories and their inhabitants and languages.

Genuine cosmopolitans can probably be found today only among those engaged in living, understanding, and publicising the plurality of knowledge that emerges via linguistic diversity and via multilingual societies. Languages are the key with which speakers' communities tune to the environments they inhabit, the way they build their relationship with space, time, and with other human beings. These are three basic cultural constructs - space, time, personhood - that can be interpreted and experienced in many different ways as made obvious by linguistic diversity itself.

However, linguistic diversity does also include a plurality of ways of conceiving and experiencing the human experience of language, the cultural relationship between language and body, and as it is made explicit so often, the relationship between language and spirit. Linguapax is highly aware of these deep intricacies involving linguistic diversity, beyond many other usual approaches to the field. The Linguapax Asian family, on the other hand, stands out as a key voice in this and also acts by producing discourse on the plurilingual *ethos* and multilingual autochthonous cultures, an input still not fully included in mainstream sociolinguistics produced in mainstream western academia.

If we are to think in a New Communicative Order, not only "threatened" languages but also "threatening" languages are to be fully included. We need to generate a balanced and harmonious order where "dangerous" languages may even help out endangered languages. Lachman Khubchandani insisted on this during our last Linguapax Advisory Board and delegations meeting held in Barcelona, in September 2009. He speaks from the perspective of the plurilingual *ethos* of the Indian society, where speakers manage the linguistic diversity they create on a daily basis, where languages thrive in fuzzy borders, as is usually the case in many autochthonous multilingual societies in Asia. From such as perspective, the European construct, viewing languages as clear-cut entities and the conflictive opposition between majority and minority languages, becomes an exotic notion, one embedded in monolingual cultures.

Languages are the cornerstone of cultural diversity, the basic generator of knowledge. Linguistic diversity is not just to be preserved from a fossilised heritage perspective, but as a generator of contemporary culture, or in other words, as culture to be considered contemporary in its full right. The multi-layered diversity inherent in linguistic diversity embraces not only different codes (languages), but also particular cultural representations on communication and on the linguistic dimension of human life and coexistence. These are also part of the epistemic capital of linguistic communities.

More often than not, the samples of cultural difference driven by linguistic communities are seen "from the West" simply as objects belonging to remote places, and thus

somehow equated with remote times. They are not quite considered contemporary culture, and consequently they lack the legitimacy to challenge points of view and perspectives on knowledge. More often than not, the management of cultural and linguistic diversity does not necessarily imply a much needed openness towards the content of that diversity in a way that might challenge the own long held cultural assumptions.

Linguapax's commitment to the preservation and activation of linguistic diversity worldwide is inscribed in this direction and is fuelled by the enthusiasm of the different regional delegations contributing to a more interesting and fair human coexistence through the promotion of languages and multilingual environments.

Many of the contributions included in these Proceedings - encompassing not only Asia but also the closely related Pacific region - touch on key dimensions of this approach, such as the revitalisation efforts of nearly extinct languages (Tsunoda, T. and M. Tsunoda), the awareness about the interaction between languages and "global issues" especially among teachers of wider communication languages (Cates, K.), the debate on local varieties of English and 'pluricentric languages' in the globalising context (Shiroza, S.), multilingual societies and inclusion (Maher, J.), linguistic diversity and peace or how the mismanagement of cultural and linguistic diversity can lead to conflict in the territories concerned (de Varennes, F.), etc.

Linguapax's mission, operated little by little over the years, over many different territories in the world, is to enhance the potential of linguistic diversity for generating a more peaceful and creative human life. In the quest for a more "balanced and harmonious communicative order", Linguapax, via its delegations and the multiple perspectives on language(s) that its international network keep contributing, may help create a space for the different linguistic communities to thrive, a way to preserve and activate genuine voices.

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Alicia Fuentes-Calle  
Head of the Linguistic Diversity Department – LINGUAPAX  
UNESCO Centre of Catalonia



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