SPEAKING OF EQUALITY:

AN EXPLORATION OF RELATIONAL EGALITARIAN LINGUISTIC JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

This essay explores the possibility of a relational egalitarian account on linguistic justice. For relational egalitarianism, a society based on equal social relations forms the essence of the egalitarian ideal. This paper argues that linguistic inequality, which places certain linguistic varieties in a politically, economically, and socially dominant position, automatically placing others in inferior positions, should be of concern for relational egalitarians in particular. Moreover, it portrays how existing accounts on linguistic justice are not sufficient in mitigating the relational egalitarian injustices generated by linguistic diversity. By combining and expanding these accounts, relational egalitarianism provides the theoretical prospect of true linguistic equality. However, it will appear that in practice, the feasibility of such an approach is severely constrained. This does then, in turn, raise important questions for relational egalitarian theory as a whole, which aims to be based in the practical reality that many real-life egalitarian social movements face.

Keywords: Relational egalitarianism, linguistic justice, linguistic inequality, ideal theory, non-ideal theory.

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INTRODUCTION

The language an individual speaks plays a significant role in the constitution of their identity, both with regards to personal identity and social identity, granting a type of group membership (Davies and Dubinsky 2018, 69). With more than 7,000 languages currently spoken in the world (Ethnologue 2021a), however, these linguistic identities do not all enjoy equal status. While only some are officially recognised by a state, many more languages are endangered (Ethnologue 2021a). This reflects the social inequality of languages, in which some languages are considered to be prestigious, while others are considered to be inferior, defective, or even primitive (Casanova and Jones 2013, 379; Reagan 2019, 29). This leads to discrimination and stigmatisation of the linguistic group who speaks the socially inferior variety (Bonnin 2013, 502). Moreover, socially and politically dominant languages often are economically dominant as well, in which certain languages grant more economic power and opportunities than others (Reagan 2019, 32). As such, the language an individual speaks can have a significant impact on their life, affecting their political rights, economic opportunities and social status. And indeed, the practical examples of these dynamics are endless: from the socially prestigious status of the Russian language in Ukraine (Seals 2019, 7), to the dominant status of Spanish versus the many indigenous languages in Latin America (Rubin 1985, 111). It thus matters which language (or which specific variety within that language) one speaks: not only does it grant an individual a certain social, political, and economic position, which are unequally divided among languages, it reproduces broader, non-linguistic inequalities as well (Bonnin 2013, 502).

How can these linguistic inequalities be understood in moral terms? If they undermine the equality of social relations, it would be of concern for relational egalitarianism, which places the equality of social relations in the centre of their egalitarian theory (Schemmel 2011a, 124). While linguistic inequalities may indeed distort the equality of social relations, given that they constitute stigmatisation and discrimination of certain linguistic groups (Bonnin 2013, 502), relational egalitarian academic literature has not extensively considered these linguistic inequalities thus far. Furthermore, existing accounts on linguistic justice within political theory have not taken such a relational egalitarian approach to linguistic inequality either. Therefore, this thesis aims to fill this gap in the literature by exploring such a relational egalitarian account of linguistic justice. Would such an account be relevant in the context of linguistic inequality, what would such an account look like, and should it indeed be adopted for greater linguistic justice? In short, this essay thus aims to answer the following question: *can relational egalitarianism provide (greater) linguistic justice?*

To answer this question, I will take the following steps. First, in Chapter I, I will provide a definition of both relational egalitarianism and linguistic inequality. As I will argue in this first chapter, linguistic inequality indeed undermines relational equality, which makes it a concern for relational egalitarian justice. Therefore, in Chapter II, I will consider the theoretical accounts that have aimed to provide greater linguistic justice. After all, it could be the case that, despite that these accounts are not strictly relational egalitarian, they still provide the prospect of greater relational egalitarian justice. However, as I will argue, while they all do provide the prospect of greater equality in certain respects, they do not sufficiently mitigate the relational inequalities as defined in Chapter I. Therefore, finally, Chapter III aims to combine the results from Chapter I and Chapter II. Here, I will explore the positive requirements for relational egalitarian linguistic justice, by expanding some of the existing approaches to linguistic justice from Chapter II, to account for the relational inequalities as defined in Chapter I. However, as I will argue in this third and final chapter, the relational egalitarian demands for linguistic justice may exceed what is actually feasible, both in practical terms and in combination of what relational egalitarianism may require in other spheres of society. This raises questions for the feasibility of relational egalitarian justice more broadly.

Working at the intersection of relational egalitarianism and linguistic justice literature, this essay serves as both a defence and critique of these two important fields within moral and political philosophy. On the one hand, by recognising the unjust, hierarchical nature of linguistic inequality, it provides a new perspective on what constitutes linguistic (in)justice. On the other hand, by emphasising the importance of language and the inequalities that can be produced and reproduced by it, it brings a new perspective on what constitutes relational egalitarian justice. Moreover, as this linguistic perspective seems to generate tensions with other requirements for relational egalitarian justice, it teaches us something about relational egalitarian theory more broadly.

CHAPTER I

On Why Relational Egalitarians Should Care About Language

1.1 Introduction

In a relational egalitarian conception of justice, a society is shaped by individuals who relate to each other as equals, regardless of which social group they belong to. Where does language fit into this picture, if it is a concern for relational egalitarians at all? After all, thus far, relational egalitarians have not extensively discussed language-related issues. In this chapter, however, I argue that they should, as linguistic inequality undermines relational egalitarian justice. I will begin with a definition of relational egalitarianism and an overview of the academic literature within this field. This part of the chapter is not necessarily a defence of relational egalitarianism, but rather an overview of the arguments that form the basis of this egalitarian theory. The defence of relational egalitarianism lies more in the sub-chapters that follow, in which I will propose a definition of linguistic injustice, arguing that this injustice is inherently relational and thus requires a relational egalitarian response, even though existing relational egalitarian literature has not extensively considered language and its resulting inequalities yet.

1.2 Defining Relational Egalitarianism

Relational egalitarianism can be understood as an umbrella term for a conception of justice that focuses on equal relations among individuals. It emerged with Elizabeth Anderson's (1999) "What is the Point of Equality?" as a response to the luck-egalitarian hegemony in the years before (Lippert-Rasmussen 2018, 23). Therefore, to properly define relational egalitarianism, as I will attempt in section 1.2.1, it is necessary as well to contrast it with the theory of justice it responds to, namely luck egalitarianism. This will be the aim of section 1.2.2. Finally, I will provide a brief overview of some of the main positive accounts of relational egalitarianism as applied to different themes, pointing to the field's lack of attention to issues related to language and linguistic diversity.

1.2.1 Basic Principles of Relational Egalitarianism

Relational egalitarianism is not *one* theory, but should rather be understood as an umbrella term under which many different conceptions of equality and justice exist, such as "democratic equality," (as proposed by Anderson 1999, 289) and the "social and political ideal of equality" (as defended by Scheffler 2003, 38). It is not my goal, nor is it feasible, to provide an exhaustive overview of all of these different principles and ideas and how they relate to and differ from each other. Nonetheless, various reoccurring basic principles can still be identified among them. They all revolve around creating "a community in which people stand in relations of equality to others" (Anderson 1999, 289). This has various moral implications for both individuals and institutions (Mason 2015, 129).

For individuals, it means that the relations between them should be "in certain crucial respects at least, unstructured by differences of rank, power, or status" (Scheffler 2005, 17). In other words, social hierarchies should be avoided. These social hierarchies can be understood as inequalities between groups, based on for example age, race, ethnicity, class, gender or, importantly for this paper, language, where being part of a particular group grants an individual superior or inferior status (Anderson 2012, 42). Specifically, the types of social hierarchies that Anderson perceives as objectionable from a relational egalitarian standpoint include (1) hierarchies of domination, in which the socially inferior group is subject to (arbitrary) control of the superior groups; (2) hierarchies of esteem, in which the socially inferior group is stigmatised; and (3) hierarchies of standing, in which the interests of the socially inferior group are deemed less important, resulting in unequal rights and/or opportunities between the inferior and superior social group (Anderson 2012, 42-3). As Anderson (1999, 312) points out as well, these unjust social hierarchies are very much related to Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression, being exploitation, marginality, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (Young 1988).

For institutions, then, it is first and foremost their task to provide and secure the right circumstances for individuals to have these equal relations without social hierarchies (Voigt 2020). As Carina Fourie, Fabian Schuppert, and Ivo Wallimann-Helmer (2015, 4) explain: "as citizens or, even merely as human beings, we should be treated as social equals, and the state and its institutions should not express, establish, or reinforce (certain kinds of) inegalitarian and hierarchical relations between individuals or groups of individuals." Apart from these more instrumental tasks for state institutions, they must be inherently egalitarian themselves as well, meaning that they must not exclude or discriminate citizens on the basis of one of the aforementioned social groups (Anderson 1999, 317).

As can be seen thus far, these basic principles of relational egalitarianism are primarily formulated in negative terms: they mainly express how individuals should *not* treat each other, which social relations the state and its institutions should *not* foster among their citizens, and how institutions should *not* be composed. But this negative approach may very well be the essence of relational egalitarianism, as defended by for example Jonathan Wolff (2015). After all, “a society of social equality avoids social inequality, and there are many different ways of doing that” (Wolff 2015, 224-5). Given the many different spheres in society which social inequality can take place as well, it is only logical that there is not a one-size fits all, all-encompassing approach to true relational equality. In section 1.2.3, I will discuss a variety of positive relational egalitarian accounts, all of which are directed to specific spheres in society to reach greater social equality.

But before I do, we must ask why such relational equality would matter in the first place. Why should we care about a society in which individuals relate to each other as equals? Intuitively, many would find such a society valuable, either for instrumental reasons, non-instrumental reasons, or, as is the case much more often, a combination of the two (Lippert-Rasmussen 2018, 154; 156). Instrumentally, a society of equals is valuable, because an inegalitarian society could negatively affect human freedom (especially if you are a member of the social group who is regarded and treated as inferior) and personal relations (Scheffler 2005, 19). Moreover, social hierarchies could “distort people’s attitudes toward themselves, undermining the self-respect of some and encouraging an insidious sense of superiority in others” (Scheffler 2005, 19). But a society of equals could be valuable in itself as well, regardless of the positive effects it may or may not have on personal relations, freedom, and self-respect. In such a non-instrumental approach, social equality would be part of an objective lists of things that make people’s lives good or valuable (Lippert-Rasmussen 2018, 159). There is hence a variety of both instrumental and non-instrumental reasons to strive for a society in which individuals relate to each other as equals. To successfully defend relational egalitarianism, however, it is necessary to argue why a different account of egalitarianism, being luck egalitarianism, would not suffice.

1.2.2 Contrasting Relational Egalitarianism with Luck Egalitarianism

As indicated earlier in this sub-chapter, relational egalitarianism emerged as a response to the luck/distributive egalitarian hegemony in political theory during the end of the twentieth century (Lippert-Rasmussen 2018, 23). To fully understand relational egalitarian theory, then, it is of pivotal importance to relate it to the theory it is responding to. For this paper in particular, this undertaking appears even more important, given the analysis of linguistic inequality later in this paper (sub-chapters 1.3 and 1.4). To understand whether this inequality is relational or distributive of nature, it is necessary to first define luck egalitarianism and relate it to the basic principles of relational egalitarianism.

But before I do, let me emphasise that luck egalitarianism, too, should be considered to be an umbrella term for a variety of conceptions of justice. Nevertheless, some basic principles can be identified here as well, especially when contrasting it with relational egalitarianism. After all, even though both theories are hence egalitarian, their principles differ significantly. While relational egalitarianism focuses principally on equal social relations, luck egalitarianism does not have this same focus. Instead, for luck egalitarians, central is the idea that inequalities in the advantages (such as resources or opportunities) people enjoy are *only* acceptable if they are the result from individuals' own choices, rather than their unchosen social or natural circumstances, such as socio-economic class or intelligence respectively (Scheffler 2003, 5). Unequal distributions resulting from these latter factors, which involve brute luck (rather than option luck, which constitutes voluntary risk-taking, such as gambling (Heilinger 2020, 70)), or exploitation instead of individuals' own choices, are considered to be unjust (Cohen 1989, 908). The main focus of luck egalitarianism hence constitute distributions rather than social relations, where such social relations "are largely seen as instrumental to generating such patterns of distribution" (Anderson 1999, 313).

This does not necessarily mean that (re)distribution and relational egalitarianism are inherently mutually exclusive. Andres Moles and Tom Parr (2019), for example, have suggested a hybrid account of relational equality and distributions and Christian Schemmel (2011b) has argued why relational egalitarians should not forget about (re)distribution. One of the main points of critique from relational egalitarians to luck egalitarianism is thus not that distributions do not *matter* or that it could not be helpful in any case, especially when unequal distributions negatively affect social relations (Anderson 2008, 143), but rather that unequal distributions should not form the basis of a theory of equality. The criticism points out that distributive theories thus, in a sense, do not tackle the root of the issue: they are "not able to identify properly the intrinsic moral importance of the way social and political institutions act. That is to say that how institutions treat people has relevance to social justice that is independent of, or at least not reducible to, the distributive effects of such treatment" (Schemmel 2011a, 125).

1.2.3 Relational Egalitarianism Applied

Now that I have provided a working definition of relational egalitarianism, which I have contrasted with luck egalitarianism as well, I will continue by providing a brief overview of some of the positive accounts of relational egalitarianism, in order to point to the absence of a relational egalitarian account on language and linguistic inequality. As indicated earlier in this sub-chapter, there is a variety of different approaches to relational equality in different spheres of society, as unjust hierarchies can occur in many different ways. It is not my goal nor is it feasible to introduce and discuss each of these accounts, but it does further emphasise my previous point, being that different hierarchies relating to different spheres of society require different approaches, even though they share their relational egalitarian character.

Let me recall that most unjust hierarchies are usually based on ascriptive group identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, language, ability, class and age (Anderson 2012, 42). Accordingly, relational egalitarian accounts have been written about, for example, issues of health (e.g. Voigt and Wester 2015) and disability (e.g. Brown 2019), poverty (e.g. Mosse 2010), and gender (e.g. Rao 2017). Nevertheless, despite being one of the ascriptive group identities Anderson (2012, 42) mentioned, no relational egalitarian account has been written for language and the inequalities resultant from it thus far. But this gap in itself does not necessarily explain the need for such an account: it could be the case that language and language diversity do not generate inequalities, that these inequalities are not unjust, or that they are unjust, but that these injustices are not relational in nature. In the following sub-chapters, however, I will portray that linguistic inequalities are prevalent, unjust, and that this injustice goes beyond an inequality of opportunities. This would underline the need for a relational egalitarian account on language and linguistic justice.

1.3 Defining Linguistic Inequality

As discussed in the introduction of this paper, languages shape lives. How different would your life be if you were a native Guaraní speaker versus a native Spanish speaker in

Buenos Aires? Or a monolingual, Arabic speaking migrant in Brussels versus a polyglot who speaks fluent English, French and German in the same city? How big of an influence is language on the life of a native Kannada speaker in Bangalore, which happens to be the official language there, versus on someone who is part of the Konkani speaking minority? In this section, I will argue how inequalities arise in the context of linguistic diversity, in order to formulate the working definition of linguistic inequality for the remainder of this paper. Then, to portray how these inequalities affect many individuals around the world, I will explore two contemporary examples of such linguistic inequalities, one in Paraguay and one in the United States.

1.3.1 Some Terminology

But before I begin with defining linguistic inequality, let me first clarify some of the terminology I will be using in this sub-chapter in particular and in the remainder of my thesis more generally. Most work on linguistic inequality has been done within sociolinguistic literature, and so logically, some of the terminology used in this paper is derived from this field of research. With *linguistic variety*, or just *variety*, I refer to any specific type of language spoken. Not only the 'standard' variety, which is the language spoken and promoted by state institutions, but every register, dialect, or style can be a linguistic variety, *including* the standard variety, which all would fall under the broader concept of language. Another relevant term that will be used is language ideology, which refers to how languages and specific linguistic varieties are perceived in society. It can be understood as the "entrenched beliefs about the nature, function, and symbolic value of language" (Seargeant 2009, 346). Finally, with speech community, I refer to the group of individuals that share the linguistic variety that they speak.

1.3.2 A Working Definition of Linguistic Inequality

With more than 7,000 living languages in the world today (Ethnologue 2021a), it is evident that each of these languages are not precisely equal. This inequality goes beyond the number of speakers and occurs on the political/institutional, social, and economic level. In this section, I will portray how these inequalities occur in each of these dimensions, all of which are strongly connected, and how they reproduce existing inequalities as well. Clearly, the inequalities resultant from, and reproduced by language and linguistic diversity are highly complex and occur in different manners and to different extents in different cases. The analysis in this section will therefore mostly be done in general, theoretical terms, while the case analyses in section 1.3.3 and 1.3.4 will provide concrete examples of how such inequalities can occur in practice.

Evidently, these more than 7,000 languages around the globe do not have the same political and institutional rights. In fact, a percentage of roughly 40% of these languages is even endangered (Ethnologue 2021a). Whether a language or linguistic variety, 'variety X' from now on, is predominant or endangered in a certain region partly depends on the choices a political entity makes: whether its official documents are available in variety X, whether political decision-making is done in the variety, and importantly, whether variety X is taught in schools. With the former two factors, the state cannot be neutral: it *has* to make the (political) choice to adopt one or multiple languages. Only with education, the state *could* stay neutral by letting each school decide for itself in which linguistic variety or varieties the curriculum is taught (Leibowitz 1976, 450). Most often, however, for practical and political reasons, the state is not neutral here either and decides the official language(s) of instruction by law. By adopting a certain language or multiple languages, the state restricts those whose mother tongue is different than the official language(s): they either have to learn the official language(s) or they have less to zero access to politics and official state communication, leaving their native variety only for private settings. As Arnold Leibowitz points out in his analysis of institutional linguistic inequality in the United States, the lack of political and institutional rights for those who speak unofficial languages often go hand in hand with other, non-language related discriminatory legislation and practices (Leibowitz 1976, 463). Furthermore, they often reflect the social stances towards the speakers of unofficial languages (Leibowitz 1976, 463; Reagan 2019, 30).

This brings me to the second dimension of linguistic inequality, being the social dimension. Sometimes referred to as the ideology of linguistic legitimacy, this social dimension of linguistic inequality can be understood as the different language ideologies and social stances towards linguistic varieties: it is about which varieties are considered to be prestigious in their respective language ideology and which ones are considered to be inferior (Casanova and Jones 2013, 379; Reagan 2019, 29). These inferior varieties are considered to be "defective, limited or even 'primitive'" (Reagan 2019, 29). The dominant or prestigious language is therefore not necessarily the mostly spoken variety. Instead, as Pascale Casanova and Marlon Jones have suggested, the number of multilingual speakers who choose to learn the variety could be a good indicator (Casanova and Jones 2013, 380). However, this indicator is limited as well, as different linguistic varieties are considered to be legitimate or illegitimate in different social and/or geographical contexts (Reagan 2019, 30). To know for certain which social status a linguistic variety holds, a case-by-case analysis that is context-based is thus required.

As I have pointed out previously in this section, this social dimension of linguistic inequality closely relates to, interacts with, and reinforces the political dimension, and one of the challenges faced by socially inferior linguistic varieties is thus to “create equal opportunities of access to language and communication-dependent rights” (Bonnin 2013, 502). Other prevalent challenges that form a consequence of the social inequality of languages are stigmatisation, discrimination, or undervaluation of the groups who speak the socially inferior linguistic varieties (Bonnin 2013, 502). Indeed, as these language ideologies are not actually based on *linguistic* grounds (Reagan 2019, 29), sociolinguistic inequality is not only a producer, but also a reproducer of broader social, cultural, and economic hierarchies (Bonnin 2013, 502). The linguistic inequalities are hence not a neutral given, but they often arise in circumstances of non-linguistic inequality. This is not necessarily surprising, considering the fact that many languages come into contact in circumstances such as war, colonialism, or slavery in the first place (Sankoff 2002, 641). But where languages came into contact in a more democratic manner, e.g. through trade or migration, other non-linguistic, social, cultural and economic inequalities could thus still form the basis for linguistic inequalities.

The final dimension of linguistic inequality that can be identified is related to economics. After all, the linguistic variety one speaks does not only affect their political rights and social status, but also their economic opportunities. The dominant language is most often the language used most in the professional sphere of society as well (Reagan 2019, 32). According to Luisa Martín Rojo and Alfonso Del Percio, this economic inequality often arises in a neoliberal context, in which values such as deregulation, productivity, and privatisation, are encouraged by the state (Martín Rojo and Del Percio 2020, 12). In such a context of privatisation, monolingualism is seen as economically optimal as it reduces costs of business and increases productivity (Martín Rojo and Del Percio 2020, 13). As such, on the one hand, language ideologies can affect the economic possibilities of those who speak a non-dominant language variety. In the United States, for example, individuals have aimed to alter their linguistic variety, even only their accent, to increase their economic opportunities (Reagan 2019, 46). On the other hand, as my case analysis in section 1.3.3 will portray as well, these dynamics can work the other way around as well, where the amount of economic opportunities of a certain linguistic variety affects its social status.

All in all, as can be derived from the analysis in this section, I will adopt the following working definition of linguistic inequality for the remainder of this essay:

Linguistic inequality occurs in a political, social, and economic dimension, where these different spheres strongly influence each other. Some linguistic varieties are seen as socially dominant, granting them political and economic opportunities, while others are seen as inferior, illegitimate or even primitive, where such varieties often have less institutional rights and economic possibilities. Furthermore, existing, non-language related inequalities are reproduced by these linguistic inequalities.

Clearly, these linguistic inequalities occur to different extents and in different ways as the context differs as well. Therefore, in the following two sections, I will exemplify the former analysis and the complexity of linguistic inequality in practice with two brief case studies: linguistic inequality in Paraguay, focusing on the status of Guaraní, and linguistic inequality in the United States of America, focusing on the language ideologies of African American English (AAE). I do want to make two disclaimers before I start, however. First, books can and have been written about these two cases, and certainly, I will not be able to cover all of the layers and complexity of how linguistic inequality has occurred and/or still occurs in each of them. However, it is not my aim to do so either. Instead, my aim is to contextualise the analysis of this section, in order to portray how such inequalities can take shape in practice and to emphasise their complexity. Second, with more than 7,000 living languages in the world, there are probably thousands of examples more of how different linguistic varieties relate to each other, let alone the historical examples of these dynamics, which all would be interesting and relevant to discuss in this context. Given the limited space of this paper, however, I have chosen to discuss these two, as they occur in completely different geographical and sociolinguistic contexts, and they clearly exemplify the theoretical discussion.

1.3.3 Case 1: Linguistic Inequality in Paraguay

In most of Latin America, indigenous languages are known to have an inferior status, where these languages are not officially recognised, most political leaders do not speak the languages, and neither do must urban citizens (Rubin 1985, 111). The importance of indigenous languages is denied and "one of the major criteria for becoming socially 'white' in most of Latin America is fluency in Spanish" (Rubin 1985, 111). This evidently reflects the political, social, and economic linguistic inequalities as defined and discussed in the previous section. In Paraguay, however, the relation between one of its indigenous languages, Guaraní, and Spanish is very different. The Paraguayan state recognises Guaraní as an official language on an equal footing with Spanish since the 1992 constitution, and a majority of Paraguayan citizens speak the language, either as monolinguals or bilinguals with Spanish as their first or second language

(Villagra-Batoux 2008, 53). For many Paraguayan citizens, the language forms an important component of their (national) identity (Choi 2003, 85-6), and the language is widely spoken even among the upper-class and in the country's capital, Asunción (Ito 2012, 2). Nevertheless, even though linguistic inequality thus seems to be much stronger in other Latin American countries, there is still an ongoing inequality between Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay. By many Paraguayans, Guaraní is considered to be less valuable than Spanish, as many monolingual speakers are academically and socioeconomically disadvantaged (Ito 2012, 4). As Hiroshi Ito points out: "many Paraguayan parents and teachers in both rural and urban areas feel that education in Guaraní is inferior to education in Spanish. Parents are particularly concerned that learning Guaraní or learning in Guaraní could be detrimental to Spanish language acquisition, which will disadvantage their children educationally and socioeconomically" (Ito 2012, 4). As such, the economic inequality between Guaraní and Spanish seems to negatively affect the social inequality between the two languages, despite their official equality in the constitution. This emphasises the interrelatedness of the different dimensions of linguistic inequality as discussed in the previous section.

1.3.4 Case 2: Linguistic Inequality in the United States of America

As this paper's working definition of linguistic inequality concerns the inequalities between linguistic varieties, it must be emphasised that these inequalities can take place *within* languages as well, such as between different dialects, registers or styles. In this section, specifically, I will discuss the linguistic inequality between African American English (AAE) and 'standard' American English, i.e. the English mostly taught in schools. AAE refers to the specific variety of English with a particular system of sounds, structure, and vocabulary (Green 2012, 1). Among the Americans who use AAE, there are regional differences within the variety as well (Green 2012, 1). Naturally, AAE is not exclusively spoken by African Americans and not all African Americans speak AAE, but the link between those who use AAE and those who are African American is nevertheless strongly present (Reagan 2019, 81). In American society, the perceptions of this variety are often negative, as it is by many seen as an illegitimate or broken type of English (Reagan 2019, 104). It is often said that the low academic performance of some African American children can be explained by their use of AAE (Reagan 2019, 81). AAE becomes even further delegitimised in American society through 'satire' and racist jokes (Reagan 2019, 81). As such, the perceived inferiority of AAE is not only a (sociolinguistic) inequality in itself, it reinforces unequal structures of racism as well. This thus underlines how linguistic inequalities can reproduce wider, non-linguistic societal inequalities.

1.4 Linguistic Inequality as Relational Egalitarian Injustice

Thus far, I have defined linguistic inequality and I have provided two contemporary examples to portray how this inequality can manifest itself in practice. I have not yet argued why it is unjust. Intuitively, one might be inclined to believe the inequalities as just described are unjust, but in this sub-chapter, I will argue for which reasons in particular that is indeed the case. To do so, I will connect sub-chapters 1.2 and 1.3, arguing that linguistic inequalities are unjust from a relational egalitarian perspective, where they do not only produce unjust social hierarchies, but reinforce such unjust hierarchies as well. As I will stress in the final section of this sub-chapter, these injustices go beyond a distributive inequality of opportunity, which thus again favours a relational egalitarian perspective.

1.4.1 Unjust Social Hierarchies and Linguistic Injustice

Let me recall that one of the main principles for relational egalitarianism is that certain social hierarchies constitute injustice. These unjust hierarchies between social groups take different shapes, as they could either revolve around domination, esteem, or standing (Anderson 2012, 42-3). With the analysis and working definition of linguistic inequality in mind, such linguistic inequality quite evidently would fall into this relational egalitarian conception of injustice, where linguistic inequality produces unequal relations among individuals on the basis of the social group they belong to. After all, where linguistic inequality occurs, some linguistic varieties have superior status over other linguistic varieties, which are perceived as inferior, illegitimate or even primitive. This is precisely the type of hierarchy of esteem that Anderson (2012, 43) refers to, where the socially inferior group are stigmatised, in this case on the basis of the group's native language. And this matters, as languages, for many at least, are an important source of personal and/or cultural identity (May 2014, 384). To stigmatise a group on the basis of their language is thus to stigmatise this group for part of who they are. As Timothy Reagan explains: "[w]hen a person's language is rejected, this also constitutes a rejection of the person and of the speech community that uses the language" (Reagan 2019, 353). This may be unjust in itself, but for instrumental reasons as well, as it could negatively affect individuals' sense of self-respect, for example by regarding their native language, while an important part of their identity, as being less important, valuable, respectable than other, dominant, languages.

Moreover, linguistic inequality does not only lead to stigmatisation of the perceived to be inferior speech community, but affects their rights and opportunities as well. As portrayed in the discussion of linguistic inequality, some of these speech communities have less to zero access to politics and official state communication, leaving their native variety only for private settings. Furthermore, these groups that speaks a language which holds an inferior position often have less economic opportunities as well. Such inequalities closely relate to Anderson's understanding of hierarchies of standing, where the social groups in superior positions have more power, both within state institutions and outside of them (Anderson 2012, 43). As a result, the social groups in inferior positions enjoy less rights, benefits, and opportunities than the social groups in superior positions, as is thus precisely the case for the speech communities with lower status.

Besides that linguistic inequality can hence be considered to be a producer of unjust social hierarchies, it reproduces wider social, economic, and political inequalities as well. This would further emphasise the concern of linguistic inequality for relational egalitarianism. After all, as I have portrayed in 1.3.2, the language ideologies that consider certain linguistic varieties to be valuable and others to be 'broken' or even useless, are not precisely based on *linguistic* factors (Reagan 2019, 29). As Reagan explains it, linguistic inequality, which he refers to as the ideology of linguistic legitimacy, "serves to support the dominance of existing social élites, while seemingly providing an explanation for the social and educational failure of dominated and oppressed groups" (Reagan 2019, 359). Linguistic inequality, thus, reinforces existing structures of oppression and domination, which evidently undermines relational egalitarian justice. To have a relational egalitarian response to linguistic injustice could thus potentially serve the broader goal of relational egalitarianism, i.e. true social equality and a society without relations of oppression or domination: not only in terms of language, but in all spheres of society.

1.4.2 Beyond Distributive Inequality

A luck egalitarian would probably want to explain linguistic inequality in a different manner. After all, as I have discussed in the previous sub-chapter, the language an individual speaks can negatively affect their political and economic opportunities and resources. This applies for the two case studies of this chapter as well, where Guaraní in Paraguay was perceived to have less academic and economic opportunities, and where African American English, too, negatively affected school achievements of many African American children. From a luck egalitarian point of view, as defined in section 1.2.2, such unequal outcomes due to factors individuals did not actively choose for, i.e. the language in which they were brought up, would be unjust. To achieve greater equality and justice, then, such unequal distributions must be equalised. Following the line of reasoning from this potential counter-argument, this raises the question why a distributive approach should not be taken in tackling the linguistic inequalities as described in this paper.

However, while a distributive inequality of opportunities, rights, and benefits is surely part of linguistic inequality as defined in this chapter, a luck egalitarian approach would not suffice in tackling the roots of the inequality. After all, as explained throughout this chapter, linguistic inequality, for a large part, is the result of differing language ideologies, where certain linguistic varieties are seen as superior, while others are seen as less worthy and thus inferior. Equalising distributions would not tackle the social stigmatisation that formed the basis of the distributional inequality. Just as with other relational egalitarian theories, as I have discussed in section 1.2.2, this does not mean that there is no room for redistribution at all, especially as unequal distributions can negatively affect social relations as well (Anderson 2008, 143). Such dynamics can certainly take place in linguistic inequality as well, as can for example be seen in the case analysis of linguistic inequality in Paraguay in section 1.3.3. Here, the economic inequality of opportunities between Guaraní and Spanish appeared to negatively affect the social inequality between the two languages. Thus, distributions must certainly not be forgotten or left aside in an approach to linguistic inequality, but with a relational egalitarian approach, this is not automatically the case. Furthermore, the root of linguistic injustice thus lies in the unequal relations between languages and linguistic varieties, favouring a relational egalitarian approach.

1.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have argued why issues related to language should be of special concern for relational egalitarians. In a relational egalitarian conception of justice, a society is shaped by equal relations between individuals, free from social hierarchies such as domination or oppression. Linguistic inequality, however, would hinder relational egalitarian justice, as it is a source of such unjust social hierarchies. Some linguistic varieties are seen as superior, having political, economic, social and cultural value, while others are seen as defective, broken, primitive, and thus inferior. Not only is this linguistic inequality hence a source of unjust social hierarchies in itself, it reinforces broader, non-linguistic inequalities that are of concern for relational egalitarians. As the inequalities go beyond a mere inequality of opportunities, this emphasises the need for a response to linguistic injustice which provides the prospect of greater relational equality. Therefore, in the chapter that follows, I will consider whether existing approaches within political theory and linguistic justice literature are successful in mitigating the inequalities and injustices as discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

On Why Existing Approaches to Linguistic Justice are not Sufficient

2.1 Introduction

As I have portrayed in the previous chapter, linguistic inequality is an issue for relational egalitarian justice. Nevertheless, no relational egalitarian account of linguistic justice has been written yet, and this goes both ways: within the field of relational egalitarianism, language has not been taken into consideration, but political theorists who are concerned with language and linguistic justice have not taken a strictly relational egalitarian approach either. In this chapter, I will discuss this latter side of the coin. After all, it could be the case that, even though there is not a strictly relational egalitarian account of linguistic justice, other accounts of linguistic justice are nevertheless successful in solving the issues for relational egalitarian justice as defined in the previous chapter. In the sections that follow, I will analyse four prominent approaches within the political theory literature on linguistic justice, arguing that they are not sufficiently successful in providing greater relational egalitarian justice. Specifically, I will cover the following approaches within the literature on linguistic justice: linguistic basic rights and accommodation measures in combination with education, (different forms of) compensation, linguistic territoriality and the equal recognition approach. After a justification of why I chose for these four approaches and a critical analysis of each, I will conclude that while they all do provide the prospect of greater social equality in *some* respects, they do not *sufficiently* solve the relational inequalities as defined and discussed in the previous chapter. I identify four main reoccurring reasons for this insufficient result: their response to inequalities is either too minimal, does not sufficiently take the cultural and identity-constituting functions of languages into consideration, has an inaccurate understanding of languages and how they interact, or does not (sufficiently) consider the inequalities that occur *within* languages. This paves the way for a relational egalitarian view to linguistic justice, which will be explored in the third and final chapter.

2.2 A Critical Analysis of Four Prominent Approaches to Linguistic Justice

Many political theorists have written on linguistic injustices and how, if at all, states should deal with the multilingualism among their citizens and the inequalities and injustices that arise in the context of linguistic diversity. In this section, I will discuss several of such proposals, arguing that they do not sufficiently provide greater relational egalitarian justice. Specifically, I will cover the following approaches within the literature on linguistic justice: linguistic basic rights and accommodation measures in combination with education, (different forms of) compensation, linguistic territoriality and the equal recognition approach. Naturally, it has to be acknowledged that many more political theorists have written about linguistic diversity and how states should deal with this fact. The four chosen perspectives for this thesis, however, share that they (1) are very prominent within linguistic justice literature and (2) all claim to be based on egalitarian principles to have outcomes with greater equality among citizens as well. It is therefore useful to analyse these four approaches in particular, as they could potentially solve the inequalities discussed in the previous chapter. However, as I will argue, despite that all of these perspectives claim to be based on egalitarian principles, they still undermine relational egalitarian justice.

2.2.1 Linguistic Basic Rights, Accommodation Measures and the Pivotal Role of Education

One way in which a state could respond to the inequalities related to linguistic diversity is to promote equality instead, by protecting citizens' rights and liberties *regardless* of the linguistic variety spoken (Bonotti 2017, 585). In this regard, Mateo Bonotti (2017), who defends this view, recognises both negative rights (e.g. the right for individuals to express themselves or publish in any linguistic variety) and positive measures by the state (e.g. by providing interpreters and/or translators in hospitals and courts) (Bonotti 2017, 586). For Bonotti, such protection of basic rights and liberties through linguistic accommodation measures follows from his interpretation of John Rawls' first principle of justice (Bonotti 2017, 585-86). After all, according to Rawls, in a just society, "[e]ach person has an equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and in this scheme the equal political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their fair value" (Rawls 2005, 5). Even though Rawls himself does not discuss the implications for language policy and linguistic diversity in *Political Liberalism* (2005), Bonotti argues that the combination of basic rights and certain linguistic accommodation measures as described above would suffice in achieving this first principle of justice. Therefore, it would not necessarily require official bilingualism or multilingualism, although such language policies would certainly be permissible according to Bonotti (2017, 586). According to Bonotti, this in a sense minimalist approach can be compared to state funding of chaplaincies, which reflects the liberal state's protection of individuals' freedom of conscience and religious exercise rather than an endorsement of certain religions (Bonotti 2017, 586). Especially if the state ensures that every citizen has the possibility to properly learn the official language(s),[1] the protection of basic linguistic rights (in the form of freedom of expression) and certain accommodation measures (in the form of translation and interpretation services) would be sufficient in promoting equality among all citizens, regardless of their linguistic background (Bonotti 2017, 586).

This view could be further expanded by giving education a fundamental role in propagating the equal linguistic rights and accommodation measures individuals enjoy (Reagan 2019, 358). In the classroom, the children would not only be treated as equals, they would be taught to treat other as equals as well, regardless of the language that they speak (Reagan 2019, 359). As such, the negative language ideologies would be actively combated, and basic linguistic rights without discrimination would be promoted.

Even though this approach is based on a (Rawlsian) egalitarian principle, I argue that it is insufficient in combating the injustices as described in the previous chapter. Surely, equal linguistic rights and accommodation measures should be in place, and these rights should be propagated in education. But this does not ensure that true social equality will actually be achieved. After all, many constitutions and human rights documents alike have not ended severe inequality in other spheres of society either (Heilinger 2020, 65). Again, this is not to say that such human rights documents are not *necessary* for greater social equality, they may very well be, but they are thus not sufficient in achieving relational egalitarian justice in themselves. For linguistic basic rights and accommodation measures, this same argument applies. There are two reasons for why this minimalist approach is not sufficient for greater linguistic equality.

First of all, in this approach, the state still unfairly favours one or some languages. This strikingly comes forward in the author’s flawed comparison of his Rawlsian approach to language policy with a liberal state’s stance towards religion. In this comparison, the state’s funding of chaplaincies protects individuals’ freedom of conscience and religious expression, without it meaning that the state would endorse or even promote certain religions (Bonotti 2017, 586). With regards to language, on the other hand, the same state neutrality cannot be reached in Bonotti’s basic rights and liberties model. After all, in this approach, the state operates with one or a few official languages, for example “when writing or publishing a penal code, a

[1] This could not only be reached not only through education, but also through other means, such as a ban on dubbing, as Philippe van Parijs argues for (Van Parijs 2011, 109-13).

constitution, or school textbooks" (De Schutter 2020, 155). The state, then, does not have the same neutral position as it would have to religion. Instead, it actively favours one or some languages in politics, institutions and in education. As a result, rather than promoting equality, the state would keep a social hierarchy in place as only one or a couple of languages would be given official recognition and status (Ricento 2014, 354). It would then disadvantage individuals who speak a different linguistic variety than the official one(s), who would be excluded from state institutions. As Anderson stresses as well, basic rights of individuals are thus not enough, if the institutions themselves are exclusionary themselves (Anderson 1999, 317). A basic rights approach alone would therefore not tackle, but rather maintain the political and institutional dimension of linguistic inequality as discussed in the previous chapter.

Second, the proposed accommodation measures do not combat these inequalities either. Surely, with this approach, a Spanish-speaking migrant in Mali would be able to go to the hospital without facing many issues, or a Navajo-speaking native American would be able to defend herself in court thanks to translators and interpreters provided by the state. But does that make citizens speaking different languages truly equal in this context? Again, these accommodation measures do not tackle any of the other economic and political inequalities *outside* of the hospital and the court which, as we have seen, are inequalities that are produced and reproduced by linguistic inequality. Clearly, then, this approach would leave many of the linguistic inequalities as they were, which does not provide the prospect of greater relational equality and justice.

Nevertheless, ensuring basic rights and accommodation measures, and giving education an important role in propagating these rights could be an important step in countering and restructuring unequal social relations among those who speak different linguistic varieties. In a relational egalitarian approach to language, however, such an approach would thus have to be expanded and combined with other measures to ensure that the state does not keep political and/or economic linguistic inequalities in place, which could counter the efforts done in education in the first place.

2.2.2 Compensation

How *should* states deal then with the inequalities that constitute and are reinforced by linguistic inequality, if ensuring basic rights and liberties turns out to be insufficient and actually keeps inequalities and many political and economic hierarchies between languages in place? Redistribution – or other forms of compensation – is an approach in which the state acknowledges the inequalities caused and reinforced by linguistic inequality. Philippe van Parijs explores this possible solution at great length in his *Linguistic Justice For Europe and for the World* (2011), one of the major works in the field of linguistic justice. While advocating for English to be the global lingua franca as a requirement for global justice, Van Parijs recognises the inequality that may result from it: it privileges native speakers of English while requiring all non-native speakers to invest the time and money to learn this new language (Van Parijs 2011, 51). He considers this inequality to be a form of free-riding by English-speaking individuals on the public good of English as a lingua franca (Van Parijs 2011, 51). Therefore, Van Parijs stresses, such inequality should be compensated for in some way, or at least the costs of language learning should be shared more equally. Van Parijs then explores several ways in which such compensation could take place, one of them being linguistic tax. For Van Parijs, this would mean that countries would be taxed in proportion to the number of native English-speaking citizens of that country, exempting the countries with very small proportions of this linguistic group (Van Parijs 2011, 76). While Van Parijs explores this possibility and the practical implications of it in great detail, discussing these is neither feasible within this paper's limited scope nor a necessary step to take. After all, while Van Parijs considers this linguistic tax to be a defensible route to greater equality, he points out that this tax, which would have to be imposed not by force but through (international) persuasion, is not strictly necessary in this regard. "Compensatory free-riding," as Van Parijs calls it, could be sufficient in attaining greater equality instead (Van Parijs 2011, 78). While native English speakers free ride on their language being a lingua franca, non-native English speakers should feel morally justified in poaching the web as a form of compensation (De Schutter and Robichaud 2015, 99). In this way, non-native English speakers could (and can, as it already occurs on a large scale) enjoy not only the online information in their native language, but the English content as well (Van Parijs 2011, 78). As such, while linguistic tax and compensatory free-riding differ considerably in practice, the principle behind it remains similar as both aim to provide greater equality: those who are not native speakers of the dominant lingua franca would be compensated for the time and effort it costs to learn the lingua franca. Both, then, can be considered to be redistribution measures, albeit in different forms.

As I have pointed out, Van Parijs has proposed such compensatory measures in the light of his defence for English as a global lingua franca. However, the same principles can be discussed in other linguistic and political circumstances as well.[2] English as a global lingua franca, in Van Parijs' argumentation, could be swapped for (almost) any other dominant national or international language or lingua franca, as similar dynamics take place in these other contexts. After all, these other dominant national or international languages require the same from non-native speakers of these languages as would be the case with English as a global lingua franca. Think of the Spanish language in many countries in Latin America, for instance, which serves as a lingua franca there and requires many individuals to learn the language next to their (for many, indigenous) native language. Clearly, linguistic tax or compensatory free-riding could then tackle this inequality in the same way as Van Parijs proposes it within his chosen context.

Nevertheless, these compensatory or redistributive measures are not sufficient in providing true equality in society either, even when applied to different circumstances. As I have argued in the previous chapter, linguistic inequality goes beyond a distributive inequality. While this does not mean that compensatory measures should be dismissed altogether, focusing solely on compensation is not enough to tackle the roots of the injustice. After all, in such an approach, both the symbolic and cultural value languages possess are not considered sufficiently.[3] Let me explain. Languages have an instrumental function in facilitating communication between individuals, but this is certainly not their only characteristic. All languages – although to different extents – play a symbolic role in shaping identities as well (May 2014, 384). As John E. Joseph explains, this identity role for languages goes two ways: "national, ethnic and religious identities are constructed through language, and […] languages are constructed through them" (Joseph 2004, 224). By focusing solely on compensation or redistribution, the cultural, ethnic, national and religious value language thus has, is not taken into consideration. At least, this symbolic and identity-constituting function would be reduced to a mere good for transaction: many individuals would lose part of their identity in learning the majority language or lingua franca to receive subsidies or online content in return. It thus fails to consider the sociolinguistic inequalities in their own right, regardless of its distributive

[2] As I will justify, my final chapter, in which I will explore the possibility of a positive account for relational egalitarian linguistic justice, does not have this same starting point either. Instead of considering the international dynamics of linguistic inequality, e.g. in the case of English as a global lingua franca, it focuses on tackling the linguistic inequalities within the nation-state. Nevertheless, as I argue in this paragraph as well, that does not mean that Van Parijs' proposals for redistribution cannot be helpful in other contexts as well, such as for this essay's account, as I will argue in Chapter III.

[3] This is not to say that Philippe van Parijs does not consider this symbolic and cultural value of languages at all. In the section that follows, I will discuss Van Parijs' proposal for how to take this into consideration as well. In this section, however, I analyse linguistic redistribution as a separate approach in mitigating linguistic inequalities.

consequences: a shortcoming typical of distributive egalitarian approaches as rightly pointed out by various relational egalitarian scholars (Schemmel 2011a, 125), which I have discussed in the previous chapter of this essay more extensively.

Certainly, identities inevitably develop and change constantly. However, as I have portrayed, in this compensatory approach, citizens are actively being treated unequally: while majority languages (and therefore identities) are protected and promoted, minority languages (and therefore identities) are being bought off in order to foster the other, instrumental, side of the linguistic coin: easier communication. Such unequal treatment would directly go against the relational egalitarian principles as discussed earlier in this paper, as it fails to acknowledge and tackle the linguistic inequalities in their own right. The social, economic, and political hierarchies constituted by linguistic inequality as analysed in the previous chapter are thus left unconsidered in this redistributive approach.

2.2.3 Linguistic Territoriality

Van Parijs does recognise that more needs to be done in order to achieve true linguistic equality. His suggestions for compensatory measures hence do not stand on their own, but are complemented by suggestions that focus on equal respect, or, as Van Parijs calls it, parity of esteem (Van Parijs 2011, 117-20). While the previous approaches discussed in this chapter could be characterised as luck egalitarian viewpoints, focusing mainly on equal rights and opportunities, Van Parijs' proposal for linguistic parity of esteem might be more satisfactory from a relational egalitarian point of view. After all, Van Parijs' conception of parity of esteem captures that "[i]n a just society, people must not be stigmatized, despised, disparaged, humiliated by virtue of their collective identity, that is of the social category to which they happen to belong in their own eyes and the eyes of others, for example their gender or their race, their religious or linguistic community" (Van Parijs 2011, 119). This comes much closer to a relational egalitarian perspective, in which equal relations in society are fostered. To know whether Van Parijs' proposal in this light, being linguistic territoriality, actually succeeds in attaining this parity of esteem, let us look at its concrete content.

Van Parijs defines linguistic territoriality as a "territorially differentiated coercive linguistic regime" (Van Parijs 2011, 133). Concretely, this means that linguistic communities impose a coercive linguistic regime in a given territory (De Schutter and Robichaud 2015, 101). It must be coercive, rather than accommodating, in the sense that the linguistic regime does not respond to the demand of which linguistic varieties are spoken, but that it *imposes* an official language (Van Parijs 2011, 134). This official language is then the language taught in education and used for public communication (i.e. the official language is used for laws, elections, public media, courts, etc.) (Van Parijs 2011, 134). Furthermore, the coercive linguistic regime is territorial rather than categorical, in the sense that these coercive rules are defined by location rather than by categories of people (Van Parijs 2011, 136). As a result, within (or perhaps in certain cases, across) the existing political borders, new, linguistic borders would have to be set. Van Parijs devotes the longest chapter of his 2011 book to his discussion of linguistic territoriality, and going into each and every argument he proposes for it as well as how the theory would have to be applied in practice according to Van Parijs exceeds the scope of this paper. In short, linguistic territoriality is argued to reach (greater) parity of esteem, as each linguistic community could "enjoy a territory in which they are sovereign" (De Schutter and Robichaud 2015, 102). It would make "every tongue a queen" (Van Parijs 2011, 147), which recognises the symbolic function of current minority languages as well (May 2015, 140). It would oppose a so-called colonial attitude, as those who settle in a territory would be expected to learn and speak the local language (Van Parijs 2011, 141). This could then, to a large extent, diminish the unequal sociolinguistic relations between individuals, at least on the institutional level. What more could a relational egalitarian want?

If a relational egalitarian would answer this question with "nothing," my paper would end right here. That is not the case, I argue. However, as Stephen May (2015, 140) notes as well, linguistic territoriality certainly does more for linguistic parity of esteem than mere monolingualism (with or without linguistic basic rights and liberties as discussed in section 2.2.1 of this paper). Nevertheless, there are several issues with linguistic territoriality as proposed by Van Parijs that still undermine relational egalitarian linguistic justice. Essentially, linguistic territoriality does not correspond with the linguistic reality, in which many more factors play a role in constituting inequality and relational egalitarian injustice. This becomes evident in three (separate, although very much related) ways: the (im)possibility of setting borders between languages, diaspora or otherwise minority-within-minority languages and the diversity and inequalities within languages.

Essential to a territorially differentiated coercive linguistic regime is the requirement to set borders between different linguistic communities. But is that really possible, and what are the sociolinguistic consequences of such a practice? Where languages come into contact, they constantly influence each other, which makes easy-to-set linguistic borders more of a myth than reality (Abizadeh 2012, 870-1). This happens on a small scale, with loan words or loan coinages: words, phrases or sayings that do not 'appear' foreign but "would never have been coined, or would never have acquired their modern meaning, were it not for the influence of a foreign model" (Martyn 1997, 305). But this becomes even more apparent, however, when considering contact languages, such as pidgins, creoles and mixed languages. These are often simplified linguistic varieties that arise from multiple linguistic varieties being in contact, e.g. through migration or trade (Siegel 2005, 143). In practice, many of the pidgins and creoles spoken today resulted from slave trade (Wenz 2020), but not all of them. Spanglish, for example, which is a combination of English and Spanish, is a more modern contact language widely spoken throughout the United States (Reagan 2019, 111-2). While (especially) contact languages such as pidgins and creoles are simplified languages, often used as a lingua franca, some have become a linguistic variety used in multiple social contexts or even the first language of the next generation (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2015, 117). Considering borders between languages were fuzzy already, pidgins, creoles, and mixed languages further complicate the matter. Especially where contact languages remain in contact with their lexifier (i.e. the "socially, economically, and politically dominant language […] which provides the vocabulary for the pidgin" (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2015, 116)), this creates a continuum between the different languages involved (Garrett 2012, 148). To which linguistic territory would these contact languages then belong, or (how) could they possibly get their own?

This question matters, especially given the "doubly marginalised" sociolinguistic position of many of these contact languages (Garrett 2012, 145). Not only are these varieties often marginalised vis-à-vis global languages, such as English or Spanish, they are marginalised vis-à-vis endangered languages as well (Garrett 2012, 145-46). According to Paul Garrett, this is the result of a combination of their relatively short histories (with most of these languages having arisen in the last couple of centuries) on the one hand, and their perceived lack of autonomy on the other (Garrett 2012, 146-50). They are considered to be inferior or even corrupted versions of their (most often European) lexifiers, even by their own speakers (Garrett 2012, 148). This sociolinguistically inferior position sometimes can be seen in the contact language's name already, such as that of "Negerhollands [Negro-Dutch]," an only recently extinct Dutch-lexified creole formerly spoken in the United States Virgin Islands.

Linguistic territoriality hence requires clear borders between languages, but the mixed linguistic character of contact languages complicate this. Without a clear place in a linguistic territorial framework, however, these contact languages would not enjoy the same equality as other languages. And given the already doubly marginalised position of many of these languages, this raises the question whether linguistic territoriality can truly provide a parity of esteem after all.

Similar dynamics occur when considering linguistic minorities (e.g. within other minorities) that would be too small for their "own" linguistic territory (De Schutter 2008, 111). Diaspora languages, for instance, would fall into this latter category. As they are dispersed throughout the globe, they may not be sufficiently agglomerated to form their own territory. And one can imagine that in many cases, the speakers of migrant languages do not enjoy the same social status as speakers of the lingua franca or the official language(s) of the state. To exclude these individuals from the linguistic territorial framework or to force them to move to "their" linguistic territory would again undermine the parity of esteem that linguistic territoriality aims and claims to protect.

Aside from these interlinguistic complicating factors, intralinguistic factors are not sufficiently addressed in the linguistic territoriality principle either. After all, sociolinguistic inequalities and hierarchies go beyond the linguistic "borders" (which are thus very fuzzy to begin with). Within these fuzzy borders, most language varieties differ substantively across region, class, and/or ethnicity, where the 'standard' version (i.e. the variety taught in schools) is granted the highest status (De Schutter 2020, 146). Think of the English language, for example, and the inequalities between African American English and the standard American English variety, as discussed in the first chapter of this paper. But this is by far not the only example. If we stay within the English language, it can be seen that "the English acquired by urban Africans may offer them considerable purchase and prestige for their middle-class identities in African towns, but the same English may well be treated quite differently if they moved to London, identifying them as stigmatized, migrants, and from a lower class" (May 2015, 142). While Van Parijs' account of linguistic territoriality may accommodate greater parity of esteem between languages, it remains unclear how the intralinguistic inequalities would be addressed.

All in all, these three characteristics of languages, i.e. the fuzziness of linguistic borders, the existence of minorities within minorities, and the diversity and inequalities within languages share that they are not (sufficiently) addressed in an account of linguistic territoriality. In other words, linguistic territoriality does not correspond with the (socio-)linguistic reality, at least in these three ways. This is inherent to linguistic territoriality, which is based on monolingualism and clear borders between languages (De Schutter 2008, 111). As I have argued, this is not only inaccurate, it is problematic as well. It raises the question whether linguistic territoriality could truly provide a linguistic parity of esteem, as argued by Philippe van Parijs. It seems that citizens are treated with equal respect, only insofar they fit into the limited, monolingual structure of linguistic territoriality. And given that many individuals would fall outside of this scheme, we could no longer speak of true equal treatment, contradicting the fundamental relational egalitarian principle of equal treatment by state institutions.

2.2.4 Equal Recognition

In a response to Van Parijs, Helder de Schutter rejects linguistic territoriality for similar (among other) reasons (De Schutter 2008, 111-2). Instead, De Schutter opts for an equal recognition approach instead (De Schutter 2008, 117). This brings me to the fourth and final approach within the field of linguistic justice literature that I will discuss in this chapter. In an equal recognition approach, states are multilingual entities in which the different languages spoken in the region are official languages, where these languages are treated equally by the law and enjoy equal benefits (Patten 2014, 200), such as official state documents and public education. The approach is proceduralist in the sense that it does not aim for a certain linguistic outcome, for example by ensuring a minority language's survival or the promotion of a national language (De Schutter 2017, 76). Some examples where multiple languages are already equally recognised include Belgium, where Dutch, French, and German are all official languages of the state; Paraguay, which officially recognises Spanish and Guaraní; and Bolivia, which, besides Spanish, has included dozens of indigenous languages in its current constitution (Anria 2016, 100). It is clear that in these different examples, the practical applications of equal language recognition differ extensively. But in its theory, too, different principles of equal recognition can be recognised. De Schutter distinguishes three main principles within the academic debate: the per-capita, the per-language, and the equal-services principle (De Schutter 2017, 76-80).

In the per-capita approach, as defended by Alan Patten (among others), the level of assistance depends on how much demand there is for services, as expressed by the percentage of people speaking a certain language (Patten 2014, 200). After all, the goal of equal language recognition is "to establish fair conditions for individuals who speak different languages, not to be fair to the languages themselves" (Patten 2014, 200). In practice, then, speakers of small minority languages would have less services available in their native language, or would have to travel farther for these services (e.g. public education in their particular language). In the per-language approach, on the other hand, individual languages *are* taken as the starting point, where the exact same resources are given to each language spoken within a political community, regardless of how many speakers there are for each (De Schutter 2017, 77). Finally, in an equal-services account, too, every language spoken in the community receives equal services, regardless of how many speakers there are for each, but this does not necessarily require the state to spend the exact amount of resources on each (De Schutter 2017, 77). In practice, if there are two languages spoken in a certain country, no matter how many citizens speak the one and how many speak the other, an equal-services account would function as follows: "if the state provides public hospitals, it provides monolingual hospitals for both language groups or bilingual hospitals. The same goes for state-funded TV or public education. If the state mentions one language in the constitution, it also mentions the other language; if it has an anthem, it will produce versions in both languages or a bilingual version; if it offers healthcare brochures, it will print them in both languages; and so on" (De Schutter 2017, 77).

Generally, an equal recognition account certainly provides a prospect of greater equality among citizens who speak different languages. Every language spoken in the community is acknowledged and provided with official services, such as official documents and public education (at least if the state provides these services in any language). Nonetheless, the equal recognition approaches do not entirely protect and foster relational equality either. This is especially apparent for the per-capita approach, in which speakers of minority languages have less access to services in their language. While this may seem fair in a market-approach of linguistic diversity, in which a smaller demand logically allows for a smaller supply, it potentially pushes citizens towards using the majority language(s) with more services available. As De Schutter explains, this threatens minority language speakers' sense of "linguistic dignity" (De Schutter 2017, 82). But for the per-language and equal-services accounts, the latter being defended by De Schutter (2017), which prevents such a potential loss of linguistic dignity among those who speak minority languages, various questions and issues remain unanswered as well. As was the case for linguistic territoriality, discussed in the previous section, it remains unclear where the 'in-between' contact languages stand in this approach, and socio-economic hierarchies within languages remain unaddressed too. Nevertheless, a per-language or equal-services account does promote institutional and political equality among the different languages spoken in a community.

2.3 Conclusions

The approaches discussed in this chapter certainly aim for greater linguistic equality, and most of them do provide a prospect of greater equality in some respects, albeit in different spheres of society and to different extents. Nevertheless, they are not sufficiently successful in addressing the relational inequalities as discussed in Chapter 1. As I have portrayed in this chapter, this occurs to different extents depending on the specific approach, but overall, four main causes of this result can be identified. The existing principles of linguistic justices either leave existing (social, economic, and political) inequalities between languages unaddressed, they do not take the cultural and identity-constituting functions of languages into consideration, they have an inaccurate understanding of the (fuzzy) borders between languages, or they do not (sufficiently) consider the social, economic and political inequalities that occur within languages. This calls for a new approach to linguistic justice, one that takes the best parts of the existing approaches but takes relational inequalities seriously. It thus requires an approach which tackles the existing inequalities by their roots, considers the cultural and identity-constituting functions of languages, does not hold onto an inaccurate monolingual framework, and takes intralinguistic inequalities as seriously as interlinguistic inequalities. In the following chapter, I will explore such a relational egalitarian approach to linguistic injustice: what would such a conception of linguistic justice look like, and is it at all feasible and desirable to put it in practice?

CHAPTER III

A Relational Egalitarian Approach to Linguistic Justice: Theory and Practice

3.1 Introduction

Thus far, I have argued how linguistic inequality constitutes and reproduces certain social hierarchies, which makes this inequality unjust from a relational egalitarian perspective. Moreover, as I have argued in the previous chapter, existing accounts within the field of linguistic justice do not sufficiently tackle these unjust social hierarchies. Therefore, as for this final chapter, the main goal is to answer the following remaining question: what does relational egalitarian theory require, then, in positive terms, for (greater) linguistic justice? To do accordingly, I will begin with a demarcation of the question. Should such a relational egalitarian account focus on the moral obligations of institutions or individuals and should it have a national or global perspective? As I will justify in 3.2, while each of these may be important for relational egalitarian justice, the analysis in sub-chapter 3.3 will focus on the *institutional* side of the coin from a *national* perspective. In that section, combining and building on the results from Chapter I and Chapter II, I will provide the theoretical prerequisites for a relational egalitarian approach to linguistic justice. Specifically, it will consider the institutional, social, and economic aspects that states would have to consider in order to reach the relational egalitarian ideal, as these dimensions constituted linguistic inequality to begin with. However, as I will portray in section 3.4, these theoretical requirements appear to be very demanding and therefore nearly impossible to properly apply in practice. Moreover, the relational egalitarian ideal of linguistic justice is constrained by the instrumental function of languages. As I will conclude, these practical constraints could potentially problematise the theoretical foundations of relational egalitarian justice more broadly.

3.2 Demarcating the Scope of the Question

Since a relational egalitarian approach to linguistic justice can mean many things, it needs be very clear and justified to whom the account applies: does it constitute the moral obligations for individuals, institutions, or both, and does it have a national or global perspective? Given the limited space of this paper, my paper will have a *national*, rather than global, focus on the moral obligations of *institutions*, rather than individuals. In this section, I will briefly illustrate the differences of the potential approaches, and justify my choices between them.

3.2.1 The Individual vs. the Institution

As I have pointed out in the first chapter of this thesis, relational egalitarianism has various moral implications for both individuals and institutions. To briefly summarise, for individuals, the main moral obligation is to treat others as equals. Unjust social hierarchies, then, should be avoided at all costs. This always applies: whether it concerns gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, or language, does not (fundamentally, at least) change the corresponding moral obligation to treat everyone as equals. What does differ per case, at least more than the moral obligations for individuals, are the moral implications of relational egalitarianism for institutions. To summarise the discussion in Chapter 1.2.1, these implications are twofold. On the one hand, institutions have the moral obligation to provide the right circumstances for individuals to fulfil their relational egalitarian obligations. On the other hand, the institutions themselves must be organised in such a way that they are democratic, i.e. socially equal, as well. As I have argued, this means that there is not a one-size-fits-all, positive account for institutions to both foster equal relations among citizens and to be democratic themselves with regards to e.g. gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, or language.

Therefore, and given the limited scope of this paper, the focus of the remainder of this chapter will be the role of institutions in contributing to relational egalitarian linguistic justice. Naturally, this does not mean that the individual moral obligations of relational egalitarianism decrease in importance or cease to exist altogether. In a relational egalitarian conception of justice, individuals still have the moral task to regard and treat others, who may speak different linguistic varieties than themselves, as equals. Sociolinguistic ideologies, in which some varieties are perceived as broken, primitive, worthless, or inferior otherwise, do not fit in such a society of equals. In the remainder of this chapter, I will analyse what is theoretically necessary for institutions to foster and protect such a society of equals, regardless of the linguistic variety one may speak.

3.2.2 The National vs. the Global

Before I do, however, the scope of this approach must be further specified and clarified: will this relational egalitarian approach to linguistic justice have a national or global perspective? This is an important question to ask, as linguistic inequalities do not strictly stop at political borders. A concrete example of how such linguistic inequalities can occur across borders is academia.[4] Here, mainly English[5] is seen as the legitimate language (Martín Rojo 2021, 173). This does not only place other languages in inferior positions, it excludes those who are not in the socio-economic position to study English (or other prominent languages used in academia) as well (Martín Rojo 2021, 174). As such, just as with linguistic inequalities that occur within political borders, global linguistic inequality can reinforce non-linguistic inequalities and hierarchies as well.

Relational egalitarianism, too, does not *necessarily* only consider social equality within political borders. Most relational egalitarian accounts do focus on achieving egalitarian justice within political societies, but some authors have, although relatively recently, argued in favour of equal relations globally (Nath 2020, 8). Such accounts of global relational egalitarianism have been proposed and defended by e.g. Rekha Nath (2011), Christine Hobden (2019), and Jan-Christoph Heilinger (2020, 98). These accounts have to defend whether one can speak of global relations that have moral relevance, and how, if at all, such relations are of concern for relational egalitarians (Nath 2020, 8-9; Heilinger 2020, 98).

Even though global linguistic inequalities may give rise to such concerns, and relatively recent accounts of global relational egalitarianism could potentially be applied to these cases, it goes beyond the scope of this paper to explore this possibility at length. Therefore, the theoretical requirements for relational egalitarian linguistic justice, as will be proposed in the following sections, will have an institutional, national approach. To emphasise this again, however, this is not to underestimate the potential moral obligations for institutions *and individuals* on a *global* scale, which may very well be present, but these questions would need to be addressed more profoundly than the limited space of this paper allows for. These open questions thus certainly remain relevant for any future research on both linguistic justice and relational egalitarianism.

3.3 Theoretical Requirements for Relational Egalitarian Linguistic Justice

Now that the scope of this chapter has been defined and justified, the remaining question that this sub-chapter aims to answer is the following: what does relational egalitarian theory, in positive terms, require of institutions for (greater) linguistic justice, within the boundaries of

[4] In Appendix A, I will further reflect on how this essay *itself* relates to these academic linguistic inequalities.
[5] Besides some other (mostly colonial) languages, such as French or Spanish, which both do not enjoy the same status as English does in academia but are still more prominent than most other languages (Martín Rojo 2021, 174).

the nation-state? To answer this question, the results from Chapter I (how linguistic inequality constitutes relational egalitarian injustice) and Chapter II (how existing theories on linguistic justice are not sufficiently solving the injustice of Chapter I) will be combined and expanded. Although the theories of Chapter II were not *sufficiently* successful in providing true social equality, this does not mean that they should be neglected altogether. As I have argued, for many of these conceptions of linguistic justice do have certain aspects that could provide greater equality. What it does mean, is that different components of different theories would have to be combined and expanded where the existing theories do not sufficiently succeed to provide linguistic equality for all. In the following sections, I will consider the institutional requirements for greater institutional, social, and economic linguistic inequality, as these three dimensions constitute the different dimensions of linguistic inequality as well, as defined in Chapter 1.3. These basic theoretical principles of relational egalitarian linguistic justice as proposed in this sub-chapter are not meant to be all-encompassing and complete, but are rather aimed to form a basis on which can be built in future research. Moreover, as linguistic inequalities often reproduce broader, non-linguistic inequalities, focusing on language only would not be enough: the non-linguistic inequalities would remain present. For true relational egalitarian justice, then, a broader approach would be required. The following sections, however, focus on the linguistic component in this relational egalitarian conception of justice.

3.3.1 Institutional Linguistic Justice

Naturally, as established in 3.2, each of the other two dimensions of linguistic justice, i.e. the social and economic dimension, will consider the institutional moral implications. However, as I have pointed out previously in this paper as well, the relational egalitarian moral implications for institutions are not only instrumental in nature, by providing and securing the right circumstances for social equality. Instead, the institutions must be inherently equal themselves as well, which will be given shape in this section of the chapter. For other spheres in society, in the relational egalitarian ideal, this means that individuals should be able to participate in government affairs and not be excluded from institutions (Anderson 1999, 317). As for linguistic justice, this seems to imply that language should not form a barrier to able to be included in politics and other institutions either. Moreover, basic rights are not sufficient, if certain groups are still excluded from or discriminated within these institutions. As I have argued in the previous chapter, this means that for linguistic justice, a basic rights approach is not sufficient either.

Instead, for linguistic justice based on relational egalitarian principles, every linguistic variety must then have equal institutional status, in which no linguistic varieties (including specific dialects as well as contact languages) are excluded from e.g. official state documents, education, and democratic decision-making processes. To reach such equal institutional and political status for every variety spoken in the community, then, an equal-services (or per-language) type of equal recognition approach, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.4, could be a valid starting point. To briefly summarise, in this type of approach, every language spoken in the community has the same institutional status and are given equal services, regardless of the number of native speakers present in the country. But as I have portrayed, to be truly equal, such an equality of services must be expanded. Concretely, this means that, as linguistic inequalities occur both within and between languages, that linguistic diversity within languages must given the same institutional attention as the broader, interlinguistic diversity within the nation-state. To be socially equal, institutions thus must not exclude certain (minority) non-standard linguistic varieties.

Such a relational egalitarian approach would potentially have to be expanded even further with an institutional recognition of the languages spoken by immigrants as well. While it is generally accepted that immigrants adapt to the local official language(s) (Patten and Kymlicka 2003, 8), relational egalitarianism may require that, once immigrants are accepted as citizens, they should be treated with equal concern and respect. This would then potentially require the official recognition of, and the provision of equal services in their languages. Five more articles, if not fifty, could be written about this possibility alone, however, and it is not my goal to assess whether this is indeed a moral implication for relational egalitarian linguistic justice. Instead, it is to point to the possibility of it in the light of the more general, positive moral obligation for states to equally recognise each of the linguistic varieties spoken within their communities.

3.3.2 Social Linguistic Justice

Aside from these moral implications for states that focus on the social equality of their own organisation and institutions, there is an instrumental responsibility for states as well, in providing and securing the right circumstances for individuals to treat each other as equals. This is particularly important for linguistic justice, as linguistic inequalities, for a large part, revolve around the language ideologies present in society. While some linguistic varieties are considered to be primitive, broken, or illegitimate, others have superior status in society. It is the form of discrimination and stigmatisation many speakers of non-dominant languages face that I have defined in section 1.3.2 and discussed throughout this essay.

The institutional rights of languages often reflect these social stances, in which the superior linguistic variety is the standard variety with official recognition and state services (Leibowitz 1976, 463). That does not mean, however, that an expanded equal recognition approach as described in the previous section would be sufficient in mitigating the social inequalities resultant from language ideologies. After all, the challenges faced by the speakers of non-dominant languages do not only constitute a lack of institutional rights and services, but the *social* discrimination, undervaluation and stigmatisation these speech communities endure as well. While official recognition would thus be an important first step in granting equal status to the linguistic varieties spoken in the community, it would, as I have argued in the previous chapter as well, leave most of the socio-economic linguistic inequalities unaddressed. The expanded official recognition approach as defined in the previous section would thus have to be expanded even further, in order to account for these socio-economic inequalities, for which I will discuss the economic side of the coin in section 3.3.3.

In social terms, then, the equal recognition approach should be expanded with a role for state institutions to actively promote and secure equality among citizens who speak different linguistic varieties. This could be done in a variety of ways, but a clear example would be to do so through public education. This possibility has been discussed in light of the basic rights approach in section 2.2.1 as well. Concretely, it would mean that there is a pivotal role for public education to tackle the harming linguistic ideologies that constitute linguistic inequality (Reagan 2019, 359). This would not only have to be done in the curriculum, but in "in teacher-student and student-teacher communication, in teacher (and student) judgments about language and language variation, [and] in the assessment and evaluation of students (as well as of teachers)" as well (Reagan 2019, 359). While these latter requirements focus more on the individual moral obligations, institutions thus have an important role to play in *facilitating* the right curriculum and circumstances for this sort of interactions, in order to challenge and contest the linguistic ideologies underlying linguistic injustice. This moral implication does not necessarily limit itself to education, either, but constitutes the broader moral obligation for states to have equal concern for each of its speech communities. By not only officially recognising and supporting all linguistic varieties spoken within the borders of the state equally, but by propagating the equality of these linguistic varieties, through education and/or other institutions, too, the state actively acknowledges the symbolic and cultural value languages have for its speakers in an equal manner. As such, it would contest the linguistic ideologies that formed the basis of social linguistic inequality.

3.3.3 Economic Linguistic Justice

Finally, in a relational egalitarian approach to linguistic justice, the economic dimension of linguistic inequality must be addressed as well. After all, while the institutional rights and social equality of linguistic varieties are certainly important, they do not fully cover the complexity of linguistic injustice. As I have discussed in Chapter 1.3.2, the socio-political dominance of languages can affect their economic position in society as well, granting the speakers of these languages more economic opportunities. But as the case analysis of Guaraní in Paraguay suggested as well, this can work the other way around, too, where the economic position of a language or linguistic variety can affect the social status of the language. The institutional implications to tackle this economic dimension of linguistic injustice are therefore two-fold.

On the one hand, institutions should prevent that language ideologies negatively affect the economic position of some linguistic varieties, while granting economic hegemony to others. The institutional and social dimensions of relational egalitarian linguistic justice already play an important role here, by granting every linguistic variety institutional rights and services and by shifting the narratives of harming language ideologies. As the political, social, and economic aspects of linguistic justice are all intertwined, these steps to mitigate the social and institutional linguistic inequalities could positively affect the economic inequalities between languages as well.

On the other hand, institutions should prevent that certain linguistic varieties with economic hegemony negatively affect language ideologies, which would again make some linguistic varieties more valuable than others, despite these aforementioned efforts. After all, it is not unlikely that certain languages would remain dominant in economic terms, even though they have equal social and political status. As pointed out in Chapter 1.3.2, there may be productivity and efficiency reasons for businesses to uphold monolingualism (Martín and Del Percio 2020, 13). Without market regulation to diversify the languages used in the economy,[6] this would insinuate the additional need for some form of redistribution, as proposed by

[6] To assess whether such market regulation would indeed be required from a relational egalitarian perspective goes beyond the scope of this essay. This question touches upon much broader themes than linguistic justice, concerned with the relationship between relational egalitarianism and the market, which would require careful consideration. For this argument, therefore, I accept these deregulated markets as the given status quo.

Philippe van Parijs and discussed in Chapter 2.2.2 of this paper. After all, while relational egalitarianism does not revolve around redistribution, that does not mean that it does not have a place in the theory altogether. To repeat once more, especially where unequal distributions negatively affect social relations, redistribution is of importance in relational egalitarian theory (Anderson 2008, 143). And given that the fact of economic dominance of some linguistic varieties could distort the social equality of languages, redistribution thus seems to become an essential addition to the institutional and social requirements for relational egalitarian linguistic justice.

3.4 Practical Application and Feasibility Constraints

With the theoretical exploration of relational egalitarian linguistic justice as expounded above, the linguistic inequalities as defined and described in Chapter I are tackled, and the shortcomings of existing approaches to linguistic justice as described in Chapter II have been resolved. Nevertheless, as I will argue in this sub-chapter, more would be necessary to successfully defend such a relational egalitarian approach to linguistic justice, given that the linguistic factor of it makes it particularly complex to put the theory in practice. Two main sources of these feasibility constraints will be identified in this sub-chapter. One concerns the immense linguistic diversity in many countries, which makes true equal recognition as described in 3.3.1 difficult to achieve. The other relates to the instrumental value languages have, aside from their symbolic and identity-constituting function. These practical constraints, then, bring this section to a discussion on whether, given these feasibility constraints, such a relational egalitarian approach would be desirable to defend at all. Moreover, these feasibility constraints seem to generate tensions with the relational egalitarian conception of justice more broadly.

3.4.1 Equal Recognition in a Linguistically Diverse World

In the previous sub-chapter, I have argued why an expanded equal recognition approach would provide the prospect of greater relational equality in terms of language. But as I have emphasised, this would require that each linguistic variety would be treated with the same concern and respect, providing equal services for each variety regardless of the number of people in the respective speech community. While it would thus provide the prospect of greater relational equality, this approach would be highly demanding of state institutions in practice. Naturally, this would differ per state: in a state where only a couple linguistic varieties are spoken, equal recognition of these varieties would require a lot fewer resources than in an expanded equal recognition approach in Papua New Guinea, for example, where there are currently more than 800 living languages (Ethnologue 2021b). Here, if the state offers public education, it must be available in each of these 800 languages *plus* the linguistic varieties within these 800 languages (including the contact languages that would fall in-between), and the same goes for constitutions, official documents, anthems, and so on. And Papua New Guinea, while currently the linguistically most diverse country in the world, would not be the only country in which institutional and political equality for languages would be severely difficult to actually achieve. In Indonesia, for example, there are currently more than 700 living languages, in Australia 314, in Nigeria 522, in China 308, and in Brazil ‘only’ 221 (Ethnologue 2021b). These immense numbers thus even exclude the linguistic varieties that can be identified *within* these over-arching languages. Furthermore, if languages spoken by migrants have to be addressed and supported equally as well, as thus may indeed be the case in a relational egalitarian conception of linguistic justice, the complexity and number of resources necessary to successfully implement an expanded equal recognition approach increases even further. The smaller the speech communities, the more complex it becomes as well to provide equal services and set up the corresponding infrastructure and institutions, such as those of public education (De Schutter 2019, 16). While I will not empirically assess the actual possibility of a successful implementation of such an approach, this may not even be a necessary step to take. After all, a relational egalitarian conception of linguistic justice may not be desirable for other, although certainly related reasons, which I will discuss in the following section.

3.4.2 Between Equality and Communication

These feasibility constraints relate to the instrumental, communicative functions of languages. Throughout this paper, the main focus has been other side of the linguistic coin, being the symbolic, cultural, identity-constituting function of language. This is only logical, given that language ideologies and linguistic injustice relate to this function of language in particular. That does not mean, however, that the other main function of language loses its value or ceases to exist altogether. Evidently, language is still used as the means of communication. As I will argue in this section, these two functions of language, being the communicative and the symbolic, seem to be in tension with one another. In a relational egalitarian conception of linguistic justice, the communicative function of language is hindered, I argue, which should be of concern for relational egalitarians as well.

As has been pointed out before, there are productivity reasons for why monolingualism is often the economic standard. Here, the communicative function of languages thus trumps the identity-constituting function of language to decrease costs and increase efficiency. In turn, this monolingual standard negatively affects the equality among individuals who speak different linguistic varieties. In institutions, too, monolingualism increases linguistic inequality, for which reason a relational egalitarian approach to linguistic justice requires equal recognition of linguistic varieties, and thus multilingualism, instead. However, for relational egalitarians, too, the communicative function of languages is important to consider and protect. As De Schutter points out, multilingualism can be seen as a burden for democracy (De Schutter 2019, 18). Democratic deliberation requires that citizens understand each other, and this favours monolingualism (Barry 2001, 227). In a multilingual state, however, in which all linguistic varieties are equally recognised – let me recall that in some states, this would imply the equal recognition of hundreds of languages, the varieties within them and potentially the present immigrant languages as well – the democratic process would therefore be hindered. However, for relational egalitarianism, this would not be an easy concession to make. Being a theory that revolves around the equality of relations, unequal political power would go against the basic principles of relational egalitarianism (Motchoulski 2021, 2). This places democracy as a central political ideal in relational egalitarian theory (Motchoulski 2021, 2). As such, with its multilingual perspective, relational egalitarian linguistic justice seems to hinder another important principle for relational egalitarian justice, namely democracy. On the contrary, the goal of effective and fair democracy, with its monolingual perspective, undermines relational egalitarian linguistic justice. These tensions are not resolved with a linguistic territoriality approach, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, either. While it may come across as the best of both worlds, in which the monolingual entities both encourage democratic efficiency and parity of esteem between languages, it still undermines linguistic justice in numerous ways as the issues discussed in the previous chapter are not resolved.[7] All in all, as long as the instrumental function of languages is not replaced with a micro-chip installed in our brain, doing the communication for us (Embury-Dennis 2020), the tensions between the two main functions of languages remain.[8]

[7] Specifically, linguistic territoriality does not account for the linguistic reality of fuzzy borders, intralinguistic inequalities, and minority languages within minorities, as discussed extensively in section 2.2.3.

[8] In Appendix A, I argue how these tensions between the instrumental and symbolic value of languages are reflected by this essay in itself as well.

3.4.3 Ideal Theory, Non-Ideal Theory, and Relational Egalitarian (Linguistic) Justice

As can be seen, various feasibility constraints arise from a relational egalitarian perspective on linguistic justice. While one consists in the practical feasibility of equal recognition in an immensely multilingual world, the other relates to the counteracting demands of relational egalitarian justice. With these two types of feasibility constraints in mind, this raises the question whether relational egalitarianism can serve as an appropriate theory of justice in broader terms, and if it can, whether relational egalitarian justice can ever be achieved.

As opposed to luck egalitarianism, relational egalitarianism is often framed as and considered to be more of a non-ideal theory of justice (Lippert-Rasmussen 2019, 359). In such a non-ideal theory of justice, the focus lies more on the transition to *greater* justice, than on the final, ideal society (Robeyns 2008, 346). These non-ideal objectives can indeed be found in relational egalitarianism as well, which often claims to better account for "the concerns that motivate real-life egalitarian social movements than distributive egalitarianism does," providing a rationale for social movements' demand for "same-sex marriage equality, of disability rights activists demanding inclusion in public spaces, and of civil rights activists protesting racial segregation policies" (Nath 2020, 2).

Similarly, although more generally, non-ideal theories of justice often criticise ideal theories for requiring something that society cannot actually achieve in practice (Gheaus 2013, 445-6). And given the feasibility constraints for relational egalitarian linguistic justice, as discussed in the previous sections, this may be the case for relational egalitarianism as well. While this may not be an issue for a theory of justice – Anca Gheaus (2013), for example, has argued that there can be injustice without perpetrators – it does seem to undermine relational egalitarians' general claim to be better embedded in daily social injustice. If relational egalitarian linguistic justice is constrained both by the linguistic reality and by other, conflicting projects of relational egalitarianism, how could relational egalitarianism more broadly successfully provide a solution for the real-life examples of societal marginalisation and stigmatisation? My goal here is not to explicitly resolve these tensions and the questions that arise from them, but rather to make them explicit in light of the relational egalitarian project.

3.5 Conclusions

This chapter has aimed to answer the remaining question of what, in positive terms, relational egalitarianism requires to achieve linguistic justice. Focusing on the theoretical requirements for institutions on the national level, I have explored the institutional, social, and economic prerequisites of relational egalitarian linguistic justice. However, while this positive account followed from the findings of Chapter I and Chapter II, it appeared that such a theoretical approach to linguistic justice may be difficult to apply in practice. After all, if taken seriously, the relational egalitarian requirements for greater linguistic justice are both highly demanding of institutions and may partly counteract other relational egalitarian projects, specifically for the ideal of democracy. These feasibility constraints of relational egalitarian justice may problematise relational egalitarianism as a whole, which claims to provide a theoretical answer for the pressing issues marginalised groups face on a daily basis.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this thesis has explored the possibility of a relational egalitarian response to linguistic justice. After all, as I have portrayed in the first chapter of this paper, language should be of special concern for relational egalitarians. Linguistic inequality constitutes unjust social hierarchies, where certain linguistic varieties have political, economic, and social dominance over other linguistic varieties in inferior positions. These inequalities reinforce broader, non-linguistic unjust social hierarchies and go beyond distributive inequalities, therefore requiring a relational egalitarian approach. Moreover, as has been the main focus of the second chapter, existing approaches to linguistic justice do not sufficiently mitigate these relational inequalities. Therefore, in the third and final chapter of this thesis, I have considered what relational egalitarianism *does* require for (greater) linguistic justice, by expanding on the approaches discussed in Chapter II. However, as I have portrayed in Chapter III, the relational egalitarian project for linguistic justice is constrained, both in general terms by its practical feasibility and in light of the tensions between the communicative and identity-constituting functions of languages. This generates further tensions for relational egalitarianism more broadly, which, on the contrary, claims to provide a theoretical rationale for real-life injustices.

As such, this paper has answered the following main question as posed in the introduction of this paper: *can relational egalitarianism provide (greater) linguistic justice?* The answer to this question is two-fold. On the one hand, relational egalitarianism can provide an explanation for the injustices of linguistic inequality. Theoretically, too, it can stipulate the requirements for what would constitute linguistic relational egalitarian linguistic justice. On the other hand, however, the relational egalitarian conception of linguistic justice is constrained in practice. Moreover, given the tensions between the communicative and symbolic function of language, it could hinder the relational egalitarian ideal of fair democracy as well. Whether relational egalitarianism can provide greater linguistic justice thus depends on the conception of relational egalitarianism more broadly, and whether its interpretation of justice must be practically feasible. The answer to this question could be further expanded in future research, by analysing the individual and global implications of relational egalitarian linguistic justice.

All in all, as long as the theoretical requirements of linguistic justice are constrained by their practical feasibility, this would not only be bad news for the many speech communities around the globe, which have faced and continue to face stigmatisation and discrimination on the basis of their language. It would be bad news for relational egalitarianism as a whole, which may no longer successfully serve as a theoretical rationale for the real-life egalitarian social movements.

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APPENDIX A

This Thesis and Linguistic Injustice: Some Reflective Remarks

This essay, as you may have noticed by now, is written in a variety of the English language. This is not a random decision. Surely, in theory, this paper could have been written in any linguistic variety that has a written form, but, as Luisa Martín Rojo points out as well, English is the natural choice to make in academia, where it is certainly the most prevalently used language (Martín Rojo 2021, 170). Even articles and seminars on multilingualism are often monolingually English themselves as well (Martín Rojo 2021, 170). This essay, too, may feel conflicting in a sense. While considering the linguistic inequalities around the globe, I am aware that it contributes to linguistic inequality itself as well (although only very little, of course, being one unpublished article among the many more published academic books and articles written on a yearly basis). After all, as I have pointed out in Chapter III of this paper, the dominance of English in academia is not a random, natural, or harmless occurrence. Resulting from power dynamics, the dominant position of English does not only place other languages in academically inferior positions, it excludes those who do not have the resources to learn the language (Martín Rojo 2021, 174). By writing this paper in English, then, the academically dominant position of the language is further consolidated.

One could aim to contest or negotiate these existing linguistic hierarchies in academia by writing and publishing in a non-dominant language. This year, for instance, Ignatius Mabasa was the first every PhD student at Rhodes University to complete and defend a dissertation written in the ChiShona language (Rhodes University 2021). By writing his thesis in ChiShona, Mabasa aimed to contest the marginalisation and stigmatisation many African languages still face (Rhodes University 2021). But this is not always a real possibility; most academic journals simply do not allow for publication in an academically non-dominant language, which constrains the linguistic options academics have. And for many journals and authors alike, this choice for the English language is simply the most practical one as it significantly fosters the academic debate to publish in mainly one language (rather than thousands). This thesis, too, aims to build on and contribute to philosophical knowledge on linguistic justice and relational egalitarianism. If published in a language other than English, it would have been less likely that this goal would be achieved.

As such, the status of English in academia reflects the broader tensions between the symbolic function and status of languages versus their instrumental, communicative value, as expounded in the third chapter of this thesis. This thesis in itself reflects these same dynamics as well. Both in content and in form, then, this paper underlines the complexity of linguistic inequality and injustice. The communicative and symbolic function are in a constant tension with each other, where (linguistic) justice seems to require both.