Episode 1 Season 2 (English)

[00:00:00]

**Darian:** Goedemorgen Constance,

**Constance:** Goedemorgen Darian: .

**Darian:** Hoe gaat het alles goed?

**Constance:** Goed met jou?

**Darian: :** Ja, niet slecht Dankjewel! Why are we speaking Dutch?

**Constance:** Why are we speaking Dutch?

**Darian: :** It's our topic for today. Englishization or internationalization.

**Constance:** That's

**Darian: :** It is not the same.

**Darian: :** No not at all. We have to be very careful. And the future of Maastricht University, right? Or the future of English language instruction within Maastricht University, but also more broadly.

**Constance:** I just wanted to say, which also might translate into the future of the university.

**Darian: :** Yes, indeed. We're very lucky, we have two great guests here today, both from the best philosophy department in the world, Maastricht University Department of Philosophy.

**Constance:** Bob Wilkinson and René Gabriels who have been very active both as researchers, but also as public speakers on this topic, and they will discuss with us questions of what is language injustice, how does it relate [00:01:00] to stability of universities, How does it relate to the larger context of, in which a university is embedded, and how does it relate to internationalization?

**Darian: :** I guess it's important to say that we planned this discussion quite a while ago. In the meantime, there was an election in the Netherlands. That election produced some, I don't know if there were surprising results. I don't know if anyone was, I think many people were, are, Somewhat concerned, but I don't know how many people were that surprised, although perhaps the, let's say, margin of victory, if we want to put it that way, for the far right party, the PVV, was somewhat surprising.

**Darian: :** And I think the results of this election will inevitably have big impact on the debate about internationalization, about migration, especially migration in relation to, students coming from abroad, but also staff coming from abroad, as well as language policy. So that's something that we hadn't really [00:02:00] planned to talk about initially, but I think it's sitting there.

**Darian:** It's a kind of the only font in the room, so to speak. And probably at some point we will come back to, we will come back to discuss election in some more detail. But first, I think we want to just discuss a little bit the work that the two of you have been doing in relation to these topics.

**Bob:** Okay. Thank you very much, Darian: I'm Bob Wilkinson. I've been working for the university on and off since 1984 and I was heavily involved with the introduction the first so called English medium program university. But in fact, it's worth remembering when it started it was a quadrilingual program with Dutch, English, French and German.

**Bob:** Later the other languages disappeared and only English was left. I did quite a lot of research on this during the 1990s but since 2015 I've [00:03:00] been involved with Rene in looking at the impacts of the use of English on students, staff, on the role of society in all of And I find it a fascinating journey, which is now about to take a new turn.

**Constance:** Linguistic justice. Could you explain what do you mean by That

**Bob:** Linguistic justice, has many different meanings. Basically, we probably follow the interpretation of Philip Van Parijs . And he sees linguistic justice in three forms. One you can call cooperative is where Two or more groups of people communicate through a single language, and then you can see it as a cost benefit ratio in how much each participant has to invest in order to be able to communicate.

**Bob:** And if you're doing everything in [00:04:00] English, Then those people who have prior investment in English, such as, L1 speakers from Britain or America or Australia, they have to invest much less than somebody, say, from the Netherlands or even, say, from Montenegro or anywhere else. The second type you can see as distributive And this is where Linguistic justice is seen as a public good. But Or at least not so much as a public good, but more where people have to trade off at an individual level I think René could probably explain this in a little bit more detail. But it relates to what you can call the inequalities of opportunities for And so it's looking at opportunities that people have in using Language A or [00:05:00] Language B. François Grain and his colleagues in Geneva have done quite a lot of research on the economic values this respect, showing that in Switzerland at least, it is economically more valuable to learn French or German, if you don't already speak it, than English.

**Bob:** The third type is you can see as parity of esteem. And in this case, you're looking at the collective identity of people, that language is constitutive for collective identity of a group of people. And in this respect, you can say the current debate in the Netherlands relates to mixtures of these interpretations where some people may be interpreting it more as parity of esteem whereas other people [00:06:00] might see it more as economic opportunities

**René:** But I think sometimes it's much better to ask yourself what is injustice or even what is experience as injustice. So I'm very much inspired.

**René:** I'm not now talking about our research as sociolinguistics, but as philosopher of science or philosopher of language and a political philosopher. is the issue of the sense of injustice. So Judith Sklar wrote an excellent book in which she says that I took it from her That we are so good in talking about what justice is like John Rawls, but we should start from the sense of injustice.

**René:** Not talking about academic world, but more the political world or the bigger world. For a lot of countries, their experience of the habits people express in many countries, a sense of injustice when orders overwhelm their language or impose their language on them. That means it's a kind of ation and talk, talking about the Irish and the [00:07:00] Irish who had to get rid of their language and the 'cause of the colonization by the English.

**René:** But the same in the Baltic states. And the Baltic states first they had to speak Russian and now after the switch in the TIC states, they were happy to use their original language the vernacular language, and now they are dealing with English at the university level.

**René:** I think people have a sense of interest when it also, when it comes to language, if there is an usurpation of the language going on. And the same is is now an issue for other reasons in the Netherlands when it comes to the university.

**René:** And very often, in social linguistics even, they use the word colonization. Because there's a colonial heritage, why, when it comes to the language has to do with power, when it comes to the dominance of English worldwide. That is the legacy of the colonial [00:08:00] age.

**Constance:** Before we go into the colonization argument, which I think everyone is quite interested to hear more about from what I just understand from what you're saying, so the different types of justice or injustice, what you're saying, what the problem is a problem outside of the university, because I could also mention that many people who come to the university are quite aware of the fact that some have to invest more in order to be able to study in English than others, right?

**Constance:** And this is not news to people who come to study in English language program, right? As a student, also having studied here. This was something that I could anticipate, right? And that's still maybe a, that's still a matter of injustice, but it's something that is anticipated. And we take it for granted because we know that's what we choose for.

**Constance:** So I could imagine that these kind of injustices happen within the university because of English language use. They are mitigated by expectation management, but by knowing, whereas the injustice that you were talking about. is a much larger problem where the university is the kind of institution that imposes the language from the outside as you just, Darian: , as you just said.

**Constance:** So the [00:09:00] injustice that you're talking about is rather felt outside of the university than inside.

**René:** Yeah, also inside the university, it itself. Bob and I, we just finishing a special issue for a journal, a social linguistic and the, deliberately have chosen to address the differences between stakeholders and their interests. So the different stakeholders have different interests, and they are very often conflicting within the university, between the university and a larger, context and even then between nation states or within nation states, talking about Belgium, for instance, et cetera.

**René:** And we should be aware of that. And the problem is that people working at the university are very often not aware about what it means for the larger society because academics are living in a bubble. And We have now a transnational community of people who are living in the bubble within that bubble of [00:10:00] academia.

**René:** And that means, and will only speak English, who ha there, who don't speak the language in, in of the country in which they live, et cetera, et cetera. And that triggers a lot of feelings of injustice or a sense of injustice. By. Some stakeholders and you, we have to be aware that are conflicting interests when it comes to different stakeholders within the academic community, between the academic community and outside academic community, so to say, and an awful also on a macro level when it comes to, Belgium, for instance, the Flemish and the Bolognans. Thank you

**Constance:** We had quite some upheaval about the kind of work that you two were doing also within the university, within our faculty, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. And when I now hear you talking, I can see that people are triggered because you, feels like, Is it fair to put that kind of responsibility on individuals working in the university to have to be aware of all of these surroundings, whereas we are in a setting where the lingua franca is English, where we have to communicate in [00:11:00] an English community, where we maybe have to fear for the, for our jobs, right?

**Constance:** So when I'm now hearing this, I can understand that some of these points are very triggering from their perspective.

**Bob:** I think this is true, but I think people should not neglect other aspects as René's mentioned. If you look at why do most students come and study in English at this university or similar universities, it's often for individual, personal, career based reasons.

**Bob:** Various motivational reasons that are for their own personal benefit. They're not terribly aware of the effects around the university or the effects of a university that employs A large number of international staff has a dominant majority of non-Dutch speaking students. And the impact that has on life in the surrounding city.

**Bob:** I [00:12:00] became very much aware of this when I lived here in Maastricht and my neighbours complained that they could not talk dialect nor Dutch in shops and cafes in Maastricht. And they say it's the influence of dominance of English.

**Bob:** You can then go a little bit further than you, and you can ask, why do so many people speak English anyhow?

**Bob:** Why have they learned it? Then you have to go back the early, the late 1940s and the 1950s when governments introduced foreign language learning in schools. And in most European countries, fairly quickly, English became the first foreign language. So you end up, by the end of the 60s and the 70s, with a large number of your young population whose first foreign language is [00:13:00] English.

**Bob:** Now when we've looked at what languages do students in this university speak, we find they speak Hundreds of languages actually, then you try and ask, at what level can they At an academic level, they can use their first language, usually, not always, some even say they can't. we looked at the level in this area of French and German.

**Bob:** Is there a possibility for students to study here courses in French and German? And if you look at students whose French and German is their third language, it is not at a level to be able to follow courses in French and German. What I'm saying by this is you look back to political decisions from a long time ago and you see the consequences 30 or 40 years later.

**Bob:** If we jump to now, as René's been mentioning, you can see [00:14:00] universities, not just here in the Netherlands, but across the world, are introducing more and more English. What is going to be the impact? in 30 or 40 years time on relationship between the university, as René calls it, bubble, and the rest of the population. I can see dangers coming in the future.

**Constance:** , I could also imagine that now people would be quick to say what's the impact if we hadn't done this for Limburg, for example? So what, that's like a quick way to respond, right? What, do you rather want no university here?

**René:** It’s very suggested because your suggestion is the same as done by the board of this university, that the region profits a lot economically spoken from the Englishization of the University of Maastricht. There are no figures about it that sustain that whole idea. The next question is then why in the same region[00:15:00] three other universities in hustled, in Lih and in Aachen don't have such a level of English and other interesting things if they want to have an impact on the region, then why are there not seriously bilingual that you train even also the students as well as the staff to speak both languages to contribute really to the region. Most of the students that come to the University of Maastricht leave the university very quickly and go back to the home country or to elsewhere in the Netherlands.

**René:** And the most important thing, by the way, to come back also to the linguistic justice or injustice issue is, to ask ourselves, why is this university that much on that level of Englishization? Why is in the Netherlands English so dominant in comparison to many other countries?

**René:** The only reason is, and you should and that it's not, and All the administrators are not open about it. It's the way how we finance higher education. It [00:16:00] is very attractive in a neoliberal society in which we live to attract students from abroad via an EMI program, English Medium Instruction Program.

**René:** And that's the basic reason and all the other shit. About the region or saying it's good for the quality. We have better staff, better students. That's all at least not sustained with figures with research. And another issue also addresses issue, it's not that much linguistic justice, but socioeconomic justice.

**René:** Students of course they deliberately have chosen to do these EMI programs. However, there are a lot of students who don't make it to that. We exclude students who don't want to do that program or don't have the opportunity to do that program. And that is, there's also a financial barrier to, to get access to such programs.

**René:** there are maybe a lot of students from abroad who would like to do this program, but who, whose parents cannot afford it to do an EMI program?[00:17:00]

**Darian: :** but sorry, René, I don't understand the last part of what you're saying because what's the difference between coming from abroad to do an EMI program and coming from abroad to do a Dutch language program?

**Darian: :** And if students want to study in Dutch, so if local students want to study in Dutch, which I think is a perfectly reasonable thing for them to want to do. Are there not other opportunities to do that in the Netherlands? There are 14 universities in the Netherlands. There are many, I think it's only, what, about one third of programs that are taught in English. So there are certainly opportunities to study in Dutch in the Netherlands,

**René:** Oh, sorry. I'm right. I was not clear. Sorry to interrupt you is know what I want to say. If you're from a poor family or a rich family from abroad or from a poor already mean, I don't know how it is in the Netherlands, but I want to see research on that.

**René:** But my intuition is at least that if you have to be very high fees from if you're from Bulgaria, Romania to get access to the University of Marseille and you think that as parents that you can I cannot afford. [00:18:00] Then I'm pretty sure that most of students who made it to the University of Maastricht or any other university are from middle class or upper class families and not to speak about students who want to come to university if they're not European So there are, to have access to university, that's one. And the second is whether you If you think it's good for your career, whether you have access to an EMI program or not.

**Darian: :** Wait a minute. So I'm still a little bit confused because I think you want to talk now about widening access to the university. Let's talk, let's stick within the European Union. So leaving

**René:** yeah.

**Darian:** who have to pay international fees. But if we are really interested in widening access. To university education, especially to the kinds of programs that are offered here at Maastricht University to a broader group of European students, then doesn't it make sense that we would do that?

**Darian:** We would offer those programs in, let's say, what is the lingua franca of science or in the most commonly spoken second language?[00:19:00] It seems like you're interested in saying so we hear often these sort of, let's say, comments about what's happening is, the Bulgarian middle classes, the Romanian middle classes are coming to the Netherlands to get educated, and I think that's probably, there's probably some truth to that, and not that's a bad thing anyway, right?

**Darian:** And I, what I hear you saying is we should create a situation as well where we are attentive to the fact that we should be more inclusive in a class sense, so have a broader capacity to attract also, let's say, what we would traditionally call working class students or something like that, from outside of the Netherlands, from the European Union, from across the European Union.

**Darian:** But if we're going to say that, doesn't it make sense that we would do that in the language that is most common to all of these students

**Constance:** also, in the matter of the linguistic injustice we talked about before, the, in terms of equity, the kind of effort that students from Bulgaria, for example, would have to invest in order to learn Dutch at the same level as the Dutch native speakers were.

**Constance:** Then when we're talking about language injustice, then it wouldn't make any sense to open the programs

**Bob:** Yeah. There are some interesting points to be made [00:20:00] here. one of the things that quite a lot of research shows that the people who choose to do English medium programs tend to come from the wealthier sections society, they tend to have more opportunities in their childhood to do language, to take extracurricular courses than people who Choose to study in the first language.

**Bob:** There's quite a lot of evidence But, there is recently Quite a lot of evidence, or there is some evidence coming out that this doesn't necessarily accrue better benefits studies in Scandinavia and recently one of our studies in Vietnam shows that the benefits that you have from Having a wealthier background, having had a better education in a private school, for example, having had extra courses doesn't carry [00:21:00] over later in your studies.

**Bob:** It works. in the first few years, first two but then that extra benefit that you've had in your teenage years doesn't carry over to your final year. The difference then between where you can make comparisons between people studying in their first language and their second language is crosses. the average gain in content learning declines relatively compared to learning in the first language.

**Constance:** But if we follow this argument through, then we would just never study in any other language, right? Then we then you would say it's always more beneficial to just study in your mother tongue.

**Bob:** Sure. That's probably true. If that's the only judgment

**Bob:** you make, but there are other things you can take into account. Why did I go and study in France, for example, in French? Because I wanted to learn about French culture, [00:22:00] French way of life. I wanted to be more international from a sense there, and in fact these extra benefits from studying in a second language would be foregone if you only studied all the time in your first However, that doesn't negate what René said at all. If you're studying in a second language, English, then there could be some gains and losses from the fact that it's not in your first language. Gains are the sort of social cultural gains from meeting other people, but losses could be The materials that you use may be slanted towards an Anglo American literature that, for example, if you look at much of the literature that's suggested on many courses at this university, you find very little that's [00:23:00] indicated in a language other than

**Constance:** English, We're talking about academic literature now, or do you mean primary sources

**Bob:** In fact, you could be slanting your education. to one way, which would come back to reinforcing the kind of hegemony of English.

**Darian:** You've used the word benefits and I think like about five different senses in the last two minutes. So maybe it's helpful to clarify a little bit the different kinds of benefits. Because when we started out with this definition of linguistic injustice in the first instance, we talked about there was a sort of cost benefit situation, right?

**Darian:** So there is a benefit You to speaking a lingua franca or to speaking a common language to being able to cooperate. But there are also costs that are accrued in having to do that. So there are costs in having to learn the language, having to master the language, and of course Let's say there is a kind of communicative cost as well in speaking a language that is not your mother tongue, especially when there are high stakes involved, right?

**Darian:** Even including in scientific communication, because it's difficult to have the same level of nuance etc. So on the one hand, we have that [00:24:00] discussion of cost benefit. On the other hand, I think, I can't remember, I think it was Rene who said that many students are coming to study in English language programs, either here in the Netherlands or elsewhere.

**Darian:** Actually, I think it was you that said that, Bob. because of a perceived financial benefit or perceived individual benefit for their career development, et cetera, et cetera. So we have this kind of benefit. We have this sort of discussion of cost benefit in terms of learning a new language and speaking a language that's not your mother tongue.

**Darian:** And then we have these other kind of benefits that you're talking about now, so these slightly more intangible ones. The cultural benefit of, learning. about a new culture, adapting to another way of life, even if only temporarily. And then there's a certain other kind of benefit also, it seems about, and that's the benefit that we associate with educational attainment, right?

**Darian:** So am I getting all those different types of benefits that are at play in this discussion correct?

**Bob:** Sure,

**Darian:** Okay, good.

**René:** yeah, But then the next question is, [00:25:00] whose benefits?

**René:** so it can be that for the one to make a very simple distinction between cultural and economic benefits then the benefit of the one. Is not a benefit for the other and are conflicting interests and because we have different stakeholders. And so for if we're talking about academics who are talking English they have other benefits maybe of this Englishization than those who don't speak English within academia and not to speak about the others.

**René:** Then to come back to the different kinds of benefits, to talk only about two ones is the economic benefit and the cultural benefit. It's not beneficial for Dutch culture if everything is dominate if English is the dominating language. Because a culture can only be reproduced and developed if there, at least also on an academic level the language is cultivated, L1, the Dutch language.

**René:** And so that's a cultural aspect. Economically, I said it already, [00:26:00] and we have to talk about that, that we have a neoliberal university where it's very attractive to attract all these people from abroad. There's a perverse incentive to attract all these international students.

**Darian:** What is the point of a university in our current socio economic context, and is a university primarily An institution that is a kind of engine of knowledge production, which can then be translated into various forms of benefit, to use our term benefit, and primarily economic benefit.

**Darian:** And of course that economic benefit is not distributed, let's say, equitably, right? So economic benefit that is generated through the production of knowledge tends to benefit most the elite class we might say, or does a university have a broader, let's say, sociocultural function as well? And that's much more difficult, I think, to define.

**Darian:** Also, because of the exact reason that you just gave, universities are by definition elite, right? And so they are catering, they're educating historically, at least, a sort [00:27:00] of middle and upper class tranche of the, of society young people. But I think this question about language and about language policy also brings us very quickly into this question, right?

**Darian:** What is a university actually for? And if it is indeed the case that what the university should be for, is to generate as much knowledge as possible, to translate that economic benefit, to translate it into And because that economic benefit then translates social benefit, that's the argument.

**Darian:** If the point of the university is to generate as many, top level publications as possible, to generate as many successful research grants as possible, then I think it makes sense that the majority of work, or the vast majority, or even all the majority of work in a should be done in what is, without question, the lingua franca of science which at the moment, is English.

**Darian:** It was previously other languages, and in the current period that we're living through, it's English. I think that probably, I'll put words into your mouths for a moment, and you can tell me whether I'm wrong, you're going to argue actually there's been a transition [00:28:00] the role of the university in the 20th century, especially in the late 20th century.

**Darian:** And the role of the university has changed, so it's neither simply to train the elite of a society, it's not even any more to simply to be the training ground for the managerial class of a society, which is the transition that happened, let's say, sometime in the 19th century with industrialization.

**Darian:** And nor is it just this sort of engine of science, the university is something beyond that has a greater cultural significance and has a link then to, A cultural sphere. And in a way, the discussion that we're having is what is that cultural sphere that it has a link to? Is it a national sphere?

**Darian:** Is it a linguistic sphere? Or do we think on broader terms

**Constance:** and for in our case is it a regional sphere?

**Bob:** I think there's an issue coming in that universities have got big and very often they're situated in cities or regions that They suddenly find the university may be the biggest [00:29:00] employer of, or the biggest organization in the local region. That has a huge impact.

**Bob:** If you then continue with a kind role to train students and staff in the top level. Education and research that you've just mentioned, then you're creating a gap between, say, the 50 percent of society who don't go to university, who don't perceive the benefits, maybe they get a job not so well paid, but There's a big gap, and they find that if they want to work with the university, then they have to give up their language and use the language that the university's

**René:** .To come back, I was very glad that you raised a more fundamental question about the university. And you can link that also to what you said before, Darian: , [00:30:00] about the benefits.

**René:** Let's say in very simple words. The economic benefits and the cultural benefits. Why do we have universities? The current policy, the dominant policy, is, became more or, is the result of a transformation in the Netherlands of, and not only in the Netherlands, is that the economic benefits became more and more important than the cultural benefits of universities.

**René:** That means the basic question is, since at least 15 years in the Netherlands, very neoliberal. What is the contribution of the university to the GDP of the Netherlands and other countries the same? And that is at the expense of the cultural benefits. But I think universities , should have a cultural benefit, should contribute to the culture, and here also language plays an important role.

**René:** The culture, and let's focus on my own faculty, arts and culture, we had a tradition. At our faculty of researchers who did research on Dutch society and we had also tradition where we trained [00:31:00] students to go in the Dutch archives. Therefore, you need to speak and write and read Dutch.

**René:** But that means that some, my of my colleagues for years wrote biographies about Dutch orders, did research on Dutch cultural history, et cetera. If you are in the arts and culture faculty, nobody is doing that research seriously anymore, where we don't train students, because it's completely in Dutch, in English to learn to go into Dutch archives, et cetera.

**René:** Then you lose something. And then you sustain, and to use the word elite, because we should use the word elite, especially since last week, we had elections here, people who vote now for the right wing parties, they talk about us as elite, and they do it in a very pejorative way, so you can do it in a very neutral way, yes we are an elite in a very neutral sociological way, but the word elite has got a negative connotation, and there is a lot of [00:32:00] resentment among those, most often in the countryside, towards people like us.

**René:** And we have to understand that. We have to understand why there is such a resentment with regard also to this elitist culture that we embody. In order also to bridge the gap that there is between us and them has to put it simple between the people who voted last week for an extremist right wing political party.

**René:** And they, of course, are not willing to support, also financially, by the way, this is also a financial issue all these students from abroad, this highly English is university. We have to understand that and why there is this resentment. And it is also has a lot to do with with language.

**René:** . But to come back, I think you are completely right. We have to relate make a distinction between different interests and we have to raise the basic question, why do we need universities and universities not only. Not only have an economic benefits and [00:33:00] should also maybe contribute to that, we have to create at least we have to produce People who would benefit the Dutch economy and the economy abroad also in other countries.

**René:** But we should, we also have an, a cultural function and a cultural benefit. And we and that, and then the next question you also already raised Darian: , is the relationship between both. But I think the one goes at the expense of the order.

**Darian:** I want to just get one point in. You raise the issue of resentment and resentment against a perceived elite of which academics are generally perceived as part of that elite, both on the economic and on the cultural side. And you gave that as one of the reasons for the results of the, for the great success of a far right wing party in last week's elections in Netherlands, but I think we need should be a little bit careful at not attributing too much coherence either to the agenda and also to the resentment [00:34:00] of The voters or the far right parties themselves, because on the one hand, you have this resentment of a supposed economic and culturally elite, but on the policy side, you often have a policies that are not In any way, geared towards addressing that gap between an elite and a, larger tranche of society that feels left behind, but are in fact about cutting regulations, about making environmental conditions worse, about making things actually easier for international corporations to operate within tax free zones, et cetera, et cetera.

**Darian:** So I, I think we should be a little bit careful at not just saying, oh yes, this is a completely coherent argument that is coming from the far right, and we, we should be attentive to that. to the resentment. We should be attentive to the points that are being used, but I think we should be a little bit careful Yeah.

**René:** Yeah, agree.

**Bob:** think one of the interesting points recently is, to my knowledge, this is the first time in an election that things like internationalization and Englishization have actually played a [00:35:00] major role in policies and discussion.

**Bob:** I think previously this hasn't been the case. It may have been there in policy documents, but it's only jumped to the fore because of the debate of the last few years. I would also like

**Constance:** can I still add something to that? Because I'm a bit, I'm also, I'm, I also think we should be a bit weary of this kind of argumentation. I have the feeling that de Englishization is now offered in these kind of debates as this wundermittel that will solve all the issues of accessibility of the universities.

**Constance:** I think not addressing actually the deeper rooted concerns that we've been, that we've been talking about why universities have historically not been accessible to certain groups in society, right? Is taking the English away suddenly the solution in order to make a university more

**Darian:** There seems to be something very knee jerk about the reaction. And I think we need to be careful when we differentiate again, between sort of the, political discussion that is ongoing and a longer, say, more in depth, more robust, [00:36:00] often more academic discussion about these topics. Because, exactly, there seems to be this sentiment, okay, let's get rid of all the English programs, then we don't have to educate the Bulgarian Romanian middle classes anymore, and then there will be,

**Constance:** And then suddenly the first generation students from Limburg will all, flourish at the university. It's a bit of a false promise, I

**Bob:** Exactly. I would most certainly agree. I don't think sudden change is going to help it. It's actually, I feel it's sometimes a bit of a myth that the way Englishization, which does exist is put forward and discussed. is a sort of cloak for hiding other much more fundamental problems in which haven't been addressed.

**Bob:** And the housing issue is one that hasn't been addressed for decades and, but I'd like to come back to the issue of benefits, when, of economic benefits and cultural benefits. I think are intertwined. I [00:37:00] agree, theoretically, you should be able to disentangle them to see what has what kind of effect.

**Bob:** But I think, as an individual, you actually experience both economic benefits and cultural benefits and economic losses and cultural losses in one and the same person. And I think we mix up our identities very often, depending who we're talking to and depending how our minds switch. I could go on a long time, but I

**Constance:** In some of the publications or some of the conversations about this topic, you also repeatedly said we're not against internationalization, right?

**Constance:** That's because we have to disentangle those two also, as if they are the same. At the same time, I'm then wondering, how does internationalization, how could it look like in a just way that addresses these kinds of benefits and losses, cultural benefits, economic benefits and losses that you were talking about

**René:** Now I'm talking [00:38:00] really as an academic. We very often use concepts that not fruitful. Even the word let's take the word internationalization. Is the really, is that an appropriate concept, if you take it literally, intermix between nations? If we talk about academia, we're not talking about something that is going on between two nation states.

**René:** We're talking about, to a large extent, we're talking about the creation of a transnational community. And in the academic world, we have, we, and especially when it comes to expats, we created a transnational community that is detached, had to come back to the issue we discussed before, that is to a certain extent detached from the region and from anything else.

**René:** Therefore, the argument also at This university, we contribute to the region. We should contribute as an academic, and if you want to figure out the truth about something, we should contribute [00:39:00] to the whole world community, but at the same time in a localized way. So you should contribute maybe to the region or to the city, but at the same time you want to figure out the truth about one subject that is very often transnational and not international.

**René:** And this And the most important point that Bob and I are making is That sometimes people think that internationalization and initialization are the same and and they are not the same. You can have internationalization without the use of English. You couldn't internationalize with the use of Spanish or not any other count language, which was in the past very common.

**René:** It's and that's also what we should keep in mind. And the critique by Dutch intellectuals basically and many others and also some associations. It's not a critique on internationalization, but it's a critique on the, for Engelsing, Englishization. And if the discussion here in the, at least in the academic community, they like, [00:40:00] and it is even in their interest, to cover everything in terms of internationalization, not to address the Concerns

**Constance:** I wanna now make the point that actually English language education is a form of localization. in this region, because I actually don't agree, but my students, I have many students who go into the archives, in Dutch archives, and then write about it in English in order to be able to share the knowledge, the insights that they gained from Dutch primary sources with the rest of us, me and other students, and later they might publish about it.

**Constance:** So isn't that actually a way? If you were only to write this in Dutch, you wouldn't share it with the larger international community, because let's be honest, there's not that many people out there who also speak Dutch. So isn't English language education in this context a form of localization which you actually manage to bring the local to the broader community?

**Bob:** would agree. that there are individual instances where this is happening. I had an excellent example some years ago in the law in international law, where the [00:41:00] lecturer gave his whole course in English but set individual tasks for groups of students which required them to access original documentation in languages of the courts.

**Bob:** And it worked wonderfully. I thought it was a brilliant way of handling

**Darian:** I wanna go back to the point that René made a moment ago about the, on the one hand the difference between internationalization and trans nationalization. And on the other hand, this sort of.

**Darian:** Let's say transnational academic community that emerges. So on the first point, I think I, I agree with you completely, right? So what is, what it, and I don't think this is a new phenomenon, although right, is that what emerges is, It's a not an international situation of internationalization, but a transnational group, right?

**Darian:** So that we, we are mobile as academics between countries when it's possible, right? So I feel comfortable working in pretty much any academic setting, because more or less, I would know how to navigate the institution. Of course, you have to learn [00:42:00] some locale, local stuff, and so on and so forth.

**Darian:** We talked to our colleagues from around the world. Generally, we use the lingua franca to do that. That being English, of course, if you go to some other countries, more or less right? So in France or in Germany, you're probably somewhat more likely to be in a context where people are speaking French or people are speaking German, but less and less right?

**Darian:** So we end up more and more in this transnational community where there is a scientific lingua franca that dominates. And I do think that has the kind, some of the drawbacks that Bob just mentioned as well. So we lose some of the linguistic plurality that certainly enriches culture, full stop, but also especially academic culture, and then especially academic culture in the humanities and the cultural sciences, right?

**Darian:** There, I'm with you. I think where I start to get a little bit uncomfortable is this sort of we move from that argument to this. These academics, this new transnational community are completely disconnected from the local region from the communities that they are embedded in from where they are living.

**Darian:** And I just don't see [00:43:00] that really. So that's purely anecdotal. I don't have any. I don't have any evidence for that. But everyone I know, in Maastricht, or every academic I know, actually It's maybe less so if you're living in a huge metropolitan urban area, but every academic I know is involved in some way in their local community, right?

**Darian:** They're involved in various activities, they're involved in schools, they're involved in many different ways, right? And so I'm a little bit, I'm just a little bit wary of creating this sort of stereotype of The foreign academic only speaking English, only interacting with other expats, not engaging at all with the community, not being interested in what's happening in the local culture, because I just don't see it as being the case.

**Darian:** And in the media, and so in some of the things that have been published, that we have seen also coming out of, people writing from this university, there's this kind of bogeyman. of the sort of, especially the anglophone academic who doesn't care at all about what's going on around them, has no real interest in the local culture or the regional culture or even the national culture, who's really just doing [00:44:00] their, elite scientific activity and that's it.

**Darian:** So I do worry about the sort of slippage that occurs from what I think are very legitimate arguments or very legitimate discussions about the cultural role of the university and the cultural role of the academic, and really what I think is a very important discussion about Let's say the public role of the university and the role of academics in public debate and I think Their language is an extremely important issue, and I think the inability of, let's say, academics, like myself, for example, to contribute to public debate in the country where they work is an, that is an extremely important issue, and I agree with that.

**Darian:** But I think to go from there to creating this sort of stereotypical bogeyman of the transnational liquid, academic who floats from here to there, in conference to this or that without giving a shit about their local environment, I think that's a step that is really a kind of political tool that is used.

**René:** That, that is questionable. It's also a question it's questionable in the sense [00:45:00] that you should do research on that. And the way to do research on that is network analysis. You count how often you have contact, really if you,

**Constance:** you

**René:** The experts here in Maastricht really have a contact with the people in the region.

**René:** And then there's a question also of language, whether they speak with these people. And I think language is here a barrier. And so you even mentioned fulfilling a public role as a public intellectual. You need to speak Dutch and write Dutch in order to do that. And as if you're an expert or belong to the transnational community, I think I don't know, but I think it's true that they are much more disconnected from the region or the local community than the average women average Dutch to talk about an average Dutch academic who speaks also English, et cetera, et cetera.

**Darian:** I have some trouble. I just want to push back on you for moment. You're [00:46:00] right. So this is something that I think if we really were interested, Yeah, We should do research And if we're answering it in a scientific way. But I think there is a kind of assumption here that is made right that the foreign academic, the foreign knowledge worker here in the region has less to do with the local community, the local region than the Dutch one who lives there, somewhere else, for example, in the Netherlands, who lives in Utrecht or Amsterdam, or Rotterdam, or whatever, only comes in to do their job and then goes back. I think that's probably an unfair assumption,

**Constance:** the research argument works both ways. It's not as if we have the data on saying that the expats don't interact with with the local communities, right? But yet that's the kind of argument that prevails in the..

**René:** but I think you also, the, you should, this disentangle economic and cultural benefits. But here there's also interesting economic side of the story we are not talking about the expats. Working at the university, but we're also talking about the expat working in business, et cetera, et cetera. And there there is some research done, [00:47:00] especially in Amsterdam. The people who are working at the site, us, are in the center.

**René:** Even there is, it's a huge gap, at least felt by the by a lot of people between them. Working at the Zuid-As or working in the center of Amsterdam and the others.

**Darian:** Yeah. Is this comes

**René:** we should do research on that. But I think it's an issue that should be scrutinized. And it's also felt. Even if it's not truth, then we should say to those people who have such feelings that there is a huge gap between the transnational community of expats and The ordinary people, and there is something going on in the to come back also to the elections, but this is an issue, this is a serious issue, a felt issue.

**Darian:** No problem to say this is a serious issue. No problem to say this is a felt issue.

**Bob:** But I'm, now that I've got the microphone, I would like to comment that the fact that there is very [00:48:00] little hard scientific evidence to show this is probably irrelevant to the problem.

**Bob:** In the fact that the perceptions that people hold often govern their so if they perceive that, oh, foreigners are all then, oh, foreigners are it becomes a fact. So it gets repeated and Probably, nobody actually does research And that's, I think, a danger. And that's where academy could come in and correct

**Constance:** it. But when I look at the, because in the very beginning, Rene, you also said, there is like this one and a half years ago, you felt more of an urge to also engage in a public discourse on this topic.

**Constance:** And I have the feeling that this kind of public discourse, not just you, just in general, the discourse on internationalization, feeds into this kind of perception as foreigners of foreigners. without it being based on more than a feeling of discomfort.

**René:** People have maybe wrong ideas or [00:49:00] perceptions of our world and the academic world, and that has Bob is right, has performativity but it's also the other way around. It's also the other way around, or it don't, therefore I was deliberately talking about the bubble.

**René:** I think we have also weird perception about the region, for instance and other people or even don't take notice of that. And I guess also that is an issue which you to come back to this expat issue. Yeah, if you're really traveling around, especially about the economic elite inside us, do we really read the Dutch newspaper?

**René:** Does it affect you, what is going on, et cetera, in the Netherlands? You're wealthy, you don't have You can give a shit. And if the Dutch government says you have to isolate your building, you can afford it very easily. If they take other measures, you can afford it easy. That is for a lot of people, the ordinary people, that, that feel it in different ways.

**René:** And we have to think about that. And also the consequence of even if it [00:50:00] are false perceptions, we have to take that into account. We have to do research on that. And I think here to come back to Darian: 's initial question about where Why do we need universities? Yeah, we need universities to do research to correct issues.

**Darian:** I want to go back. Sorry, I always want to go back. Yeah, I want to go back because in the very beginning you said That class issues have become excluded from our public debate, and from our political debate. And I agree with you. And then I think you proceeded to do precisely the thing that you were complaining about in the beginning, right?

**Darian:** So you gave us this situation where you described a real sense of resentment, a sense of unease between what we call you called the ordinary people. It's, we can use that term, right? Vis-a-vis some kind of economic elite, You described it in terms of something that had in an instant, and I think it was really good example, right?

**Darian:** You gave the insulation example, right? So there are those people who can simply pay to have their houses insulated without [00:51:00] worrying about it too much and those who Such a thing, if they are, if it's demanded of them, becomes a real financial burden, real financial concern, And this has absolutely to do with one of the most pressing issues of our day, which is the cost, how the costs and the benefits of, yeah, mitigation or adaptation to climate change are being dealt with.

**Darian:** This is an economic issue, this is a socio economic issue, and it needs to be discussed as such in the political way. But what happens is precisely that this gets transformed, because it's easier to talk about it in terms of a cultural issue, right? The problem is not a class problem. The problem is not an economic problem.

**Darian:** Oh, the problem has to do with these elite foreigners running around, not reading, they don't care about what's happening. They jet in, they jet out. They, yeah. They go from conference to conference talking blah, blah, blah, about concepts that have nothing to do with the ordinary people. So I, I really am concerned that instead of taking on what I think is an absolutely legitimate and important socioeconomic question, we [00:52:00] simply transpose it into the cultural realm.

**Darian:** Not to say that they're not cultural aspects of it, but to say that it's not a cultural problem. And it's not. It's really, we are dealing with a, a. crisis of the form of capitalism that we live with. And we are dealing with political efforts to, let's say, describe that crisis purely in cultural terms, whether it's about, yeah, the, foreign elite, the academics elite and the language that they are teaching in and working, or whether it's about migrant laborers at the other end of the spectrum of the labor market, right?

**Darian:** And that is, I think for me, that's a real concern. So When we talk, you said, yeah, when we talk about economic issues, we should be open and we should be honest that's what, indeed, what we're talking about. And I think the same holds, then, when we talk about the sort of broader national political issues

**René:** You're right. It's a very complex issue. And therefore, first we have to disentangle or differentiate economic social economic issues, cultural [00:53:00] or social cultural issues, et cetera. And I know, and I am aware that a lot of issues. Our phrase in cultural terms and that distracts us of addressing other issues.

**René:** To take for instance the elections that we had last week, the discussion initially was also about social security, it was about environmental issues, but at the end it turned out to become a discussion basically about migration. About migration and phrase in cultural terms, because it's a threat to our collectively shared Dutch culture.

**René:** If many migrants come with basic, sometimes a Muslim background, that's the far right wing argumentation. But nevertheless. This culture issue should be taken into account, and so we, it's our responsibility to address, Hey, you discuss only migration, but we should, we didn't discuss at all the [00:54:00] climate catastrophe.

**René:** We didn't discuss the class differences, et cetera, but we, as academics, we should take into account all these issues, but we can also focus on one issue. And then related to the other one, for instance, class or climate, even the climate issue. But even this university, most of the discussions the last couple of years, ten years, were about cultural issues and were phrased in terms of cultural identity issues.

**René:** Think about all discussion about woke feminism, et cetera. This socioeconomic issue is not at all discussed. It's even in the academic world in any issue. It's not only the far guys are phrasing terms in culture terms, but it's also a part of the academic world. Because we distract the attention from one socio economic issue and I should add also the climate issue by focusing only on the cultural issue.

**René:** I'm aware of that, but nevertheless, I'm also concerned also to address the other things because the socio economic [00:55:00] you can only address if you train people to do research on that in Dutch. I speak Dutch and even dialect, therefore I can do research on poverty in Maastricht. You don't have access to the food bank if you speak English and don't, even if you speak don't speak dialect.

**René:** And the more you only train people, especially at a faculty where we are Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, where most of the people At least the students are not trained. You can say some of my students can go into the archive, but they cannot contribute to the culture because culture is also something that should be cultivated.

**René:** And if you think that the university not only has an economic task to contribute to the GDP, but also to culture, then you have to take into account also culture and to be very self-critical as a university about the way we talk about culture and forget about the arrest.

**Constance:** So we talked about the elections, as what Darian: called the elephant in the room, I think the other [00:56:00] elephant in the room is the argument that, the framing of the problem of international, of Englishization that you've used in various publications, and that is a framing of that Englishization is a form of colonialism.

**Constance:** And I think that didn't sit well with quite many people because of also ongoing colonial injustices in the world and seeing the Dutch or the Limburg situation in the light of these kind of colonial injustices, I think it's quite painful to some people. So can you maybe explain why you would use that kind of framing in order to

**René:** accept what's out there? I guess you don't refer to publications of Bob and me, but to two other colleagues. And we'll use that. So you should be very precise. We didn't

**Constance:** You have used it also on our intranet. You have re we you have

**René:** Yes, but I want to defend them. And colonies being the it's first of all the word colonization is used is a metaphor.

**René:** And as a metaphor, it's used in two ways. If you [00:57:00] talk about language, first way is to say the that English is so dominant. And then you can refer to Abraham and many other publications. It's the legacy of the colonial past.

**Constance:** Then it's not a metaphor,

**René:** It's A metaphor, yeah, it's of course a metaphor.

**Constance:** a metaphor.

**René:** a metaphor. Yeah, what is a metaphor? Okay, let's talk about what is a metaphor. That's a really interesting subject. I really prefer to talk about metaphors. You

**Constance:** No, but if You say it's a legacy of British, or later American

**René:** yeah, but even if I say, if I use a metaphor, for instance the word to grasp is a metaphor. I understand that. Yeah but it's that metaphor, and and you revitalize maybe the a metaphor of colonialism if you say nowadays the Dutch language is colonized by the because of the Englishization. And I don't see why that is a [00:58:00] problem to use it. to link it to the second way to use it that is used by Jürgen Haumans, the famous German philosopher in theory of communicative action.

**René:** He's talking about the colonization of the life world, and he argues that the state as well as the economy colonizes, can colonize life world. One of the many Many examples he gives is communications blockade, communication barriers. Here you can use, could use the word colonization.

**René:** That's not that we use the concept, but I want to defend my two colleagues who use the concept. I don't know how, why did I use it in this way, but I would say yes, there's a colonization of the Dutch life world because of the Englishization. Because in the life world and the ordinary people, they experience that they are overwhelmed and they are annoyed by the dominance of English.

**Darian:** I think, wait a minute, hold on. Because I just have to call a little [00:59:00] bit of bullshit, I think on these, some of these arguments. 'cause I think so many things get mixed up, right? So on the one hand, I think, okay, we can talk metaphorically, and I think everyone understands what we mean when we talk about the imperialism of American culture right?

**Darian:** So with over, since since the end of the second World War, we see increasing, yeah. reach spread of American cultural production into what you would call the life worlds of, into other life worlds, right? So into life worlds of European nation states but around the world, right? But I think, on the one hand, yes, I think that's indisputable.

**Darian:** On the other hand, it gets soaked up, right? It's, let's not pretend that there is some sort of effort to resist the encroaches of American culture. And I'm not talking here necessarily about scientific culture, because then I think it's It's less a strong argument but I'm talking about American popular culture.

**Darian:** It's being soaked up, it's being consumed, and I think, yes, of course, there's always some resistance, there [01:00:00] is always some, there's always a counter narrative, a counter story, but to use this kind of metaphor of colonization in this instance, I find to be I can see how we use it as a metaphor, but I find it

**René:** I don't see why you bother about that at all? Because if you say there is resistance, by the way, we also don't use very very deliberately, not a word linguistic imperialism. So also here, imperialism is why, because the word imperialism, and you could also. If I would be you arguing against colonization, I would use the following argument that you can also mobilize against linguistic imperialists that assumes that there's one actor who very deliberately imposes on the other and assumes even that the other Cannot resist it.

**René:** Yes, they can resist and very often it's unintentionally, it's not that some white in Hollywood say let's get rid of French culture in Europe and impose our pop songs on the French culture, not at all, but there's [01:01:00] resistance and people, if they resist, they use a language. And one of the ways to to resist is to use the word colonization because it has certain connotations.

**René:** And I think correct. Some, yeah. If you give expression to that and resist to the Englishization by using the word colonization. And I've and it's over political correctness of those people who are annoyed by using that. What is the problem? I don't see the problem if colleagues use the word

**Darian:** Yeah, but And

**René:** if you use it metaphorically and to resist the Englishization that annoys a lot of people and it has a lot to do with power, et cetera.

**Darian:** We can use the term metaphorically if we want to, but I think we should be pretty careful when we compare what's happening in the Dutch context with the Dutch language or in Dutch academia to what has happened with the violent suppression of indigenous communities, indigenous languages, in other parts of the world.

**Darian:** [01:02:00] This is We're talking here about policy that Dutch have imposed upon themselves. We're talking about policies and let's say also a general set of cultural and socioeconomic practices which have arguably been economically very beneficial to the country, right? We might say, yes, it has generated inequalities as well.

**Darian:** Okay, we can make that argument. But I think it's a little bit Yeah, I agree with you that we shouldn't be overly sensitive and we shouldn't give into too much political correctness, but we should also say yeah, when we use metaphors, we're doing things with those metaphors, right? And we make sometimes direct comparisons, They are, those direct comparisons are performative in that they are supposed to be doing something politically, right? There are more Dutch speakers now, I think, than there have ever been before in the world. And that is largely due to migration into the Netherlands, and migrants learn Dutch, participate in Dutch culture, and transform Dutch culture as well as transforming [01:03:00] the Dutch language.

**Darian:** And I, so I think we can use the term colonization, I think everybody is, understands a little bit what it means to use the metaphor of, yes, colonization of Anglo American, cultural colonization, but when we start to really make these direct comparisons, when we start to really say, yeah, the Dutch language is like these other languages that have been violently suppressed and violently stamped out, and that students were not allowed to learn even at the level of primary or secondary education I think the argument devolves into a kind

**René:** is oversensitive and it's also purification of the concept of colonization. Because if in sociology, which is very common or philosophy, people talk about the colonization of the life they're not thinking about a violent way, how the state or the market colonizes the life

**Darian:** on the other hand, I think we have a purification of the concept of culture.Cultures change. Cultures interact. The influx of [01:04:00] migrants, the influx of different types of people, the progressive changes within our culture in relation to gender, in relation to sexuality etc. All of these things change the culture such that it is no longer what it was like before.

**Darian:** And this is part of the dynamism of culture. And of course we can make efforts to regulate that. We can make efforts to intervene in that in ways that we think are important. But I think we should

**René:** but then what is then the problem?

**René:** Because we, yes, we, there's a pro proliferation of hybrids going on, and we should celebrate these hybrids, but we should be at the same time, aware that those people who use the word colonization should be taken seriously because they don't. a say at all. Also, these two colleagues you're referring to wrote about that in the NSA Humbles, but they are not saying, Hey, they violently imposed the English on us. No, they are addressing that as a concern of domain loss of Dutch.

**Constance:** but with, any good metaphor, it comes with, with associated [01:05:00] commonplaces and with colonialism. These are a violent imposition. And these are also often taken away the agency of the one that is being colonized. And I think that is what you tried to say before, this kind of, the language is also being soaked up and there's agency in, Soaking it up.

**Constance:** It's not as if we're here talking about a passive group that is, that has this kind of English imposed on them. Yeah,

**René:** but then you ask, very simply you ask people, what do you exactly mean by that? Have an open discussion about that, instead of saying, whoa, this.

**Constance:** Thank you, Bob and Rene. for being here today and for talking us through the arguments of why Englishization is a form of language injustice. I think we learned quite a lot about it.

**René:** You're welcome.

**Darian:** Thank you.

**Bob:** Thank you.

**Darian**: As usual, any and all opinions or positions expressed during this podcast are solely those of the hosts or the guests, and absolutely not the official positions of Maastricht University.

**Constance**: If you have any questions or ideas for future episodes, please write us a message at wokeasscience@maastrichtuniversity.nl and follow us on Instagram: Woke As Science, to listen to previous episodes and also of course get the latest news on our new episodes.

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**Constance**: Ciao ciao.