Brexit and its avatars

New nationalisms and the multilingual challenge for Europe

Michael Kelly
Languages and the Internationalisation of Education
CEL/ELC conference, Brussels, 30 November 2017
Outline

- Brexit and its avatars
- Languages and the new nationalisms
- The multilingual challenge
Brexit and its avatars

• A personal view
  – June 2016 – a bolt from the blue
  – November 2016 – the trump of doom

• Silence of the lambs
  – May 2017 – Macron and the sweet relief

• The Disunited Kingdom
  – Leavers/Brexiters/Brexiteers (52%) versus Remainers/Remoaners (48%)
  – Avatars in US (Red/Blue)
  – Divisions on similar lines in other countries
New nationalisms

• Revival of exclusionary nationalisms
  – Against globalisation/globalism
  – Nationalist elites and laissés pour compte
  – Exacerbated identity, bubbles and rabbit holes
  – (Social) media, ideology and the dark side of the moon

• Nationalism against nations
  – Zero sum game (win-lose)
  – Limit perspectives (fear and loathing)
  – Reduce cooperation (suspicion and resentment)
Languages and the new nationalisms

- Language as field of struggle
  - Communication as weapon in information strategy
  - Linguistic identity as fortress (Shibboleth)
  - Language in culture wars
- Language as object of struggle
  - Construction/defence of national language
  - Other languages as threats/risks, question of trust
Languages after Brexit

The multilingual challenge

• Multilingualism in the national interest
  – Economic growth
  – Social inclusion
  – Personal development

• Multilingualism in the international interest
  – War and peace
  – Scientific research and innovation
  – Cultural exchange, educational cooperation
Beyond the Zero sum game

- Aspire to win-win
- Attenuate the effects of exclusionary nationalism
  - Widen horizons (openness and discovery)
  - Promote communication (dialogue and empathy)
  - Increase cooperation (working together)
Discussion

Michael Kelly
University of Southampton
M.H.Kelly@soton.ac.uk