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**Second Class Languages and the Illusion of Monolingualism in Europe.**

Dominant notions of what constitutes a 'language' and what a 'dialect' within a continuum are entirely based on socio-political factors, often totally disregarding structural, psycholinguistic, and communicative aspects.

As a consequence, the working definitions of "bilingual" and "bilingualism" often conceal a strong socio-political bias on what it means to speak more than one "language".

This paper argues that such stance leads to a "sociolinguistic paradox" that hides the true extent of multilingualism and that is ultimately detrimental to linguistic diversity.

I conclude by presenting an intelligibility-based approach that shows how the paradox can be resolved by applying insight from recent work on intelligibility rates.