UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA

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17/11/2021

Seminario 2021-2022



Título: The measurement of the value of a language

Sala: E28

Hora: 12:30

Abstract: We address the problem of assessing the value of a language. We consider a stylized model of multilingual societies in which we introduce axioms formalizing the principles of impartiality, monotonicity, invariance and consistency. We show that the combination of these axioms characterizes a family of communicative benefit functions which assign a value to each language in the society. The functions within the family involve a two-step procedure. First, they identify the groups of agents that can communicate in each language. Second, each group is assigned an aggregate (size-dependent) value, which is evenly divided among the languages in which the group can communicate. Our novel approach could be useful in a wide range of empirical applications and policy decisions.

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