



2018 FORUM
of the Conseil Européen pour les Langues / European Language Council
29-30 November 2018, Freie Universität Berlin

The Challenges of Plurilingualism for Scientific Practice

Objectives

The Forum is the result of the reflections made by the *Languages and Science Working Group* of the *Conseil Européen pour les Langues / European Language Council* (CEL/ELC). These reflections are part of the current debate on the benefits and risks for the world of research and higher education of using a single language (in this case English as a *lingua academica*) within the context of internationalisation. The Forum's objective is to discuss questions related to the challenges of plurilingualism for scientific practice, in particular those related to the creation of new knowledge. The fundamental question posed is how and under what conditions plurilingualism can be advantageous for scientific practice (for research in all its dimensions, particularly in terms of interaction within research groups as well as in the evaluation of research projects). Through the exchange of plurilingual experiences in different contexts, the Forum seeks to contribute to the development of a research project with the ultimate goal of providing scientific arguments for the creation of alternative plurilingual solutions (envisaging an equitable balance between English and other languages) and thereby contributing to knowledge quality. These issues will also be considered in terms of possible research policy measures, with a view to developing plurilingual practice on both a national and an international level.

Numerous research findings have shown the added value of plurilingualism for the world of higher education in cognitive, communicative and strategic terms, and more recent studies have focused on demonstrating its added value for research, although these benefits are evidently linked to certain conditions. Among the factors to be examined, we can highlight the different values attached to languages and, consequently, whether or not they are considered to be so-called languages of science, and the impact this status has on the construction of knowledge. However, our objective here will not be to consider individual languages as such, but rather to examine their actual use in the context of scientific practice. We will examine the contact between languages through their speakers within the context of scientific communication, and our hypothesis is that conceptual richness stems from the dynamics of exchange, comparison and transfer, whatever the intrinsic value of the languages involved. We will also examine how all languages can contribute to the construction of new knowledge in a new type of exchange with the most widespread vehicular languages, in a context of conceptual, discursive and cultural enrichment.

Forum Structure

The Forum will be organised as follows:

- a general plenary session, a language policy session, a scientific session (non-linguistic disciplines) and a scientific session (linguistics).
- a scientific round table with interventions from several disciplines (including testimonies of plurilingual scientific practice); a language policy round table (European Commission, national ministries, university officials).

Target Group

The Forum is aimed at members of the CEL/ELC, researchers interested in these topics (researchers from linguistics and other disciplines), experts in the field, national and international research institutions, university research officials, university managers, organisations or associations concerned with these issues, policy makers, those who have organised events on this topic, young researchers interested in this field.

Contact person : Anne-Claude Berthoud, Université de Lausanne (anne-claude.berthoud@unil.ch)