



2018 Forum
of the Conseil Européen pour les Langues / European Language
Council (CEL/ELC)
Freie Universität Berlin, 29-30 November 2018
The challenges of Multilingualism for Scientific Practice

Objectives

The Forum is the result of preliminary analyses and reflections undertaken by the *Languages and Science Working Group* of the *Conseil Européen pour les Langues / European Language Council (CEL/ELC)*. As such, these form part of the current debate as to the benefits and risks for the world of research and higher education of using a single, default language (in this case English as the *lingua academica*) within the context of internationalisation. The Forum's objective is to discuss questions related to the challenges of multilingualism for scientific practice, in particular approaches linked to the creation of new knowledge. The fundamental question posed is how and under what conditions multilingualism can be advantageous for scientific practice (for research in all its dimensions, from day-to-day interaction within research groups to the evaluation of research projects). Through the exchange of multilingual experiences from a range of contexts, the Forum seeks to contribute to the development of a research project with the aim of providing scientific arguments for the creation of alternative solutions that envisage a more equitable balance between English and other languages and thereby contribute to knowledge quality. These issues will also be considered in terms of possible research policy measures, with a view to developing multilingual scientific practice at both the national and international level.

Numerous research findings have shown the added value of multilingualism for the world of higher education in cognitive, communicative and strategic terms; 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 are the different and changing values attached to languages, in particular whether or not they are so-called languages of science and the impact such an ascribed or acquired status might have on the construction of knowledge. However, the objective here will not be to consider individual languages as such, but rather to examine their current use in the context of scientific practice. It will be a question of considering the contact between languages as initiated by researchers within the context of scientific communication. This would be in line with the hypothesis that conceptual richness stems from the dynamics of exchanges, comparisons and transfers of good scientific practice, whatever the intrinsic value of the languages involved may be. Hence the broader question to be addressed is how all languages can contribute to the construction of new knowledge in a new type of exchange with the most widely used vehicular languages, the ultimate goal being the conceptual, discursive and cultural enrichment of scientific discourse per se.

Target Group

The Forum is aimed at members of the CEL/ELC, researchers interested in these issues (researchers from linguistics and other disciplines), experts in the field, national and international research institutions, persons at universities responsible for research, organisations or associations concerned with these issues, policy makers, persons who have organised events linked to this topic, young researchers interested in this field.

