

The changing face of multilingualism in today's Europe



Multilingualism in the past: Key words in the milestone documents

- ◆ 1995: **THE WHITE PAPER**: **proficiency** in three community languages
- ◆ 1999: **UNESCO** proclaims an **International mother language** day.
- ◆ 2002: **Barcelona** : to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by **teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age**
- ◆ 2005: **COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION** :“*A new framework strategy for multilingualism.*” promoting a climate that is conducive to **the full expression of all languages**
- ◆ 2007-2009: appointment of a **EU COMMISSIONER FOR MULTILINGUALISM**
- ◆ 2007 : **HIGH LEVEL GROUP** report which led to ...
- ◆ 2008: **COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION**
“*Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment*” :
inclusiveness/ active citizens/ intercultural dialogue

We had a dream ...



1997



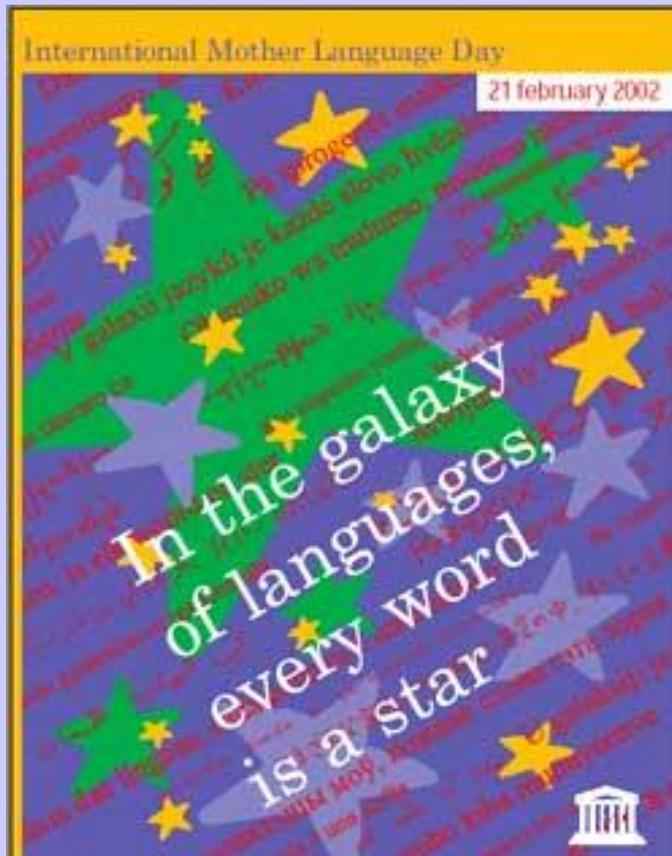
Poster for intercultural
dialogue

A. LHERETE

Assumptions behind the traditional view

- ◆ The mother tongue + two formula was/ is still ? understood by most in reference with **European community original languages** ;
- ◆ The **mother tongue** was thought of both as the “**perfect**” tongue and the **language of schooling** for most children;
- ◆ Multilingualism was regarded as key to European **integration/ inclusiveness**;
- ◆ Multilingualism was regarded as key the creation of a **European identity and citizenship**;
- ◆ **Multilingualism** was seen as an **additive process** (several neatly separately official languages learnt at different times);
- ◆ **Mobility** was considered key to the development of **multilingualism**.

Mother languages : a new growing awareness



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Mother languages matter, and yet ..

International Mother Language Day

Journée internationale de la langue maternelle

Ľańgŭāgēs **matter!**

Les langues, **ça compte!**



February 21
février 2009

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY 21 FEBRUARY 2012



Learning in a language they can understand is vital for children to enjoy their right to quality education. Mother Tongue and Multilingual Education are key to reducing discrimination, promoting inclusion and improving learning outcomes for all.

 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

www.unesco.org/education

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From the dream to the reality...

- ◆ **More and more languages** are present in Europe
 - officially 23 + 60 regional languages
 - in reality much more.



- ◆ Roughly **one quarter of all 15-year-olds** living in the Union is **practically illiterate** and among them some of them have two or even three “first” languages.
- ◆ How can institutions cope with the Rights of the Child ?

Article 30

*In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or **to use his or her own language.***

UN convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

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Today's challenges

- ◆ English being considered a basic skill, the idea of **equality between languages** is more and more challenged and **motivation to learn other languages is dropping**.
- ◆ **ICT changes the way people communicate** (new languages, new forms of writing and reading, new kinds of messages, importance of icons/emoticons replacing words and long formal sentences).
- ◆ **Mobility no longer implies immersion**. People's physical address no longer corresponds to their linguistic address. You can travel, study abroad and have virtually no contact with the language of the host country.



Reasons for concern

- ◆ The Council of Europe's **Language Policy Division has been downgraded** to Unit level.
- ◆ The financial and economic crisis is having a **negative impact on the diversity** of language courses offered both in schools and in HE.
- ◆ Language services in EU Member States are reduced; **languages are now seen as a luxury.**
- ◆ The new key words are : jobs, growth, business, competition, global environment... see paragraph :
...while language learning is important for jobs and needs particular attention
(Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcome
Strasbourg, 20.11.2012COM(2012) 669 final

The latest developments

Strasbourg, 20.11.2012
SWD(2012) 372 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Language competences for employability, mobility and growth

Accompanying the document

Communication From the Commission

Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes

{COM(2012) 669 final}
{SWD(2012) 371 final}
{SWD(2012) 373 final}
{SWD(2012) 374 final}
{SWD(2012) 375 final}
{SWD(2012) 376 final}
{SWD(2012) 377 final}

An interesting agenda but so far this document is available in English only ...

From a challenge to an opportunity

- ◆ Classic view of multilingualism : high level competences in several standard languages (= *langue officielle*).
- ◆ Practical view of multilingualism: in daily life, picking and choosing words and expressions of various languages in a personal repertoire /functional tool box depending on context and circumstances : “multilanguaging”/ hybrid languaging”.
- ◆ Advantage: creativity
- ◆ Risk : misunderstandings in schools, in the academic environment and in the work place.

See Dylan project

A cartoon illustration on a red background. On the left, a man with black hair, a mustache, and a pink shirt with a grey tie is speaking. He is holding a brown sign that says "For the Boss". On the right, a boy with blonde hair, a green shirt, and brown pants is listening. A large white speech bubble is above the man, and a smaller white thought bubble is above the boy.

Everything has
to be done in
english!

J'avoue que lors des
discussions avec les américains
ou les anglais lorsqu'ils commencent
à discuter en slang je ne capte pas à
100%, j'ai réellement un "gap", un manque
de culture qui me gêne beaucoup. Je
n'arrive pas parce que je ne connais pas le
langage de tous les jours et souvent
aussi le sens de l'humour, du coup,
j'ai moins de chances de
m'imposer.

New priorities for language teachers

- ◆ An increasing number of European kids experience what we call **DIGLOSSIE in French ie: living in a two language-environment** : the home language which remains oral and is sometimes considered a minor language, and the school language which is both the powerful language and ...the language of failure.
- ◆ Teachers have to be trained how to build on the reality of **multi-semilingualisms** and how to achieve a **multilingual literacy**.
- ◆ The focus on **language teachers as communication teachers** over the last two decades has served on aspect of language teaching only ie: speaking skills and interpersonal communication, in most cases **oral productive skills for basic needs**.
- ◆ **Receptive skills (both oral and written)** are regarded as passive less interesting skills which develop “naturally”. It is harder to observe them, to measure them... yet, they are vital to encourage language autonomy and make life long learning possible.

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The traditional focus : oral productive skills mostly



European Language label



European Day of Languages

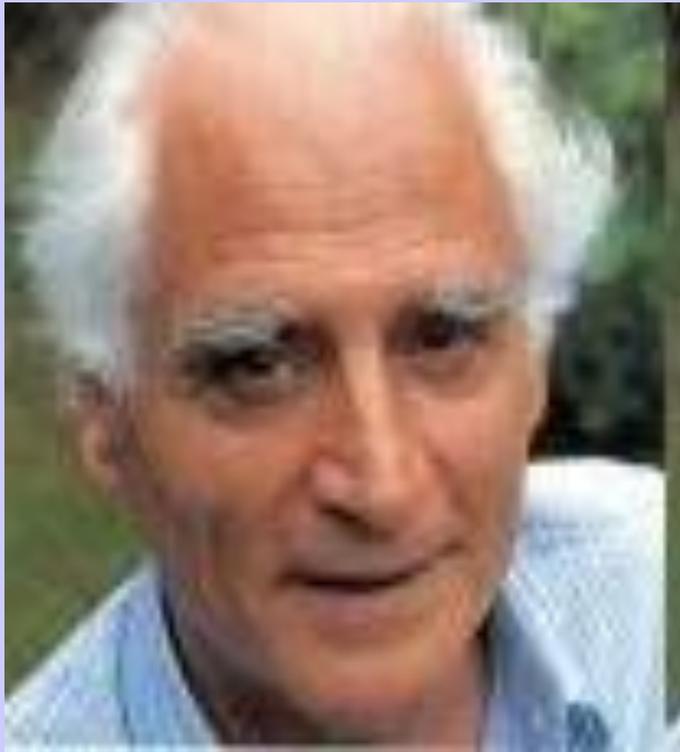


□

LINGUISTICS

EU project to protect and preserve languages, 2009

« Une langue est un iceberg »



**Michel Serres sur
Canal Académie**

Languages are more than means of oral communication

◆ « *Languages are a means of communication, but they are also an important aspect of personal, social, and cultural identity.* »

HLGM, 2007 short version of the report.

◆ Language policies must take into account **all the properties and functions** of languages :

-Means of communication / Identity markers /cultural vectors /thinking tools

◆ New challenges :Beyond **social** language acquisition, targeting **academic** language acquisition, which is essential for students to succeed in school and in university.

◆ Beyond the **BICS** level, teachers must strive to empower students with higher level capacities ie: **CALPs**.

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Mediation : a vital skill in a multilingual environment

◆ **The social role of language teachers** in multicultural classes must also be acknowledged as they are naturally **experts in mediation skills**.

◆ *In both the receptive and productive modes, **the written and/or oral activities of mediation make communication possible** between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly. Translation or interpretation, paraphrase, summary or record, provides for a third party a (re) formulation of a source text to which this third party does not have direct access. Mediating language activities –(re) processing an existing text – occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies. (CEFR p. 14)*

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Mediation : a skill to be developed from the early stages

- ◆ Mediation occupies an important place in the normal functioning of our societies because it is more and more necessary to **build bridges between coexisting cultures/languages, to fill the « gaps » which cause misunderstandings.**
- ◆ It is an **essential strategy for language teaching and learning** as it implies **both receptive and productive skills**: processing texts, paraphrasing, rephrasing, summarizing, explaining and sometimes translating for oneself or a third party.
- ◆ It is a multifaceted skill : which **includes cultural, linguistic and communication skills.**

Les objectifs de la discipline langues vivantes en France

La langue est imprégnée de culture et les savoirs linguistiques ne s'acquièrent pas hors contexte. Ils prennent leur sens dans un va-et-vient entre **nécessité de communiquer et désir de comprendre l'autre** dans toutes ses dimensions personnelles, sociales et culturelles. Ces savoir-faire de la rencontre, qui contribuent à la construction d'une compétence interculturelle, s'appuient nécessairement sur un ensemble de connaissances et de repères (littéraires, artistiques, historiques, géographiques, scientifiques...) représentatifs de la variété humaine et linguistique du ou des pays dont on apprend la langue.

La spécificité culturelle réside d'abord dans la langue elle-même, d'où l'importance à accorder à la prise en compte de la charge culturelle du lexique

PROGRAMME D'ENSEIGNEMENT DES LANGUES VIVANTES EN CLASSE DE
SECONDE GÉNÉRALE ET TECHNOLOGIQUE

Les objectifs de la discipline langues vivantes (étrangères ou régionales) , Avril 2010

***Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird,
That cannot fly.”***

— Langston Hughes

A stack of white envelopes is shown, with the top one slightly open. The envelopes feature a decorative border consisting of a light blue outer line and a yellow inner line. The words "Thank You" are printed in a black, elegant cursive font on the front of the envelopes. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly wood.

Thank You