

# LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The national linguistic situation

Switzerland has a particularly complex linguistic patchwork because, while on the whole it is a scene with four languages, the situations at Canton level are very diverse.

For example, Italian, which is both a national and an official language, is part of a quadrilingual structure at national level, of a trilingual structure in the canton of Graubünden, and of a monolingual structure in the Ticino. On top of that, there is the question of diglossia, for Italian as well as for German. It is also worth noting, concerning Italian, that it has been a widely spread language in the migrant community which is of considerable size in certain areas of the country.

Therefore, while the question of bilingualism concerns Switzerland, it does not affect all Cantons, let alone all speakers, in the same way. However, when it is mentioned, it is most often in close connection with the minority problem. Switzerland suffers from ‘language ache’, but all languages do not endure the same pains. Romansch and Italian are probably the most severely hit. French, the language of the ‘big minority’, is doing rather well at national level, even though it causes a few struggles in the mainly German-speaking Canton of Bern.

So when the federal government intervenes in language policy, it is usually in order to regulate the minority–majority relationship, to maintain ‘language peace’. This peace is threatened by two main factors, namely the attack on one particular linguistic community and the lack of understanding between the communities. Therefore, the duty of the federal State is to guarantee quadrilingualism within its borders and to promote good relationships between the linguistic communities. However, quadrilingualism has long been suffering from the weakening of Romansch, and intercommunity relationships have appeared very shaky since the vote of 6 December, 1992, on the entry of Switzerland into the European Economic Area (the vote showed an apparent division of opinion between citizens of the different linguistic communities). The first of these problems had already given rise to growing political activity and led the *Département fédéral de l’intérieur* to set up a working party mandated to consider the revision of article 116 of the Constitution (article on languages). The second problem only accelerated the process, notably through the setting up of another Committee in charge of examining the problems of understanding so as to improve communication between speakers of different languages.

In order to grasp better the results of the present Swiss language policy and assess its impact on the organisation of the educational system, it is worth quoting the substance of article 116, approved on 10 March 1996 (our translation):

<sup>1</sup> The national languages of Switzerland are German, French, Italian and Romansch.

<sup>2</sup> The Confederation and the Cantons promote understanding and exchanges between the linguistic communities.

<sup>3</sup> The Confederation supports steps taken by the Cantons of Graubünden and the Ticino to maintain and promote the Romansch and Italian languages.

<sup>4</sup> The official languages of the Confederation are German, French and Italian. Romansch is an official language for the relationships between the Confederation and Romansch citizens. The details are determined by law.

In addition to this article 116, the Swiss language policy accepts two unwritten principles recognised as constitutional, namely the principles of the territoriality of languages and of the freedom of language (see Froidevaux 1996). Both also look after language peace. The principle of the territoriality of languages protects languages in their traditional spatial distribution. A precise territory is allocated to each language, with a view to guaranteeing homogeneous monolingual zones. This should help to keep, for each language, a communication space that corresponds to a geographical space. Above all the purpose is to preserve minority languages, which could die out very quickly without a guaranteed territory. In fact, this principle ignores the essential heterogeneity of each linguistic area and re-orientates the problem of minorities. That is to say, a minority is recognised and preserved only if it constitutes a majority in a given area. So the principle of territoriality seems to be rather in contradiction with the fundamental right of the freedom of language. It shows its limitations particularly along linguistic borders, that is to say in areas which are often very heterogeneous. For example, such borders cut through Cantons, and even Communes, which as a consequence design a policy of bilingualism which then applies to the whole territory of the Canton/Commune, including homogeneous as well as heterogeneous areas.

The federal language policy therefore seems to present a paradox which consists in promoting mutual cultural and linguistic understanding while avoiding the coexistence of several languages in a given territory. Rather than a paradox, it is in fact a tension between the institutional and individual levels. On the one hand, the institutional multilingualism at national level is based on an addition of territorial monolingualisms, thus making it possible for the individual to function monolingually. On the other hand, close contacts between languages produce bilingual individuals, who seem to be a condition for the maintenance and development of this contact.

In this respect, the new article 116 in a way contributes to removing the paradox. It should, for example, promote intercultural exchanges and support the Cantons where special steps are taken concerning the study of languages at school. This dimension is even a priority, because school plays a central role in the development of the individual not only as a citizen, but also as a communicating human being. The action of school is at the crossroads between the institutional and individual levels, and bilingual education must manage this encounter.

### **1.2 Description of area specific understanding of bilingual education**

Bilingual education had already functioned and proved fruitful before the revision of article 116. However, this constitutional step gives the question of bilingualism a global coherence and spurs on the advent of practical, scientific and political opportunities for the development of bilingual education (see Brohy 1996b). This development is not without difficulty, and beyond interpersonal divisions of opinion, it reveals a considerable gap between authorities and parents. The former, for instance, in order to support the principle of territoriality and the national languages, are more likely to opt for 'late' models (that is, the introduction of the second language in secondary school) including national languages only, whereas the latter tend to give preference to 'early' or 'middle' models with the possibility of making room for English. It is true that school is an institutional territory which in a way substitutes for a geographical territory, which defines its own language policy by establishing certain relations between the

languages present. While school both escapes and reinterprets the principle of territoriality, in doing so, it reinforces the communicative constraints because it enforces linguistic pluralism right from the individual level.

The few remarks above show how much the question of bilingual education is discussed, and therefore present, in Switzerland. This question is interpreted in very diverse ways in different places, and it is dealt with by largely cantonal education policies. There is no Swiss educational system as such; instead, there are a number of educational systems, as education falls within the competence of the Cantons. Even if there are attempts towards exchange and coordination, notably through a number of intercantonal and federal bodies (see below), it must be noted that there are significant disparities between Cantons. Of course, these disparities have an impact on the design and organisation of bilingual education, which corresponds to varied needs, traditions and political wishes. Beyond the pedagogical structures chosen, the motivations for going the bilingual way can come from either a deliberate choice (which we could call ‘positive option’), or an almost natural choice for example to resolve a territoriality conflict or to preserve a minority language (we could call this choice ‘negative’ option). One of the challenges for Switzerland is to bring the positive and the negative option into dialogue so as to give all projects a positive dimension while still respecting the local sociolinguistic situation.

In this very fragmented and complex question, there are, as mentioned above, a number of intercantonal and federal bodies which try to give some common impetus to education in the different Cantons. These bodies are more or less closely related to politics, research and practice. The main ones are mentioned below:

- the *Office fédéral de la recherche et de la science* is in charge of, among other things, handling the *maturité fédérale*. After the introduction of the bilingual *maturité*, it has made recommendations with a view to setting up such a *maturité* in the different Cantons;
- the *Institut romand de recherche et de documentation pédagogiques* (IRDP) has created a group (the GREB, or *Groupe de recherche sur l’enseignement bilingue*) specialised in the questions of bilingual education;
- the *Commission romande pour l’enseignement de l’allemand* (CREA), which was mandated to explore new teaching methods and makes recommendations in favour of modular teaching and immersion;
- the *Conférence des directeurs de l’instruction publique* (CDIP) is committed to the promotion of bilingual education and has published recommendations to that purpose;
- the *Association pour la promotion de l’enseignement plurilingue en Suisse* (APEPS) was created very recently. Its mission is to make an appraisal of bilingual education, to promote bilingual education, and to give out information and advice on it;
- the *Fonds national suisse de la recherche scientifique* (FNRS) regularly finances research on the question of bilingualism and bilingual education; it is mandated by the Swiss government to set up national research projects (PNRs). PNR 21, for example, dealt with cultural plurality and national identity, while PNR 33 was devoted to the efficiency of the Swiss training systems.

In what follows, we would like, through texts from the bodies just mentioned, to sketch the general framework of the Swiss policy on bilingual education.

The elements of this policy appear mainly in the declarations and recommendations published by the CDIP, for example:

- (a) recommendations and decisions of 30 October 1975 concerning the introduction, reform and coordination of the teaching of a second national language for all children during compulsory education;
- (b) recommendations of 24 October 1985 concerning the promotion of pupil and teacher exchanges between the linguistic areas of Switzerland;

- (c) meeting points between compulsory and post-compulsory education of 30 October 1986;
- (d) declaration of 6 June 1991 entitled ‘Racism at school’;
- (e) recommendations of 24 October 1991 as to the schooling of children of foreign mother tongue;
- (f) recommendations of 18 February 1993 on the European dimension of education;
- (g) recommendations of 18 February 1993 concerning the promotion of exchanges within Switzerland and with foreign countries in education and training;
- (h) declaration of 2 March 1995 concerning the promotion of bilingual education in Switzerland.

(For the French titles of the above documents, see References.)

Already in the first document (a), the acquisition of a second language is defined as a major objective of compulsory education. Communication-based teaching is also encouraged. Document (c) helps to give a framework to the general purpose of the teaching (our translation):

The pupil

- acquires a positive attitude towards linguistic pluralism in general, and towards that of Switzerland in particular,
- prepares to understand others in their own language and to communicate with them,
- endeavours to understand the cultural aspects specific to other linguistic regions,
- shows understanding towards the genius of other linguistic communities,
- is sensitive to the aesthetic aspects of languages.

Since the early nineties, the question of bilingual education, although still mainly defined in relation to Swiss internal needs, has gained a growing international dimension, due to two factors: firstly, the importance of the construction of Europe and the opening up of the job market, and secondly the need to integrate foreigners better and to allow Swiss pupils as well to benefit from their linguistic and cultural diversity.

The CDIP has recently reiterated its support for bilingual education in document (h), from which the following is an extract (our translation):

- bilingual education should be offered in all types of school and should take into account the age of the learners and the local situation;
- certificates and diplomas including bilingual education must be allowed and encouraged, especially *maturité* certificates with the mention “bilingual education”;
- the authorities are called upon to eliminate everything which, from a legal or administrative point of view, could hinder the introduction of bilingual education and to create favourable conditions for it as regards teacher training as well as teaching and learning material.

These various elements show that, indeed, at a national level there is a will to build and to promote some kind of coherence in the project of bilingual education. However, these documents also reveal how precarious this attempt is, as its being taken into account from the legal and political points of view depends on 26 States and 26 different situations. This situation does not make it easy to get a general view of education in Switzerland. However, it has the advantage of showing the diversity of the question of bilingualism in Switzerland, and offers many different options closely linked to the context. In the present report, apart from a general framework, we cannot present more than a few salient aspects of this question.

### **1.3 Legislation and language teacher training**

Like school, teacher training falls to a large extent within the competence of the Cantons. As a consequence, it shows great variety in design and organisation. So, for example, the training for

secondary and tertiary/university levels can vary considerably in length (see Perregaux et al. 1997). Basically, there are two main training courses:

- the *Ecoles normales* prepare teachers for nursery and primary school teaching;
- the *Séminaires pédagogiques de l'enseignement secondaire* require a university degree and prepare teachers for (lower and upper) secondary level teaching.

To these must be added, among others, specific teacher training courses for teachers in professional schools. As these courses are often organised at federal level, in a way they ignore the specific situation of each school, and therefore cannot easily take into account a potential experimental and limited bilingual dimension.

However, in spite of the great diversity in teacher training in Switzerland, one of the significant assets of the bilingual education perspective has been to make it easier to obtain accreditation for teacher diplomas from one Canton in another, and, as a consequence, to promote exchanges (see 3.4). The bilingual question, obliging an opening up to others, contributes to a progressive decompartmentalisation.

It must also be pointed out that there is a relative discrepancy between initial training and in-service training. Indeed, the latter, because of its more flexible structure, is more often intercantonal and open to recent or even experimental contributions. Its openness is in fact not unrelated to the risk factor, which decreases when the training in question is optional and limited.

## **2. LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

In spite of the fragmentation of competences as regards teacher training, it is at the level of bilingual education that the greatest coherence between Cantons can be found. This is a rather disappointing coherence, however, as it consists of a virtual absence of specific and regular training for teachers in bilingual classes.

A comparison of the bibliographies of the CDIP on bilingualism and on teacher training on bilingualism clearly demonstrates this fact: 11 pages for the former, 4 references for the latter. The conclusions of evaluation reports on various limited experiments are also revealing. Many of these reports indeed end with warm recommendations as to the setting up of regular teacher training in bilingual education. For example, the 1996 report on the bilingual learning experiment in Sierre (see Bregy et al. 1996), under the heading 'perspectives', almost exclusively mentions the question of teacher training (our translation): 'In order to fulfil their task successfully, it is essential for teachers to have good initial training and continuous improvement. Some basic theoretical information on bilingualism would allow them to define achievable objectives, so that disappointment due to unrealistic expectations could be avoided. Regular meetings between teachers of bilingual classes should encourage the exchange of practical information.'

In fact, teacher training is often the last level that is affected in the long process of bilingual experimentation. Besides, it is in the Cantons with the longest experience in bilingual education that the training courses are best established (Fribourg, Valais). It is also worth noting that, while there is much experimentation going on in the classroom, much less is done in teacher training, especially in the initial stage.

To summarise, teacher training, when it is provided, usually runs parallel to the development of a specific experiment. In a way, it is improvised, or rather made to measure. Various bodies can take responsibility for it, for example the university, or institutes for research on teaching, like

the IRDP, or sometimes the *Ecole normale*. This shows that initial teacher training is rarely affected.

## **2.1. Initial teacher training**

Initial teacher training only rarely includes a bilingual element, and when it does, it tends to be more about intercultural pedagogy than about bilingual education, as those two domains are in fact part of relatively distinct traditions in Switzerland.

Under 2.1.2, we will however give an outline of the modules of training in intercultural pedagogy.

### **2.1.1. At university level**

The university does not really offer any initial training in teaching. However, there are exceptions, like the *Faculté de psychologie et des sciences de l'éducation* at the University of Geneva, which plays a very important role in the training of primary school teachers, which also includes elements of intercultural pedagogy.

As a general rule, the university is rather a place for preliminary education giving a body of theoretical knowledge, which can then be used, or not, in teaching. This theoretical knowledge seems to be twofold: languages and knowledge of the bilingual question.

Languages remain a productive domain for Arts Faculties in Switzerland. Many students choose languages in their curriculum, often directed towards teaching. In fact, the incentive is to acquire a good knowledge of the language in order to be able to teach it. Besides, several universities require their students to spend some time abroad to obtain a degree in a modern language. This more practical element surely has the advantage of increasing the students' awareness of the cultural, social and psychological aspects of language learning, as well as of the advantages and difficulties of the process of becoming bilingual. However, this increase in awareness often remains superficial, as it is not discussed within any theoretical framework nor reactivated in relation to the handling of concrete problems in Switzerland.

As far as the knowledge of the bilingual question is concerned, it can be dealt with in psychology, ethnology, sociology, economics as well as linguistics courses. But it is probably in this last domain that it is most prominent. Indeed, linguistics departments regularly set up seminars on bilingualism, immersion, intercultural matters or other related questions. Examples, only considering the Basel-Lausanne axis, include:

- *The bilingual person*: postgraduate seminar, Universities of Basel and Neuchâtel, 1994-95 (F. Grosjean, G. Lüdi, B. Py);
- *Teaching through immersion and second language acquisition*: (lower and upper) undergraduate seminar, University of Neuchâtel, 1996-97 (L. Gajo, B. Py);
- *Bilingualism in relation to sociolinguistics, language acquisition and teaching*: upper undergraduate seminar, University of Lausanne, 1996-97 (A. Schwarz);
- *Bilingualism, acquisition strategies and interaction*: upper undergraduate seminar, University of Lausanne, 1997 (A.-C. Berthoud, L. Gajo);
- *The bilingual person*: lower and upper undergraduate seminar, University of Neuchâtel, 1997 (F. Grosjean, B. Py).

The interesting thing about these seminars is that they offer real education about bilingualism, even if the link with teaching is not always discussed as such. Their growing number is heartening, too.

However, even if these seminars arouse a rather largely shared interest among students, they are not compulsory, but part of a much larger offer. So students learn above all about linguistics, sociology and pedagogy, and bilingualism is not the priority.

### **2.1.2. At non-university level**

Initial teacher training at non-university level includes mainly intercultural pedagogy, which, although close, does not overlap with the question of bilingual education.

In the report *Le quadrilinguisme en Suisse-présent et futur* ( see *Département fédéral de l'intérieur* 1989), one chapter presents an appraisal as well as wishes concerning teacher training. In this chapter, great emphasis is put on intercultural pedagogy. It is highlighted that the question has been more thoroughly reflected upon in the French-speaking part of the country. The report emphasises awareness more than concrete achievements, although it makes mention of the existence of courses in intercultural pedagogy offered in the Canton of Zürich since October 1987. The problem is that intercultural pedagogy has to do primarily with migrant children and does not directly take into account the internal pluralist situation of Switzerland: 'Intercultural pedagogy should not, however, be directed to foreign children only, but should refer to the historical multilingualism of Switzerland.' This fact reveals a tendency to consider cultural and pedagogical problems chiefly in relation to others, often defined in terms of nationality. Moreover, the report sees bilingual education as one component of intercultural pedagogy: 'The training of teachers who have to teach certain subjects in a foreign language constitutes one particular aspect of the teachers' intercultural training.' While the path looks long and difficult ('The *Ecoles normales* and universities have to fulfil a difficult task in the domain of teachers' intercultural training'), the means are presented as close and easily accessible: 'In order to achieve intercultural education and training, there is no need to create new concepts. It is enough to call upon certain fundamental values of our federalist State: tolerance towards the other language and culture, reciprocal efforts of understanding.' The point is in fact to have an effect on the teachers' attitudes and representations.

The two terms, intercultural pedagogy and bilingual education, even if they sound like synonyms to some people, refer to relatively separate research networks in Switzerland. Besides, in order to progress in the reflection on bilingual education, it would be useful to define the assumptions and implications of such terms more clearly. To meet the demands of the present report, we only partly take into account the question of labels.

In the following, we illustrate the modules in intercultural pedagogy by presenting two situations: the *Ecole normale* of Neuchâtel and the *Ecoles normales* of Zürich. To complement this for purposes of comparison, we also briefly describe the initial teacher training course in the Canton of Graubünden.

At the *Ecole normale* of Neuchâtel, there has been a training course in intercultural pedagogy for a few years. It aims at increasing awareness in order to have an effect on the representations (of others, languages, pluralism, bilingualism) of nursery and primary school teachers-to-be. The training is spread out regularly over three years rather than concentrated in intensive courses. In addition to that, there is one intensive course in the second year. It consists of two days of training and information on the question of migrants with the contribution of professional people (police, speech therapists, etc.), three one-and-a-half-hour sessions on migration (organised within the school), as well as an introduction to language awareness. This training is completed by optional work in integration classes (special transitory structures for the integration of non-francophone migrant children) or in bilingual classes. However, the extent to which this awareness is put into practice in class is not checked. Once again, the problem of the connection between teacher training and practice in class comes up again

concerning the handling of attitudes and representations. From August 1997, the *Ecole normale* of Neuchâtel will, in collaboration with the *Séminaire pédagogique de l'enseignement secondaire* and the *Séminaire de français moderne* of the University, offer training in the teaching of French as a foreign language.

As far as the *Ecoles normales* of Zürich are concerned, it is a slightly different story. In the eighties, there was growing interest in the intercultural question. After a tentative beginning, based on an opening up to foreign folklore and gastronomy through a few specific seminars, there was a growing wish to elaborate a general concept for the integration of intercultural pedagogy into teacher training (see Truniger 1995). In 1987, this concept was accepted by the school and cantonal authorities. The plan is to integrate intercultural pedagogy within existing courses like pedagogy, psychology and language teaching. Therefore, intercultural pedagogy becomes an intrinsic dimension of all general subjects, with the hypothetical power to change their approach considerably and to base them more on heterogeneity. This integration goes together with other, more traditional types of action, notably stays in foreign countries where there is significant emigration. The main benefit of these stays is that they change attitudes and representations, which, in Zürich, Neuchâtel and elsewhere, for intercultural pedagogy as well as for bilingual education, still seem to constitute the main challenge.

In the cases of Neuchâtel and Zürich, it is interesting to see how the intercultural dimension relates to problems in both first and second language teaching. For example, language awareness, which we deal with further in this paper, aims at stimulating the opening up to others through awareness of the inherent linguistic diversity of the class. However, it must be acknowledged that the relatively quick setting up of courses in intercultural pedagogy (compared to bilingual education in the strict sense) results more from a malaise among teachers about practical problems met in the classroom (difficulties due to heterogeneity and dissymmetry) than from a spontaneous desire to open up and move towards linguistic pluralism. In other words, the point is more to deal with children whose bilingualism is built through force of circumstance, than to create new bilinguals.

In order to bring a further point of view to the problem, we think it is useful to briefly present the situation of the *Ecole normale* of the Canton of Graubünden. This Canton with three languages, two of which are very much minority languages, is trying to bring pluralism into the institutions, which are too often monopolised by the majority language, German. So the *Ecole normale* of Chur has a section devoted to the Italian and Romansch languages (see Lia Rumantscha 1996). For example, it offers four hours a week of Romansch as well as two or several subjects in that language. Non-Romansch speakers also have the opportunity to learn the language. The point here is primarily to give minority speakers the opportunity to get trained in their language in order to be then able to teach in their language. But the purpose is also to bring German speakers towards minority languages, to make them aware of these languages. The solution in this case has been to define the training institution itself as pluralist. It is more, however, a bilingual dimension than an intercultural one, as only national languages are concerned. In the Graubünden situation, although contacts and language and cultural exchanges are not explicitly discussed, teachers-to-be are invited to reflect on the question and experience it through direct contact.

## **2.2. In-service teacher training (INSET)**

In-service training cannot in fact count on a firm basis in terms of bilingual education. However, it can, for example, count on competence in the target language and knowledge of social strategies in the classroom.

It is in in-service training that novelties and experimentation are most welcomed. Its organisation is lighter, more flexible and dynamic, which permits a greater adaptability to the follow-up and training requirements of bilingual education. Its structures in particular make it possible for researchers to take part directly in the training, which reduces the delay between research results and their being put into practice. That is why the bilingual question appears more and more often, and as a priority, in in-service training courses. That is also why it is difficult to get a general view of the question, because these training courses tend to be organised in a limited way by various institutions. Often, they are even directly linked to the organisation of action-research and are set up somewhat informally. In what follows, we nevertheless try to describe some of their elements.

### **2.2.1. At university level**

Universities play a role in in-service teacher training in at least two ways: either directly, by opening their seminars and conferences to teachers, be it informally or formally (through the publication of their list of courses handed out to teachers), or indirectly, at the request of recognised institutions offering in-service training, or training in general. In this section, we will deal only with actions organised directly by the university.

These actions are numerous, but often limited and optional. They can be linked either to the regular courses offered, or to one particular research project.

In the first case, the university shows a deliberate intention to open its doors and have a dialogue with practitioners. A real exchange is sought, in which researchers and teachers stimulate each other to find suitable answers and strategies. University professors can even, on specific occasions, take on researchers attached to institutions for pedagogical research who guarantee a continuous connection between research and practice. This is the case for certain seminars in the *Centre de linguistique appliquée* of the University of Neuchâtel, which are organised with the support of the IRDP. Universities sometimes have their own in-service training courses, as in Basel, where training courses in bilingual education are regularly organised. As an example, the advance programme for 1998 already contains a three-semester course on the subject.

In the second case, where the university takes part in in-service training through one particular research project, actions are more numerous, more specific, and are inherent issues in the research. By way of illustration, we will mention here a large-scale operation carried out in the context of the national research project PNR 33, about the efficiency of the Swiss training systems.

It took the form of a forum organised by the CDIP in January on second language teaching. For four days, it provided an opportunity for researchers and practitioners from all over Switzerland to hold fruitful dialogues. Apart from the many lectures, scientific experts and practitioners met in workshops to reflect on specific themes, one of the workshops being devoted exclusively to problems connected with bilingual education.

### **2.2.2. At non-university level**

In this section, we present actions undertaken by official centres for in-service training or non-university pedagogical institutions. It is possible, however, that the university also takes part in them indirectly. Moreover, it seems relevant to distinguish general training from training closely linked to the organisation and the follow-up of specific pedagogical experiments.

As far as general training is concerned, there follows a brief outline of the offer of a few cantonal or intercantonal in-service training centres.

To start with a global view at national level, it is interesting to focus on the courses offered by the *Centre de perfectionnement suisse de Lucerne* between 1986 and 1997. It is striking that there are hardly any courses explicitly on bilingual teaching. There are of course plenty of courses on second language teaching, often applying to one particular language, but the bilingual question hardly emerges as a topic for reflection as such. If we try all the same to bring out the general direction as regards bilingual education, three years can be mentioned, namely 1987, 1991 and 1996. In 1987, there was a course-colloquium on the theme 'linguistic minorisation and interaction', in 1991 a course on 'second language and dialects' focusing mainly on the Romansch question, and in 1996 a seminar on 'second language teaching' centred on new research and options in teaching, including immersion. The movement seems to progress from a growing awareness of the relations (notably power relations) between languages and between linguistic communities to teaching proposals sensitive to linguistic pluralism, through questioning about minority languages in Switzerland.

If we now turn to courses offered by in-service training centres and teacher training institutions at cantonal level, the situation changes considerably and there are significant contrasts between the different regions. By way of illustration, we describe three cases where the offer is relatively rich, namely the Valais, Fribourg and Basel.

In the Valais, for three years there has been a course called 'teaching in two languages'. The first two years, it was led by a Swiss specialist in bilingual education, Claudine Brohy. This year it will be run by this same person together with a specialist in intercultural pedagogy, Christiane Perregaux. This shows once again the necessity of a meeting point between the two fields. This course aims, on the one hand, at sharing particular experiences in the development of a theoretical framework underlying bilingual education, and, on the other hand, at developing action-research.

Fribourg, just like the Valais, now has regular means of action in in-service training. Moreover, these two Cantons often work together. Specific actions are certainly more abundant there than elsewhere. For example, a one-day training course was organised by the IRDP in January 1995. Teachers in Sierre were able to visit a few bilingual classes in the Canton of Fribourg and share their experiences as well as teaching material. It must be emphasised that this material itself causes a number of problems which would be worth investigating in detail, because they directly influence the teachers' training and practice.

In the Canton of Basel, the ULEF (*Institut für Unterrichtsfragen und Lehrerfortbildung*) regularly organises courses in relation to bilingual education. So, if we focus on the years 1996 and 1997, the following titles can be mentioned as a rough guide: *Arbeitsgruppen "Innovation didactique" im Fremdsprachenunterricht: Neue Unterrichtsformen kennenlernen, ausprobieren, hinterfragen: Klassen- und Schüleraustausch: Wichtigste Informationen und Tips; Immersive Sequenzen im Fremdsprachenunterricht; Themenzentrierter Unterricht als Ergänzung und Bereicherung des herkömmlichen Französischunterricht.*

In addition to these initiatives undertaken for general training purposes, there are a certain number of (sometimes not very visible) pedagogical initiatives exclusively in relation to the development and follow-up of specific projects in bilingual education. One example is the recent organisation by the *Séminaire pédagogique*, in the Canton of Zürich, of a bilingual module for the teaching of history, in the context of a research project within PNR 33.

In-service training, therefore, offers a range of possibilities concerning bilingual education. However, it must be kept in mind that this type of training is often optional. Teachers enrol of

their own will, and, unfortunately, it usually means preaching to the converted. It is therefore difficult to have an effect on representations if the more recalcitrant do not put in an appearance.

### **3. NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

#### **3.1. With respect to the nature of schools**

According to an inventory published by the APEPS in May 1996, Switzerland has more than a hundred models of bilingual education, of which about two thirds are at secondary and tertiary levels. Most of these models are situated on the linguistic border between the French-speaking and the German-speaking parts (Bienne, Fribourg, Sierre). On the whole, they are more numerous on the French-speaking side, and it must be noted that their presence is particularly strong in the only trilingual Canton, the Canton of Graubünden, as well as in Basel, a city on two borders. The weaker development of bilingual education in the German-speaking part of Switzerland can certainly be explained by the following two factors: firstly, the Standard German/Swiss German diglossia can give Swiss German children the impression that they already experience immersion from their first year in primary school (see Brohy 1996a); secondly, bilingualism, in its functional as well as identity aspects, seems to be less of an urgent matter for the majority community.

It must also be pointed out that a considerable number of these models are experimental, and receive the tentative support of the authorities. Bilingualism is a challenge, and therefore a risk.

This risk was taken by private schools before public education. This fact can be explained by a more autonomous, and therefore more flexible management, as well as by greater attention given to the 'linguistic market' and the parents' wishes. The flexibility of private schools then allows greater daring, which does not automatically mean greater efficiency.

To come back to public education, we would like, by way of illustration, to give a quick description of a particularly innovative experiment, namely the opening, in 1994, of a bilingual course of study in the primary school of La Chaux-de-Fonds (Canton of Neuchâtel). Pupils are offered two hours a week voluntary 'knowledge of the environment' courses in Italian. It is therefore a situation that some people playfully describe as 'going for a dip', considering how short the exposure to the second language is. The interest of this experiment lies in its pedagogical and institutional organisation. Indeed, it is based on a collaboration between the Neuchâtel School and the Italian School in La Chaux-de-Fonds, as the teachers in the project are those teaching language courses and courses on their culture of origin to the children of Italian immigrants. Therefore, the bilingual course of study is a junction between two schools and two communities. So, for the children also attending the Italian School, the classes in 'knowledge of environment' are part of both the Neuchâtel and the Italian curriculum, so that the extra workload is reduced. Also, the courses are an opportunity for native Neuchâtel pupils to participate more closely in the immigrants' bicultural environment. Moreover, more purely from the point of view of method and acquisition, the classes create effects of contrast and therefore opportunities for interesting collaboration between pupils with very diverse backgrounds in the second language. This experiment was made possible notably thanks to the financial support of the Italian State, and to the special status of the Italian language in Switzerland. The size of the Italian community in the city of La Chaux-de-Fonds, as well as their exceptional relationship with the native local community, must also be highlighted.

The description of this situation shows that one of the objectives was to promote the language of linguistic minorities. In this respect, it resembles a recent project in Samedan in the Canton of Graubünden, where, during the first years of the trilingual course of study, all pupils,

regardless of their origins, have a few hours of courses in and/or about their first language. This type of attempts show a willingness to build additive bilingualism.

This experiment also shows how national and international issues can coincide. It also indicates the conditions for an intersection of bilingual education and intercultural pedagogy.

A great number of other fairly original models could of course be mentioned, because the diversity of situations in Switzerland is a spur to continuous experimentation. However, in the most advanced areas, a certain stability in the options chosen is about to emerge. In the Canton of Fribourg, for instance, the Communes will be offered a whole range of relatively well tried and tested models like exchanges, language awareness, content teaching in a foreign language, 50/50. Each Commune will, according to its needs and objectives, choose one particular option in a common set of methods depending on shared conditions. This is a rather original way of functioning.

### **3.2. With respect to new technologies and autonomous learning**

New technologies obviously play an important role in the development of learning and teaching in general. They often allow movement towards more autonomous care of pupils and sometimes provision of more individual supervision.

Of course, bilingual education has access to these new tools, which it can, however, use in a special way. For example, a teacher suggested taking advantage of the plurilingual competences of the class and creating an electronic plurilingual dictionary, made for and by the pupils. It is common, too, to use the possibilities offered by the Internet in order to create networks of knowledge and ideas, and to make contacts. There are opportunities for interlinguistic exchanges and trips.

### **3.3. With respect to initial and INSET training**

We would now like to focus on a recent Basel initiative in the in-service training and supervision of teachers taking part in bilingual education projects.

On the initiative of a teacher–researcher, Victor Saudan, the FALZ (*Fachstelle für Fremdsprachenunterricht*) was created in the *Institut des langues romanes* of the University of Basel. The FALZ is a centre for scientific supervision and practical help for bilingual projects in school and professional settings. Its original aspect is that it offers a permanent and flexible service intended particularly for those involved in bilingual education, in a way which constantly includes research, school, work and society. It has many functions (see Saudan 1996) (our translation):

- a) Creation and maintenance of an information network between school, university, the professional world and contexts of extra-institutional learning (leisure activities, family, holidays).
- b) Information, assistance and practical support for teachers in the planning, organisation and carrying out of innovative teaching projects.
- c) ‘On-the-job’ teacher training to meet specific needs in the context of concrete teaching projects.
- d) Setting up of a database and development of teaching material in context (‘action-research’)
- e) Assistance with, and scientific evaluation of innovative teaching projects.
- f) Organisation of training–research colloquiums of for teachers after the carrying out and scientific evaluation of projects in immersion teaching.

So, by partly filling the gaps of traditional systems, the FALZ nicely paves the way for revised teacher training in bilingualism.

It remains to be seen what will become of these traditional systems which are now bound to disappear. Indeed, teacher training (initial training in any case) will undergo sweeping changes when the *Hautes Ecoles Pédagogiques* are created. They will function intercantonally and bring together teacher training for all levels. This important change will provide an opportunity for the immediate introduction of a bilingual module right from the initial training. Reports on the subject are currently being elaborated.

### **3.4. With respect to the mobility of language teacher trainees and trainers**

One of the commonly mentioned ways of changing representations is exchange. Cited in several reports, it is abundantly recommended by the CDIP, as the following extracts from document (g) show (our translation):

It is recommended that the cantonal authorities concerned should:

1. consider exchange with other linguistic regions and with foreign countries as an element of compulsory and post-compulsory education, of the professional training of apprentices and also of both the training and professional practice of teachers at these levels and types of school;

[...]

5. encourage not only language teachers, but also teachers in other subjects, to participate in exchange projects through interdisciplinary activities linked to a project and centred on a theme.

The mobility of teachers is therefore strongly encouraged, for varying periods of time (appointment in a Canton of another linguistic region or temporary exchange). In this respect, the CDIP has, in 1990, published recommendations for the reciprocal recognition of cantonal diplomas for nursery and compulsory school teaching. However, while exchange provides an opportunity to learn ‘on-the-job’, in direct contact with a different situation, it does not in itself comprise all the issues of training and should therefore be carefully prepared for. On this point, document (g) reads (our translation): ‘Teachers who participate in bilingual education projects — be it in their own Canton or in other Cantons, for example in the context of an exchange — should be trained accordingly with respect to methodology, didactics and, certainly, language competence.

### **3.5. With respect to methodology and innovations**

Zooming back out to a general view of bilingual teaching in Switzerland, we would like to elaborate upon two aspects: pedagogical practices common to all models and new teaching methods related to bilingual education in one way or another.

As far as common pedagogical practices are concerned, it seems important to emphasise ‘tandems’ and exchanges. Both are used to complete bilingual education curriculums and sometimes even to compensate for their absence. Thus, the ‘tandem’ method is dealt with in courses in the 1997 in-service training offered to teachers in the Canton of Bern. As to exchanges, the CDIP has published recommendations, of which the following, quoted from document (g), is an insight (our translation):

Practice shows that linguistic and cultural contacts in Switzerland are more and more considered as a way of working *in the context of a pedagogy of exchange, on a clearly defined project and theme and in an interdisciplinary way*. Exchanges with other linguistic regions are inherent to language teaching. Exchange projects are therefore considered as an essential contribution to the necessary improvement of our pupils’

foreign language competence. Moreover, they give them an opportunity to be personally confronted to a cultural, socio-economic, psychological, etc. context different from their own.

Now with respect to new teaching methods indirectly related to bilingual education, it is worth mentioning language awareness, the modular approach and project pedagogy.

Language awareness consists in arousing reflection about language diversity, about the ‘non-absolute’ aspect of one’s mother tongue, and about the deep functioning of language. This awareness is achieved through the confrontation of several languages, either through specific activities organised by the teacher or through the use of the probable linguistic diversity within the class. Language awareness then corresponds to awareness of diversity and awareness of others. Certain experiments of this kind have been carried out in Switzerland. This pedagogy can be seen as assistance, support and preparation for bilingual education (see De Pietro 1995). However, whereas language awareness does not contribute directly to the building of second language communicative competence, it could be asked whether it is not to a certain extent taken for granted in bilingual education.

The modular approach has been increasingly popular in the last few years, and was recently mentioned in the *Recommandations de la CREA* (our translation): ‘The modular method is characterised by a set of open and flexible teaching materials, each module comprising a clear definition of the learning objectives as well as of the corresponding evaluation methods. Several kinds of modules must be considered, which can focus on types of competence, themes, cultural aspects, activities, learning strategies, etc. They must be flexible, interchangeable, and, for some of them, optional.’ This method allows a great flexibility in the planning of the teaching and of the activities done in class. In the case of the teaching of German in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, it has the great advantage, through a common basic set of teaching materials, of meeting the very diverse desires and needs of the Cantons at socio-political, linguistic and educational levels. Moreover, it must ‘allow the opening up of language teaching to new methods such as immersion, early learning or increase of time slots’ (see Merkt 1994) (our translation).

Project pedagogy can bring valuable openings to second language teaching. A good example is the teaching through interregional thematic projects recently developed in the Basel region (see Saudan 1996) (our translation): “In the context of the thematic project *Rendez-vous à St-Louis-expédition dans un lointain proche*, for one semester, pupils in a Basel secondary school carry out personal investigations in nearby France with the help of their French peers: interviews with people who work across the border, with politicians, with coordinators of socio-cultural activities for the young, so as to develop a more critical and diverse cross-border consciousness”. We see here how project pedagogy can lead language teaching towards bilingual teaching.

#### **4. NEW NEEDS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

In this chapter, we will not refer to specific needs which have already been mentioned, more or less explicitly, in this paper.

We will rather focus on the major gaps revealed by the macroscopic examination of the situation. We will concentrate on teacher training, but we will also elaborate on bilingual education in general.

#### **4.1. In initial language teacher training programmes**

The needs in initial training seem almost completely unfulfilled. Indeed, apart from a few exceptions which in fact have more to do with intercultural pedagogy, the offer is almost nil. Even in areas where bilingual education projects seem to abound, teacher training makes no headway.

To solve this problem, the situation should certainly be stabilised, that is to say that we should go from the experimentation stage to the regularisation stage. However, this shift requires clear decisions long-term investment.

Awareness of the real pedagogical challenge which bilingual education presents is also necessary. To teach history in French to German-speaking children does not simply involve a linguistic transposition, a change of language. It is not enough to call upon a history teacher who speaks French or a French-speaking teacher who is willing to teach across the linguistic border. Training in bilingual teaching is essential.

Such training, while being tested in the field, can be improvised no more than any other. It requires specific reflection and awareness, as well as the acquisition of complex and various tools.

This situation is certainly harmful to the future of bilingual education in general because, in order to get out of the experimental stage, we need clear results. How could such results be obtained in very short periods (experiments usually last only a few years) with pupils and teachers in a way left to use their intuition?

The point is not, for the time being, to know how the needs are distributed between university and non-university levels, all the more since the distinction is likely to disappear with the establishment of the new *Hautes Ecoles Pédagogiques*. It is more important to be aware that these needs exist and that training structures must meet them.

#### **4.2. In INSET language teacher training programmes**

In-service training offers more adequate supervision with regard to bilingual education. It often provides opportunities for synergies (for example between universities and other institutions) and makes it possible to meet present needs with a certain flexibility.

However, in-service training touches only a small part of the teaching profession and therefore cannot perform a large scale consciousness raising.

On the whole, the lack of teacher training in bilingualism presents a great vacuum, for the time being. There are still many questions to be answered, among which the endless problem of attitudes. It is necessary to obtain the teachers' willingness in order to guarantee that the programmes are successful (see Gebus 1995). And this takes time.

Another problem is the almost total absence of a 'bilingualism' rubric in the training. Often, bilingualism is touched on through other topics; for example, in a course on language teaching, a few bilingual approaches are quickly dealt with. In our opinion, the bilingual question should sometimes be the main topic and should structure research fields, instead of always being structured by them.

#### **4.7. In relation to educational policy**

The variety of situations in Switzerland clearly show the diverse paths which can lead to bilingual education. We distinguish at least two, which we have earlier called the positive and the negative options. In the first kind, bilingual education is considered as an enrichment, independently from social and political constraints, whereas in the second kind, it is seen as a convenient, perhaps even necessary solution to political and socio-cultural problems of a region. While both approaches result in support of this type of teaching, it still seems preferable to move as far as possible from negative options to positive ones, even if the former sometimes trigger the latter.

This change would certainly result in an enhancement of teacher training, and of interest in this training.

In order to achieve this change, information should circulate better, and there should be a stronger willingness to share experiences in this small and fragmented land. Advantages and drawbacks of the Swiss model in fact seem to have the same origin: cantonalisation of power.

Its advantages are that it makes it possible to meet the needs associated with specific situations satisfactorily, to adapt to the sociolinguistic profile of each area, and to deal with problems in a more adequate way. This permits the highlighting of the extremely contextual aspect of bilingual models and the difficulty of generalisation.

Its drawbacks are that the lack of national coordination slows the process of development of bilingual education. In addition, the policy which consists in acting only as the need arises prevents the importance of certain issues from emerging. In doing so, this policy deprives itself from sufficient budgetary recognition.

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-(b) recommandations du 24 octobre 1985 concernant l'encouragement de l'échange d'élèves et d'enseignants entre les régions de Suisse;

-(c) points de rencontre à la charnière des scolarités obligatoire et postobligatoire du 30 octobre 1986;

-(d) déclaration du 6 juin 1991 intitulée "Le racisme à l'école";

-(e) recommandations du 24 octobre 1991 relatives à la scolarisation des enfants de langue étrangère;

-(f) recommandations du 18 février 1993 sur la dimension européenne de l'éducation;

-(g) recommandations du 18 février 1993 concernant l'encouragement de l'échange en Suisse et avec l'étranger dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation;

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