LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE REPERTOIRES: PLURILINGUALISM AS A WAY OF LIFE IN EUROPE

Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe: from linguistic diversity to plurilingual education

Reference study

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Preface

This text, part of a series published by the *Language Policy Division*, is clearly significant in its own right because it deals with certain influential factors in the organisation and sociolinguistic foundations of language teaching and in the linguistic ideologies at work in problems related to the languages of Europe. It is however part of a larger project since it is one element of a collection of publications focused on the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education*.

This *Guide* is both a descriptive and programmatic document whose purpose is to demonstrate the complexity of the questions involved in language teaching, often dealt with in a simplistic manner. It aims to describe the processes and conceptual tools needed for the analysis of educational contexts with respect to languages and for the organisation of language learning and teaching according to the principles of the Council of Europe.

The *Main version* of this Guide deals with a number of complex questions, albeit in a limited framework. It seemed necessary to illustrate these questions with case studies, syntheses and studies of specific sectors of language teaching, dealing in monographic form with questions only touched upon in the *Guide*. These *Reference Studies* provide a context for the *Guide*, showing its theoretical bases, sources of further information, areas of research and the themes which underlie it.

The *Language Policy Division* demonstrates through this collection of publications its new phase of activity, which is a continuation of previous activities. The *Division* disseminated through the *Threshold Levels* of the 1970s, a language teaching methodology more focused upon communication and mobility within Europe. It then developed on the basis of a shared educational culture, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (published in its final version in 2001). This is a document which is not concerned with the nature of the contents of language teaching but rather with the form of curricula and syllabi for language teaching. The *Framework* proposes explicit referential levels for identifying degrees of language competence, and thus provides the basis for differentiated management of courses so that opportunities for the teaching of more languages in schools and in lifelong learning are created. This recognition of the intrinsic value of plurilingualism has simultaneously led to the development of an instrument which allows each learner to become aware of and to describe their language repertoire, namely the *European Language Portfolio*. Versions of this developed in member States are manifold and were at the heart of the European Year of Languages (2001).

Plurilingualism has been identified in numerous *Recommendations* of the Council of Europe as the principle and the aim of language education policies, and must be valued at the individual level as well as being accepted collectively by educational institutions. The *Guide* and the *Reference Studies* provide the link between teaching methods and educational issues on the one hand and policy on

the other, and have the function of making explicit this principle and of describing concrete measures for implementation.

The present study investigates the concept of language of identity in relation to the overall plurilingual repertoire that every speaker has at his/her command. It describes how the languages we speak can be used as features of identity in social interaction, according to the particular group. It considers whether a "language of identity" for Europe can be identified and concludes that none is available. It gives examples of cultural identity based on language alone in the case of certain "ethnic minorities" and as a factor in the granting of nationality. It argues that, in the context of the changes under way in Europe, the concept of language repertoire is central because it allows European rights alongside national rights and, above all, because it could be the basis for a new sense of belonging to Europe.

This specific aspect of the problems of language education policies in Europe gives a perspective on the general view taken in the *Guide* but nonetheless this text is a part of the fundamental project of the *Language Policy Division*: to create through reflection and exchange of experience and expertise, the consensus necessary for European societies, characterised by their differences and the transcultural currents which create 'globalised nations', not to become lost in the search for the 'perfect' language or languages valued at the expense of others. They should rather recognise the plurality of the languages of Europe and the plurilingualism, actual or potential, of all those who live in this space, as a condition for collective creativity and for development, a component of democratic citizenship through linguistic tolerance, and therefore as a fundamental value of their actions in languages and language teaching.

Jean-Claude Beacco and Michael Byram

Introduction

As is well known, the nomenclature of languages (starting with the word *language* itself) is the subject of both academic and political debate[1]. An attempt can be made to stabilise the terminology, at least as regards types of language (mother tongue, foreign, second language, etc.), as in the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*[2]. Not all of these categories can be defined objectively, however. That applies to *language of identity* (also referred to as *linguistic identity*), which is referred to in the *Guide* only as *heritage language*, a narrower term of immediate relevance only to immigrant groups. The aim of this study is to try to clarify the concept. In order to do so, it was decided to describe not the role of languages in identity formation, but how people categorise themselves (self-categorisation) or are categorised by others (hetero-categorisation) within a cultural identity by means of language characteristics.

1. Identity, identification, languages

We shall adopt a theoretical framework on cultural identities which is now widespread[3] (though that in itself does not necessarily legitimise it). It treats cultural identities not as natural phenomena or sets of innate, stable features transmissible by inheritance, but as shared self- or hetero-categorisations that social actors develop, activate or modify in the particular interactive context or historical or social circumstance, according to the specific interest that prompts them to act as a group.

These two antithetical conceptions of cultural bonding are far from being simply scientific categories: they underlie the discourse that members of human groups use to justify their affiliations and above all their actions – so much so that social anthropology often concentrates entirely on investigating these conceptions and their implications. For example, the *Human Development Report 2004*[4] distances itself from the first conception, regarding it as *communitarian* (it has sometimes been termed *identity imperialism*)[5]. The concept it favours is that of identification by selection from the range of actual possibilities on the basis of moral values regarded as having universal validity. Clearly this type of position-taking is intended not to disqualify any particular theoretical view of the nature of affiliations, but to modify them through an educational process which

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[1] For example, Akin S. (ed.) (1999), *Noms et re-noms*, Collection Dyalang, Publications de l'université de Rouen et CNRS.

[2] Council of Europe (April 2003), *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe* (first draft), p. 48 ff.

[3] For a summary of the abundant literature on the subject, see Vinsonneau G. (2002), *L'identité culturelle*, Colin, Paris.

[4] Human Development Report 2004: *Cultural liberty in today's diverse world*, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), pp. 16-20.

[5] In other words, making identification with the group an absolute prerequisite for obtaining social recognition.

increases awareness. All things being equal, the present study attempts something similar.

As regards individual identity and identification with a large community, sociology holds that individual identity is constructed on the basis of the immediate social context (family, neighbourhood, work, etc.) and that it can be experienced as multiple in that we are all aware of belonging to different readily perceptible groups. We also know, however, that personal identity may undergo another type of identification, one that exerts total attraction. With this type of identification "the individual is a member of the group, whatever the latter's mode of social and symbolic reality"[6]. Personal identity is rooted in and shaped by abstract group identifications that tend to become exclusive, such as national or ethnic identity. Identity, in this context, may be seen as "… a virtual home to which we have to refer in accounting for a number of things, without its ever having any concrete existence"[7].

The characteristic features of such encompassing identity profiles are fundamentally contextual, deriving from specific circumstances and environments, which means that they can accommodate temporary or fairly superficial adaptations: a French Basque who feels him/herself to be only marginally a member of the French national community may nonetheless "defend" the latter if it is attacked or criticised by a foreigner. Symbolic identity profiles of this kind are therefore eminently unsteady in that affirmation or rejection of a cultural identity is a matter for negotiation in discursive interactions[8]. As B. Py argues, "A distinction needs to be drawn between *availability of* and personal *commitment to* a particular social representation. Communication within a cultural community implies availability of a repertoire of social representations … but not necessarily commitment to them … A social representation may reflect conviction, or provide a handy set of guiding precepts, or simply be a benchmark or convention useful for interpreting certain expressions of opinion …"[9] But when such identifying features are committedly adopted they involve ideology, not so much in themselves as in the types of identification used, and consequently possess stability.

2. Languages, identity, Europe

We shall consider this question in a specific context, that of creating a European area. This woud appear to be a classic example of an identity-based integration process: the collective project on which it is based cannot consist, as is often

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[6] Gallissot R. et al (2000), *L'imbroglio ethnique*, Ed. Payot Lausanne, p.134.

[7] Levi-Strauss C. (1977), *L'identité*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.

[8] For examples, see Baugnet L. (2001), *Métamorphoses identitaires*, P. Lang, Bern; Pavlenko A. and Blackledge A., eds. (2004), *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.

[9] Py B. (2004), "Pour une approche linguistique des représentations sociales", in Beacco J.-C. (ed.): *Représentations métalinguistiques ordinaires et discours*, *Langages*, No.154, pp. 10 and 11.

made out, in reviving some already existing version of Europe the roots of which merely need to be exhumed[10]. Nor can the new European entity be seen as the latest historical reincarnation of a Europe that has taken various previous forms. We are dealing here with creating a new common entity by building up globalising impetus through, in particular, cultural identification based on something of a founding myth, the aim being a transnational community able to claim a significant role on the world stage and in a world economy with continent-sized players. It can therefore be postulated that, like the emergence of nations, peoples and ethnic groups, forging this European cultural identity, with groups and in this case countries coming together into a community, involves selecting from among various resources, of which languages, alongside territory and religion, are one.

However, this European entity in gestation cannot be formed on the model of nineteenth-century states[11]: it is not clear that convergence can easily be achieved on the basis of common historical values such as religious inheritance, individual morality or individualism[12] or of a shared political ideal that still seems remote from people's ordinary lives[13]. This has led to a search for something else on which to build cultural identification within a different conception of citizenship worked out, in particular, in the theories of Habermas[14] and Schnapper[15].

It is in the context of this process of identity formation, which is only just beginning, that the question of identification through languages should be examined, since languages are potential vehicles of some aspects of identification and are a main factor in both internal and external types of allegiance. Even if communication in Europe eventually took place in a single *lingua franca* it is by no means certain that this "supra-language" could thereby become a language of identification, because long-standing national and regional identities would pre-exist it.

In considering languages' role in creating European allegiances we shall therefore adopt a fairly narrow focus and look, as already stated, not at what languages identify collective allegiances but at forms of cultural identification through languages, not, that is, at the product (*through which languages will communities – in this case Europeans – identify themselves and be identified?*) but at processes (*how do communities identify themselves through languages and, in a multicultural European area, what identifications are compatible with*

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[10] For a statement of this view, see Brisson E., Brisson J.-P., Vernant J.-P. and Vidal-Naquet P. (2000), *Démocratie, citoyenneté et héritage gréco-romain*, Ed. Liris, Paris.

[11] Thiesse A.-M. (1999), La *création des identités nationales*, Seuil, Paris.

[12] Mendras H. (1997), *L'Europe des Européens*, Gallimard, Paris.

[13] Common European Union values are, however, to be found in Article 2 of the draft Constitution (human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, respect for human rights and minority rights and so on).

[14] Habermas J., *Après l'Etat-nation. Une nouvelle constellation politique*, Fayard, Paris.

[15] Schnapper D. (1994), *La Communauté des citoyens. Sur l'idée moderne de nation*, Gallimard, Paris.

affiliations based on democratic citizenship?). Two types which differ in activeness will be described and compared: identification though a language and identification through language repertoire.

3. Identification through a (single) language

Identification through a language, as a pointer to belonging to a community, is a widespread form of cultural identification. It is, however, an *artefact*, and not an unexpected one in relation to the formation of collective identities since these involve denying historical realities. Take, for example, the predominant role late-nineteenth-century historians assigned to the Gauls in the shaping of French national identity, even although that identity is of multiple origin. Using a single language as an identifying feature is to ignore or minimise the actual diversity of individual linguistic capability, and presenting linguistic identity as homogeneous is deliberately to ignore observable linguistic reality.

3.1 Heritage Languages

Language of identity has nothing to do with the individual's socio-linguistic characteristics, particularly as these may vary over a lifetime: we may discover "our" language of identity very late in life. Identification is the outcome of a categorisation process that is undertaken voluntarily or imposed, and not the result of any intrinsic characteristics of that language.

The language of identity, whether in self- or hetero-identification, is therefore usually the "mother tongue", though that term, apparently straightforward, is by no means so. In practice the first language a child acquires (assuming he/she acquires only one) is the father's as much as the mother's if the parents speak only one and it is one they share. In many cases, parents, grandparents and older brothers or sisters will have more than one language and they will not necessarily all have the same language repertoire. Clearly the "mother tongue" is readily available for identification purposes, affording transmission of identity through the most immediate form of genetic filiation.

The language of identity, in both auto- and hetero-evaluation, is often assumed to be the national language: French people will take it absolutely for granted that a Norwegian speaks Norwegian, being unaware of the existence of Sami or Norwegian Finnish or Norwegian's two varieties, *nynorsk* and *bokmål*. Similarly, a Norwegian will assume that French people speak French, not realising that they may speak Corsican, Alsatian or Berber as well. Such notions are a function of people's awareness of language diversity, which is itself linked to knowledge of the particular foreign language. It is no coincidence that in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* recognition of regional and social varieties of the language learnt is classed as a characteristic of experienced users/learners (C2: *Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly*[16]). It is generally a native-speaker ability, but native speakers too will use scientifically baseless notions in classifying speakers by region and

[16] Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Learning, Teaching, Assessment,* CUP, 2001, p. 122.

making value judgments about regional languages or dialects they do not themselves speak but may have experience of[17].

In reality, the language of identification may also, as in G. Lüdi's typology[18], result from subjective factors:

- first, second, etc. language (according to order of acquisition). For example, we may seek to identify with another community whose language we are learning (the motivation here being termed "integrative"), like one French family – a rare case, admittedly – who have created as English-speaking an environment as possible for their child ("We decided we wanted to put him straight into an American school. We want him to be American")[19];
- a language the speaker uses constantly, or only occasionally or a little: French-speakers in families from North Africa may have very limited command of Arabic but use it sporadically (code switching) and identify – and want to be identified – with it[20];
- a language predominant in social exchanges or not very well known, like Irish in Ireland for many speakers[21];
- the language of the country of origin or the language of the host country in immigrants' case: children of immigrants may identify exclusively with one or the other; they may also identify with both and build themselves a composite but coherent identity (migrant bilingualism).

In addition, at societal rather than individual level, the languages through which identity is constructed vary widely in status. The language of identity may be the national/official/school language, a widely used, officially recognised regional language, a little-spoken regional language, the language of a legally recognised or marginalised minority, an outside language imported by migrants, etc. Any language of identification may be at an intersection of these two sets of variables, and such multiple positioning affects the identity experienced, which, according to the particular case, may be stable and uneventful, under threat, open to occasional reassessment, and so on. A language of identity is a linguistic variety chosen and/or accepted in order to signal or designate membership of a community. Sociolinguistic considerations do not come into it.

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[17] See, for example, N. Niedzielski and D. Preston (2000), *Folk Linguistics*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, especially Chapter 2 (*Regionalism*), pp. 41-200.

[18] Lüdi G. (1994), "Répertoires plurilingues: le cas de la Suisse", in Truchot C. (ed.), *Le plurilinguisme européen*, Champion, Paris, pp. 151-170.

[19] Van de Sype C. (unpublished) (2002), *Alternance des langues et construction de savoirs en situation institutionnelle d'immersion préélémentaire : pratiques et représentations*, D.E.A dissertation, University of Paris 3, p. 82 (informant P9).

[20] See the programme *Transmission familiale et acquisition non didactique des langues* (2001), Délégation à la langue française et aux langues de France, Paris.

[21] Ó Riagáin P. (1997) : *Language Policy and Social Reproduction*, Clarendon Press, Oxford. Table 5.15 (p.158), Question: "Did you use Irish in conversation last week?" Reply: no replies in 1973, 9% yes in 1983 and 1993.

3.2 Some forms of identification through a single language

The ideology of language of identity accommodates many types of discourse and social analysis.

3.2.1 National-minority discourse: "language of identity" and the growing complexities of the "ethnic nation" situation

The area that has received most study is national minorities. Their varying degrees of marginalisation result in powerful identification, in which concern for the basic identity of the nation as an ethnic inheritance rather than a choice cause them to ignore the diversity of language and speaker-communities in the country or region.

A prime example is states that have "survived" dismemberment or long periods of foreign occupation as political and cultural entities (Poland and Greece, for instance). These tend to perceive themselves as monolingual[22] and insist on the ideology of national allegiance[23], with the language, along with the religion, often being considered fundamental to transmission of community. Such states are usually very reluctant to implement measures such as those set out in the Council of Europe European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The case of central and southern Europe

The single-language identification typical of former minorities that have become majorities is also found among current minorities who unite by means of simplified identification with a single language that is held to be their defining characteristic. It is not just a matter of seeing themselves as belonging to the same group by virtue of having the same language. The language, additionally, is viewed as quite distinct from all others, its distinctness symbolising the group's absolute identity. For example, Garde, in describing how, in emergence of the Bosnian community, membership of the one faith (Islam) was the key factor, writes: "[the dialect boundary] is still less relevant to distinguishing the Croats from the Serbs, Bosnians and Montenegrins who are their south-eastern neighbours. On this side, there has never been any linguistic border. All belong to the same dialect type known as 'Serbo-Croat'. What were long seen merely as variants of the supposedly one 'Serbo-Croat' language are now treated as standard languages – 'Serbian', 'Croat' and 'Bosnian'. But the choice between the various standards, whose separateness lies in symbolically important differences, is the consequence rather than the cause of the relevant identity choice"[24]. This exclusive one-language identification has led some Bosnians in Slovenia to reject "Bosnian" courses that were also open to Croats.

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[22] Historical linguistic minorities in Greek territory include Arvanite/Albanian, Pomac, Aromanian Vlachs, Turkish-speakers in Thrace, and Roma.

[23] The sociolinguistic literature often cites the 2001 prosecution of Sotiris Bletsas, found guilty of maintaining that "in Greece, five other languages are spoken in addition to Greek" (according to http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/grece.htm)

[24] Garde P. (2004), *Le discours balkanique. Des mots et des hommes*, Fayard, Paris, p. 245.

This kind of self-categorisation should not be regarded as merely defensive or as promoted by social players who feel threatened. It has become traditional on the European political scene, spreading in particular via the historical concepts of *national minority/nationality* and even *nation* (in the Balkans and central Europe, for example). This *ethnic* (as it is often called) conception of the nation, always exaggeratedly contrasted with the *civic* conception, continues to be the basis of ordinary and official categorisations which treat national community and civic community as the same and equate national community with monolingualism.

Censuses, based on self-categorisation, highlight groups considered to be specific entities and characterised by particular languages because a census employs the legal and political classification which the constitution lays down in making rights-based provision for established minorities. For example, the *Population, Household and Housing Census* conducted in 2002 by the Slovenian Institute of Statistics identified 26 communities, including, as well as Slovenes, the Italians, Hungarians and Serbs, because respondents had to classify themselves in watertight groups. Such historical minorities are tending to redefine their ethnicity and its implications because:

- the effects of military conflict and violence suffered or inflicted tend to fade with passing generations;
- the European dynamic is beginning to give a different meaning to present political boundaries and place regional disagreements and allegiances in a new perspective;
- cross-border mobility is increasing, members of communities are moving away from their historical areas and "mixed" families are being formed, especially in urban areas;
- language policies are bearing fruit in the areas which are recognised as mixed and in which the acquisition of both majority and minority languages is encouraged.

In surveys of the Slovene situation in the mixed Slovene-Hungarian parts of the Lendava region[25] fewer than half the respondents said ethnic background was of no particular importance, but mainly "Slovenes" and much less so "Hungarians". The languages spoken are an ingredient of more complex cultural identities ("crossed identities") than official, historical and political classifications assume.

Val d'Aosta

Other surveys in Val d'Aosta, an area less marked by nationality ideology, show a wide variety of "basic profiles" in relation to bi/plurilingual competence[26], the

[25] Lük A.N., Muskens G. and Lukanovič, eds. (2000), *Managing the Mix Thereafter: Comparative Research into Mixed Communities in Three Independent Successor States,* Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana, pp. 108-113.

[26] At least three languages are spoken: Franco-Provencal, French and Italian.

specific subject under investigation[27]. The profiles in the typology are expressed ontologically, in terms of the fundamental beliefs that underlie the individual's attitudes to the languages in the local area and to his/her own bi/plurilingual competence[28]. The characteristics can be summarised as follows:

Local identity

Local bi/plurilingual	Aware and proud of being so	Franco-Provencal-based, oriented towards the past, heritage argument, activist for minority languages (French and Franco-Provencal)
Local bi/plurilingual	Aware and proud of being so	French-based, as above
Local bi/plurilingual	Unaware and indifferent	Repression?

European identity

Sceptical bi/plurilingual	Internationally inclined	Forward-looking, holds foreign languages in esteem, may develop ambivalence towards French, may set great store by English

Local and European identity

Enthusiastic local bi/plurilingual	International orientation	Synthesis and balance, occasional over-idealism

Based on Cavalli et al., op. cit., p. 562

These fundamental characteristics, ascertained by exemplary investigation, bring out two components of identity: expected identification with the original community, acquiesced in to varying degrees and not monolithic, and perception of new, broader possible affiliations (European ones), although no sense of belonging to the national community (Italy) emerges. This diversity of identification in an area reputed to be linguistically and even culturally homogeneous seems attributable not to the fact of the area's plurilingualism, but to speakers' recognition of that plurilingualism, as it is not necessarily any more perceptible than other forms of plurilingualism commonly found in Europe.

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[27] Cavalli M., Coletta D., Gajo L., Matthey M. and Serra C. (2003), *Langues, bilinguisme et représentations sociales au Val d'Aoste*, Institut Régional de Recherche Educative de la Vallée d'Aoste (IRRE-VDA), Aosta.

[28] Ibid., p.561 ff.

Even in this community that accepts its own plurilingualism, however, we can see how allegiance tends to be based on some linguistic varieties being catered for and others – despite potential eligibility for support as part of the common "theoretical" plurilingual repertoire – being sidelined. This can be seen as a stage in a process of accepted diversification of allegiance according to linguistic characteristics, though the process does not come from monolingual identification or rather, in the case of Val d'Aosta, from any imagined standard form of bi/plurilingualism which is made out to be general.

3.2.2 Access to citizenship and knowledge of the national language: "linguistic identity" as a requirement for naturalisation

Arguably, the same "process of identification through a language" is at work in administrative and legal rules for conferring nationality[29] on foreign residents in many European countries: a good command of the official/national language is seen as a prerequisite as evidence of cultural integration which in turn justifies naturalisaation, the legal form of integration. Some people even go so far as to consider command of the language to be a precondition for – of all things – moral child behaviour[30].

As is to be expected, the legislation differs greatly from one country to another. The situation has become more complex with European Union enlargement, in particular with respect to labour immigration and migration between long-standing and newer EU countries. The explanation for this lies in differences between migration movements in terms of migrants' schooling, qualifications, gender and so on, as well as in national policy choices that stem from the long-term cultural climate (including the classic one of *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*).

To confine ourselves to command of the national/official language (or one of them), the legal and administrative provisions governing the language requirements for citizenship seem to be based on two radically opposite conceptions. A partial survey[31] has shown that the degree of proficiency in the language of the host country that has to be demonstrated in order to obtain nationality varies between two very marked extremes – on the one hand, level

[29] Also known as "naturalisation".

[30] A report by a French member of parliament, J. Benisti, entitled *Rapport parlementaire de la Commission prévention du Groupe d'études parlementaire sur la sécurité intérieure*, recommends, among other things, the following linguistic approach to keep children on the "straight and narrow": "Between 1 and 3 years: only the parents, and particularly the mother, should have contact with the children. If the parents are of foreign origin, they should speak French in the home to accustom the children to speaking that language only". The report is available on the MP's website: www.jabenisti.com/article.php3?id_article=202

[31] It took the form of a seminar at Sèvres (28 and 29 June 2004) organised jointly by the Department for French and Languages of France and Population and Migration Department, entitled *L'intégration linguistique des adultes migrants en Europe*. Specialists from Germany, Austria, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom took part.

A1 (or even lower)[32] and on the other, in Germany and Denmark, knowledge identifiable as A2 or even B1. In all cases, the level is required for both interaction/reception and writing skills. As will be remembered, A1, for general oral interaction, is the ability to "interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair …" and, for the same skill, B1 is the ability to "communicate with some confidence on familiar routine … matters" and to "express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar"[33].

These quantitative differences can be explained by various considerations, the main one as regards adults being to ensure that new arrivals can fit into working life. This implies that naturalisation applicants are considered worthy of a place in the national community if, in particular, they are equipped to take advantage of the training available. A nationality condition of that kind assumes that acquisition of the national language will continue after naturalisation, but cannot guarantee it even when new citizens are offered language courses. What is a perfectly understandable requirement or concern may result in confusion of three things – schooling in the country of origin, vocational skills and competence in the national language, the third being taken as an indicator of the first two.

There may be other factors involved when applicants for citizenship are required to have a high level of proficiency in the national/official language, in particular rejection of "people who are not like us" in order to preserve the national community's cultural identity. Here, linguistic integration ceases to be simply a matter of social or occupational efficiency. Rather there is an underlying conception of belonging which requires that new arrivals possess the same *linguistic skills* as natives. People will be accepted into the community if they can demonstrate that they are already culturally compatible with the host society, so that compatibility only needs checking for legal recognition to follow.

Ability to integrate ought to be created and verified essentially on the basis of the values everyone in a country subscribes to, not "national cultural criteria", which have no part in citizenship as defined in present-day Europe. Arrangements for obtaining nationality in any case often include "civic" training or information on areas of social life that are considered fundamental and that need explaining to immigrants (the duties of the citizen, employment law, family law, etc.). Of course, it is technically impossible to check whether would-be citizens' attitudes and behaviour match such known and identified values. Here again, knowledge of the national language(s) is being used metaphorically as evidence of civic suitability. Virtual linguistic indistinguishability, and minimal display of difference, from the native speaker (and morphosyntactic accuracy is less important here than communicative ability and lack of a marked "foreign" accent) is being taken as evidence of identity (in the sense of *being identical*) with members of the target community. Command of the national language is convenient direct and tangible proof of fitting in, particularly as knowledge of the language is widely equated with knowledge of the culture, as allegedly

[32] For France, it is A.1.1., ie between a hypothetical "zero" level and level A.1.

[33] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages,* p. 74.

embodied in the "words" of the language[34]. Assimilation of the language is equated with assimilation of values. This *identity ideology* crystallises round a single language since little attention is paid to any other languages immigrants may have (such as a *lingua franca*) and education arrangements for immigrant children of compulsory school age leave little space for their "mother tongue" or "heritage" language[35].

The opposite approach requires applicants for citizenship to have only moderate command of the national language (A1.1 or A1). It presupposes that foreigners' linguistic and civic integration are two different things and that the integration process lies ahead. It accepts that immigrants' language skills may objectively be inadequate for many forms of social communication and have to be developed and that immigrants must be put through linguistic training and integration. The thinking is that instead of rejecting them because they are non-speakers or poor speakers, everything possible must be done to make them competent in at least one of the host society's languages. "Successful employment integration and social integration are impossible if people are unable to acquire oral and written language skills. Social and economic pressures are not enough to bring about acquisition of minimum language skills, however. It is the responsibility of the state and the authorities to see that language training is available"[36]. However, language training need not mean brushing aside people's language history and linguistic personality by eclipsing the languages they know or having them symbolically renounce other components of their plurilingual repertoire. A distinction is drawn between citizenship and language and it is implicitly accepted that acquiring proficiency in the language of the host society is a trans-generational process and that the role of the first generation is above all to help their children acquire the new language.

3.2.3 Censuses, statistics, languages

Traces of a single-language identification model are also to be found in official pronouncements, particularly in connection with surveys of the language skills of certain groups, whether national, regional or generational. On this point, reference should be made to the *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*[37].

For example, most census forms that include questions on languages use one-language categories or focus on mother tongue, usual language (in the home, outside the home), language spoken at school or at work, etc. Very few try to ascertain all the respondent's languages: one that did was France's 1999 census,

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[34] For a discussion of this, see Beacco J.-C. (2000), *Les dimensions culturelles des enseignements de langues*, Hachette, Paris, pp. 94-100.

[35] Eurydice (2004), *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Brussels.

[36] France's Population and Migration Department and Department for French and the Languages of France (temporary version 2004, unpublished): *Un référentiel pour les premiers acquis en français, publics adultes peu francophones, scolarisés, peu ou non scolarisés*, Preface.

[37] Op. cit., pp. 55-57.

which included the question (put to only a sample of the population) *"What language(s), dialect(s) or patois did your father and mother speak to you when you were five?"* It would probably be worth refining data-gathering methods in this area. Questionnaires could have space for respondents to provide information about perceptions or usage (what terminology they use in referring to languages, for instance) or more than one answer to a question could be allowed in investigating diversity of language function (particularly with reference to varieties of affiliation).

This statistical habit is also found in other types of counting exercise, such as statistics on linguistic minorities in a particular region, the tendency being to identify such minorities by one language only, the mother tongue, which to all intents and purposes is treated as the language of identity since the statistics give no information about command of it or the purposes for which it is used. This, after all, merely reflects the single-language identification approach that predominates in the relevant societies. However, the same defect is also found in sociolinguistic studies (in their defence, any large-scale surveys depend on official data). To take one example[38], we are told that in the Autonomous Region of Friuli Veneto Giulia (north-east Italy), "although there are no official data on numbers speaking the various languages [of the region], it is estimated that Italian-speakers form the majority group, about 52% of the population. Next come speakers of Friulian, of whom there are perhaps 526,000 … Slovene-speakers … number about 56,000 … Around 43% of the population of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Veneto Giulia speak Friuli as their mother tongue and 4% Slovene; the remaining 53% speak Italian, bar a tiny minority (0,4%) of German-speakers". The data do not tell us how many Italian-speakers speak Friulian or whether Slovene-speakers also speak Italian and/or Friulian, and still less do they tell us how many people in the region also speak Albanian or Moldovan (Albania and Moldova being two sources of immigration into Italy), which would be classed as "exported" mother tongues. Nor, of course, is there any discussion of what "speak" means, a question that only extremely costly, detailed surveys could elucidate. Quantified classification of the kind quoted tends, if we are not careful, to assign people to cultural communities on a one-language basis.

In the case of school statistics, it is not really a question of identifying groups and thus cultural allegiances, particularly as schools often do not know what languages their pupils are able to use apart from the language of instruction and the languages taught in the education system. For foreign-language learning in France, it is easy to find out how many pupils have opted for English or German, less easy to find out how many combine German and English, Spanish or Latin. What is often impossible to discover is how many of those learning English or Spanish know Khmer or Serbian, which are not taught in schools. Counts are done on the basis of languages rather than of the pupils learning them. They compartmentalise the languages instead of treating them as complementary and combinable, thus involuntarily reinforcing the common idea that knowing a single international *lingua franca* is enough.

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[38] http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/europe/italiefrioul.htm

4. Identification through language repertoire

This examination of how affinity with groups that have formed around cultural characteristics is identified very much suggests that the basis is non-recognition of speakers' linguistic repertoires as affiliation-building material. That is understandable, since it is easier to adopt the mechanical approach of measuring what is unique and what shared by means of a single feature (here, a common language) than by considering several. But there is no determinism about this: both in history[39] and the present day[40] we can find examples of political entities composed of groups politically committed to them despite a wide variety of cultural, and therefore linguistic, affiliations. But this type of cultural self-categorisation was so marginalised by state-formation on the model of the nation in nineteenth-century Europe that the existence of plurilingualism often now needs demonstrating to be the rule rather than the exception.

4.1 Plurilingualism, plurilingual repertoire, identifications

The term "plurilingualism" may give rise to misunderstandings: it is in no way a synonym of polyglottism, a polyglot being a particularly expert plurilingual speaker. What the term refers to is the capacity of individuals to use more than one language in social communication whatever their command of those languages. This set of skills constitutes the complex but unique competence, in social communication, to use different languages for different purposes with different levels of command. The plurilingual competence is the practical manifestation of the capacity for language that all human beings possess genetically and that can successively be invested in several languages. The competence is more developed in some than others, according to the individual's linguistic environment and personal or social path, so that actual monolingualism in a social actor is to be regarded merely as the default form of plurilingualism.

The individual's plurilingual repertoire is therefore made up of various languages he/she has absorbed in various ways (childhood learning, teaching, independent acquisition, etc.) and in which he/she has acquired different skills (conversation, reading, listening, etc.) to different levels. The languages in the repertoire may be assigned different, perhaps specialised, functions, such as communicating within the family, socialising with neighbours, working or learning, and, as has been pointed out, provide building blocks for affiliation to groups which see themselves as having shared cultural features and their own identifying languages. Signalling group affiliation by these means also has the social function of providing a basis for hetero-identifications that give the group added solidity.

While plurilingual repertoires differ, it can be said that some groups have partially identical repertoires for historical or geopolitical reasons and at any rate that the speakers concerned form a community by selecting a symbolic language

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[39] European examples include the Roman empire (see Veyne P., "Humanitas: Romans and non-Romans" in Giardina A. (ed.), *The Romans*, 1993) and the Austro-Hungarian empire.

[40] See the Reference Studies by Neville Alexander, Stacy Churchill and Joseph Lo Bianco (Council of Europe).

from their repertoires. This in no way means that command of other languages they know is lost: they may

- hide them or self-censor their use of them;
- not identify with them because their use is imposed by the environment;
- position and negotiate their linguistic identity and group allegiance by classic means such as code-switching or code-mixing, creating neologisms or in-group language varieties[41], or learning other languages or other discursive resources.

Here we are undoubtedly in the realm of linguistic imaginings, a set of social perceptions about languages and their functions in people's linguistic repertoires that derives from a unitary and potentially exclusionary mode of group allegiance allowing no mixing.

4.2 Open-ended identification, intercultural education, European affiliations

Clearly, then, individual plurilingualism (or the ever-present possibility of its emerging) is a fact of everyday life. But awareness of the language diversity we carry within us does not automatically mean we view other people's language diversity in a positive light even in cases where our own is identical with theirs. This is the result, in particular, of building our identity on just one identifying language, becoming progressively more unaware of our own plurilingual repertoire and sometimes coming to reject linguistic diversity in other people or groups. The transition from a closed identity to a relaxed and welcoming relationship with languages that allows us the innumerable pleasures of plurilingualism requires an *educatio*, in the strict sense of the term, that develops pluricultural and plurilingual capability.

Cultural identification based on sameness of behaviour, sameness of values and a language "common" to members of the group is not the only type possible. Identity as a crossroads, made up of encounter, mixity, acceptance of influences and adaptation of them to achieve transitional but stable equilibrium, is also capable of producing cohesion, including space for cultural communities to link up and forge unity instead of being closed off from each other.

In Europe such multiple affinities should be nurtured by:

- language policies that strike the necessary balances between group plurilingual repertoires and the languages that the federal, national, regional or other authorities use for their projects – regional cross-border relations, investment in the region, in Europe, in international exchanges, etc.;
- the educational system, one of whose priorities here, in addition to education for democracy and as a prerequisite of it, should be intercultural education. Language courses are an ideal focus for this

[41] From Villon's language of the Coquillards to today's *verlan* in France.

since it is language learning that most directly gives us significant experience of other cultures, even at a distance.

The purpose of such education is to bring about and legitimise collective self-classifications in which the shared element, in language terms, is neither a unitary language nor a common repertoire but an awareness of the diversity of individual repertoires and their dynamics.

Development of potential for plurilingual competence is fundamental to Europe, but not only because, as has often been pointed out, it would enable all Europeans to be effective citizens nationally and transnationally. A *lingua franca* would do that too, after all. In Europe, open-ended cultural affiliation involves, among other things, being able to recognise the wealth of linguistic repertoires and identify collectively and affectively with that multiplicity. Linguistic civility and benevolence towards whatever or whoever is foreign to our experience is not unknown in European history and could be the basis of a type of affiliation that, rather than elevating a particular language, develops an openness to languages – an awareness of the diversity of Europeans' plurilingual repertoires and a shared but plural manifestation of identity/ies.

Conclusion

This innovative form of allegiance-building has already been described in the *Guide for the Development of Language Policies in Europe*: "In the constitutions of modern European states, national languages have been assigned the role of being one of the fundamental components of national affiliation. This is because through languages individuals identify and define forms of affiliation or membership for themselves, just as they do through religious beliefs and shared moral values. Does Europe, which in Morin's well-known words, sees itself as a *community of destiny*, need a linguistic project of this kind in order gradually to develop its new identity, in the same way as it discovered a need for an anthem and a flag? From this point of view, should language teaching play the same role as history teaching which, through a common, but not monolithic, reading of the past seeks to create the link of citizenship in the diversity of its attitudes? If such a form of affiliation seeks to be free of the exclusion of otherness and exteriority, it will be seen that it can only be based on an open conception of language education and the language skills that need to be acquired. *Europe could be identified, not by the languages spoken there, whether or not they are indigenous languages, but by adherence to principles that define a common relationship with languages*" (p. 30). It is this common relationship with languages that we defined above as encompassing all the languages in everyone's repertoires and being rooted in positive acceptance of diversity, and it would be the outcome of a plurilingual, pluricultural education.

This form of linguistic affiliation is far from being relevant to Europe alone. It would seem to be the only way of maintaining, creating or recreating the cohesion of many culturally complex political entities in which language differences lead to cultural discrimination against groups, and so to divisions that undermine social cohesion or highlight the lack of it. With regard to South

Africa, Neville Alexander writes: "A multilingual habitus[42] has to come into being so that the danger of ethnic fragmentation and widespread civil conflict based on linguistic affiliation will become unthinkable"[43]. This requirement, that Europe's implosion last century makes all the more urgent for Europeans themselves, has clear relevance everywhere else.

[42] Meaning "plurilingual", the term used throughout the present study.

[43] Alexander, Neville (2003), *Language education policy, national and sub-national identities in South Africa*, Reference Study, Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

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