

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND NEW MINORITIES IN EUROPE

*Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in
Europe: From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education*

Reference Study

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DGIV
Council of Europe, Strasbourg
2002

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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.

There are several versions of this *Guide* for different audiences, but the 'main version' 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 *Modern Languages Division*, now the *Language Policy Division*, demonstrates through this collection of publications its new phase of activity, which is also 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 are increasingly being developed in member States 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 is

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 political principle and of describing concrete measures for implementation.

This text by Ingrid Gogolin discusses the issues which are raised by the presence in Europe of minorities who are sometimes called 'migrant' and sometimes 'immigrant' but in either case include young people with a wide and complex repertoire of languages. Their plurilingualism is however not sufficiently recognised, and their potential as language learners can be stifled by the organisation of language learning dominated by concern for monolingual speakers. Yet these young people are a model for plurilingualism. Furthermore, the vitality of their languages, the strength of their presence in societies which have not yet fully recognised them, is assured, and the author makes proposals in the final section for taking advantage of the situation and ensuring that plurilingualism is encouraged.

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

Many people in Europe, laypeople as well as experts in the field of language education, believe in the equation of language and nation. Linguistic diversity means to them the diversity of national languages in Europe or the co-existence of language territories in a nation state (like Belgium or Switzerland). They might also think of national minorities within nation states (like the Welsh minority in Great Britain, the Sorbs in Germany or the German speaking minorities in Belgium and Denmark). In fact, these connotations do not describe contemporary linguistic diversity in Europe, as they exclude the large groups of immigrants, the new minorities who contribute to enormous changes in “the linguistic public spheres” of our societies. The first chapter of this contribution will illustrate contemporary linguistic diversity in Europe. In the second chapter the role of languages for the new minorities themselves will be discussed, especially focussing on the question, what living in more than one language means for children’s language acquisition and language learning. In the third chapter a model for the construction of language education policy will be presented which aims at respecting and encouraging contemporary linguistic diversity - as it is a wealth of experience: a rich source for human development, social welfare and economic growth in Europe.

Several hundred languages in Europe

Which languages, and how many of them, exist as living languages in Europe, spoken by large communities every day? This question is a long way from being answered. Unlike other areas of the world, especially Australasian or African states, European nation states consider themselves as monolingual or, at the most, bi-, tri- or quadrilingual, if their area is divided into territories with different main languages. This is the reason why hardly any reliable data on language diversity in Europe can be found in official statistics; the self-image of relatively homogenous national populations makes the question of how many and which languages are actually used in a country, unnecessary. In some statistics, next to the national languages the so-called 'lesser used' languages are taken into account: the languages of national or regional minorities, which are in fact mostly long-settled citizens of a particular nation state. They often use their language in addition to the national one. If these are included, roughly 60 or 70 languages are counted in Europe. And many people in Europe consider this a complex, complicated situation.

If we look at non-European countries, we get a different image of what 'linguistic diversity' means. India is a good example:

“With a population of approximately 1000 million people, who, together, represent four language families, i.e. India-Aryan and Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Sango-Tibetan, 1652 languages with 10 major writing systems, 18 scheduled languages and 418 listed languages, India is certainly one of the leading multilingual nations in the world today. [...] All the state

*and Union Territories of India are multilingual, despite the dominance in each of speakers of the scheduled languages. In fact, the language situation is extremely dynamic, with new languages evolving to serve as lingua franca in several areas". (Choudhry 2001: 391; see also other contributions in the volume *The Other Languages of Europe*).*

Because of the multilingual tradition in India – as in many other countries of the world – a number of methodological approaches have been established there to determine linguistic minorities on the one hand and to count languages and their speakers on the other. This is anything but an easy task, as the boundaries between languages are fluid, and hardly any objective criteria can be named to distinguish clearly between 'languages' and 'variations' – e.g. regional dialects or the variant which is spoken by members of a social class. In fact, all languages are amalgamations: compositions of means of expression, used by a group or within regions, in which the traces of other means of expression can always be found. Whether a language is considered to be a proper 'language' or a mere 'dialect' often depends more on political decisions than on linguistic criteria. This is well demonstrated by the recent 'explosions' of languages in Eastern European countries: e.g. 'Czechoslovakian' into 'Czech' and 'Slovakian', 'Serbo-Croatian' into 'Serbian' and 'Croatian'. As long as the national unity of the former country was to be emphasized, the languages were considered as 'one'. Now, that the countries are split up, the same languages are considered as 'two' – and each one has now to serve as proof of national identity and unity for 'its own' country.

In fact, the language situation as reported from India is much more like an illustration of contemporary linguistic diversity in Europe than most European portrayals are. I would like to explain this by the example of a school (see Gogolin and Neumann, 1997, for a detailed description). It is a totally normal, ordinary German school: a primary school with roughly 200 children. The school is located in the city of Hamburg and can be considered as an example for schools in urban areas in Europe today.

In this school, nearly 50% of the children have a monolingual background and a German passport; they come from families with long ancestral lines in Germany. The other half represents more than 15 nationalities with about 20 different home languages. Some of the children speak more than two languages, for instance because their parents have different language backgrounds.

For all the children in this school, plurilingualism forms an integral and important part of their daily experience. The German language plays the role of lingua franca for everybody in the school and is undoubtedly the language which is most frequently used. Nevertheless it is anything but the only language present. Alongside German, it has become commonplace for the children to use several other languages actively: some children count in Turkish during games, others give greetings or thanks in Italian, others know Portuguese tongue-twisters or Polish 'selecting rhymes', and one swears fluently in many languages. The diversity of languages and cultural experiences is an important aspect of their

daily life for all children in that school, no matter whether they themselves are mono- or plurilingual. Independent of whether or not the school pays attention to it, diversity of languages and cultural backgrounds is a common element in the socialisation of all its children. This applies not only to our case-study school or other more exceptional schools, but for all societies which include immigrants and other minorities, and that means in fact, for all European societies.

In the microcosm of our case-study school, the cultural and linguistic reality of today's European nation states is mirrored – or at least the reality of their urban areas (where a rapidly growing part of the European population lives). Important elements of the linguistic composition of European urban areas can be described by the example of our school in Hamburg. The language situation here is composed of languages with more or less legitimacy¹, higher or lower status, larger or smaller numbers of users and other aspects of difference (cf. also Extra and Görter, 2001).

As highest in the hierarchy we find German, the dominant and most legitimate language in the school. It is the most privileged and at the same time most frequently used language. German is used by everybody – more or less proficiently. It is accepted by everybody as functioning in nearly every communicative situation. And it is the main language of education and literacy.

The next language in the hierarchy is English. First, English is important as it is the home language of some children. Mostly this is due to the fact that they, or (one of) their parents, are immigrants; some are refugees from African or Australasian states, others are immigrants from Great Britain or North America. Thus, English in a wide range of varieties is a significant language in Hamburg schools. Its importance grows because English is the preferred language of pop culture which all children meet in the media every day. Moreover, English is not only an important and frequently used language, but also a legitimate one, as it is officially accepted as a language in the education system. English – strictly speaking, a further variety of it – is taught as first 'foreign language' to all children in primary schools in Hamburg from year three on, and in most cases throughout their whole school career.

Another important language is Turkish. It is the home language of the second largest group of pupils after the German-speakers. In terms of power and legitimacy, the Turkish language has an ambiguous status. Among the children themselves, Turkish has got rather high prestige; Auer and Dirim (2000) call it a 'hidden prestige'. As can be shown by research, Turkish in Germany is often used not only by members of its own community but also by people with a non-

¹ According to Bourdieu (1991), »legitimacy« refers to the most powerful status of a language. Legitimacy is, among other factors, dependent on the legal status (e.g. as national language) and on the role and function in official institutions, such as the judicial and the education system.

Turkish background. Especially in urban areas, it functions as a peer group vernacular for children and adolescents. Research in other European areas showed similar results. Some immigrant minority languages function as languages of solidarity, of group identification for young people: both for those with minority or immigrant backgrounds and for others with no such experience (see e.g. Rampton 1995; Hewitt 1990; Franchescini 1998).

All these aspects refer to informal layers of the public sphere; they contribute to the vitality of Turkish in Germany, but may not promote its legitimacy. Nevertheless, Turkish has received what could be called a semi-legitimate status in the German school system, just as other immigrant minority languages in Germany and other European school systems have. These languages are taught in many areas in the framework of so-called mother-tongue teaching for immigrants. Until now, only children with an appropriate background – in Germany this means those holding a foreign passport – can benefit from this offer. Nevertheless, Turkish and other immigrant minority languages are approaching the status of legitimacy because of their establishment as languages of education, even though for the time being with minor status.

Thus, the ambiguous status of Turkish in Germany is attributed to its importance on the one hand – it is the family language of the largest group of immigrants in Germany – and disdain on the other – it is the language of an immigrant group which is often identified as the prototype of 'foreigners' in Germany, typifying low socio-economic status, and receiving little respect. Other immigrant minority languages in European countries have similar ambiguous functions and status to Turkish in Germany: they are spoken by large, very intensely networking groups and have received elements of official recognition, for example by being taught in the public school system or in the private sector. Nonetheless, these languages are valued as less important or of low status, depending on the status of their speakers.

Besides those already mentioned, another type of languages can be found among the children in our Hamburg school. These are again immigrants' languages, but now those with the least range of power. The groups of their speakers are relatively small and often held in very low esteem. The groups in question may be minorities in their former home countries, like Kurdish people from Turkey or Iran. They may also be unwanted people, e.g. refugees or illegal immigrants. Their languages are shown the lowest respect and support. Their speakers rarely find opportunities to become literate in their home language, so they can mostly only cultivate the oral forms of the language in question. Furthermore, there is hardly any media production available in these languages, so the opportunities for communication in these languages may be rather restricted, limited mainly to direct encounters in the minority community.

Depending on where they move on in their school career, the children of schools in Hamburg as well as in all other European countries will be confronted with even more linguistic diversity. They will meet additional languages: those

considered to be foreign languages, functioning as a regular element of secondary schooling today. Approximately two thirds of the school population in Germany learn more than one foreign language during their school career. And we are fortunate that the linguistic and cultural complexity of our example comes to an end at this point, as Hamburg does not belong to the areas of strong dialect in Germany. Thus the German spoken in Hamburg is rather homogenous, with varieties fairly close to standard German which means that children do not have to face the difference between 'dialect' and 'standard' common in other situations.

Hamburg is an ordinary example for linguistic and cultural reality in Europe today. In a survey carried out in five European cities roughly 150 languages were counted as spoken by school children in Hamburg – apart from German (Büchel et al., 2001). For London, more than 350 languages were identified as significant among school children. These figures prove that the linguistic reality in Europe is of utmost complexity. All the cultural heritages, languages and varieties of the kinds mentioned, exist at the same time in the same space. There is in fact a hierarchical situation in terms of the officially legitimated languages and their value in the 'linguistic market' (again in the sense of Bourdieu, 1991), but we have to consider that in modern European societies there probably exists more than one linguistic market. Low status languages – like Turkish in Germany – are at the same time high status languages for certain groups of speakers, and very important in particular, everyday situations. There is no crossing of real borders necessary to step from one linguistic market - an average street in the city of Hamburg, where German is the language with high status and respect - into the other, a grocery shop in that same street, owned by a person with an immigrant background who sells their products predominantly to members of their own linguistic community. In that shop, the minority language may be worth more than German – which may be proved not least by the fact that members of other minorities or members of the German-speaking majority have learned to greet, express thanks and other small talk in the minority language.

These cultural heritages, languages and varieties all together, construct the cultural and linguistic part of a 'multiple public sphere' (Fraser, 1994) in Europe. Multilingualism and cultural diversity is not limited to the co-existence of different national cultures and languages, languages of certain groups or functional fields. It has to be described as a continuous process of border crossing between all these dimensions - and many more.

The vitality of immigrant minority languages

It is often believed that linguistic diversity which is based on the existence of immigrant minority languages in Europe will lessen sooner or later. This assumption is based on the expectation that immigrants adapt to their new place of residence, also in the sense that they give up their inherited languages and 'convert' to the majority language. Teachers especially often misjudge the language behaviour of immigrant minority pupils. When they observe that children speak the majority language fluently – 'You don't even recognize that

they are foreigners' – they conclude that this is a sign of successful integration, understood as the completed process of transition from minority to majority language.

There is evidence from research that the situation is in fact much more complicated and complex. The observation of linguistic development in immigrant communities shows that the language of the majority does gain in importance for them and is frequently used, but at the same time and without contradiction the inherited language does not at all lose its relevance for them. Indeed, the functions and practices of language use change in minority situations, and furthermore the minority languages are liable to changes in which the traces of the surrounding majority language can be observed. These developments are sometimes labelled as language loss. Actually, they indicate nothing but language change, a phenomenon which happens to every language constantly, but in minority situations more obviously and extensively.

Studies like the above mentioned home-language survey give quantitative evidence to the assertion of the vitality of immigrant minority languages in Europe. Specific manifestations of recent migration processes which can be found in Europe can explain these developments in qualitative terms. The most important reasons for the fact that migrants do not give up loyalty to their inherited languages even though they adapt to the majority language are attributable to the growing occurrence of 'transmigration' (cf. Pries, 1997). This term indicates that a growing number of migrants – probably the majority of them – tends to keep their migration processes open in the sense that the links to their (country of) origin are not given up. Many migrants cling to the idea of remigration without ever realizing this often unspoken dream (Byram, 1990). They build strong and durable networks within their own community, be it friends or relatives in the country of origin or in the country of immigration, or members of the community who themselves migrated to other areas of the world. The cultivation of networks within one's own community does not usually compete with the development of relationships with members of the majority or of other minorities in the immigrant country. There is no evidence for the assumption that intense networking in the minority community indicates a cutting off from the new environment or the unwillingness to integrate. It only indicates the existence and increasing importance of 'transnational social spaces' – of forms of social coherence which are border crossing, unattached to a certain area. These developments are extremely accelerated by new technical possibilities, especially in transport and media. Today, it is no longer a long, extremely adventurous and expensive enterprise to travel there and back; and you don't even need to travel in order to communicate frequently with friends and relatives abroad.

On account of such developments it is neither inconsistent nor a source of conflict if immigrant minorities keep up their inherited languages and cultural practice on the one hand, and on the other integrate into their new neighbourhood – sometimes up to a point that their ways of expression can hardly be distinguished from those of long-settled members of the majorities. On the contrary, these strategies are most appropriate to the living conditions in modern and plural societies which are all characterised by internationalisation and mobility. The languages of origin are the privileged means of communication in 'transnational social spaces', although they are liable to changes with reference to

the surrounding languages. 'Multilingual public spheres' will therefore be durable in European societies.

These observations are of utmost importance for language education and training, and this will be explained by a brief digression into language acquisition theory and research.

Irrespective of many differences in standpoint, there is a consensus about the following principle of initial language acquisition: all children – except those with certain health problems – are born with the best possible physical pre-requisites for language acquisition. However, for the acquisition process itself, it is necessary for the child to interact and communicate with people and objects around it. Language acquisition means not only the development of linguistic units in a narrow sense, but also the gaining of familiarity with all accompanying traditions of expression: facial play, gestures and body language, connotations of expressions and phrases etc. In very early childhood the closest environment – the family – is of most importance for the development of communicative abilities. The more these abilities grow, the more independent the child becomes from its close family; the wider environment opens up for additional language experience, which again contributes to the growing mobility and independence of the child.

Thus, language acquisition is a product of interaction between physical and social conditions. If children grow up monolingual, the acquisition process takes place in a more or less homogenous situation. It is likely that the child experiences a range of diversity: other dialects or social variants of the family language, variations in ways of expression, of life situations or of life-style. However, compared to children growing up bi- or plurilingual, the spectrum of difference experienced is relatively narrow. For this reason, the monolingual child can fairly easily profit from its whole environment to expand its language skills.²

On the other hand, most children of migrant families who grow up in the country of immigration do not have easy access to all the communication resources in their environment. The language in their closest surroundings differs substantially from that in the wider area. As we know from research, the inherited language dominates the communication in immigrant families in many domains. Even if the minority language is not the overall dominant communicative tool, its importance especially in the interaction with young children is very high, as it is often used especially for socialisation purposes: for the expression of warmth and security, of affection and tenderness as well as for scolding and admonition.

² We have to admit that the demarcations between a 'monolingual' and a 'bi- or plurilingual' childhood are fluid. For example, if a 'monolingual' child grows up in an area of strong dialect, its primary language acquisition process comes close to a bilingual setting; if an immigrant family refrains from using either the inherited language or the majority language in the early interaction with the child, its language development can come close to monolingualism.

Because of the differences between family language and that of the wider environment, bilingual children do not have easy access to all language resources around them when they gain independence and mobility. They have to make considerable efforts in order to conquer their wider environment for their own progress in language development.

It is often believed, and indeed was a widespread opinion in theory and research in the 19th and into the 20th century, that this condition of difficulty and effort causes negative effects on language development. This opinion is often underpinned by examples from people's own experience, like the observation that bilingual children pronounce differently from monolingual ones or produce strange grammatical forms of words or word order. In fact this opinion has long been disproved. In reality the differences in expression or understanding indicate nothing but quite different acquisition processes which inevitably result in different outcomes. It is especially relevant in our context that the language or languages which influence the very early acquisition phase function like a filter for all further language learning; they have effects on the perception as well as the production of utterances. This can easily be illustrated by the aspect of pronunciation. A new-born baby is physically able to articulate every possible human sound. Gradually this ability gets partly lost; it adapts to the concrete stock of sounds in the baby's environment. The decisive part of this development takes place in the first year. This does not mean that the ability to produce or imitate sounds from other languages gets totally lost – but it is clearly reduced.³ This is why many people never lose their 'foreign accent' when they learn a new language at an older age.

Language acquisition theory and research definitely indicate that the linguistic property of a bilingual child differs in both its languages from the one of a child which grew up monolingually in one of the languages. From research into cognitive development we gain powerful indications for the assumption that bilingualism in early childhood is most beneficial for language development as a whole and for cognitive development as well. This is attributed to the very fact that children cannot exploit their language environment effortlessly. They are permanently confronted with special challenges like the following: they must distinguish between their languages and develop criteria for the differentiation; they must identify which of their languages is appropriate with a particular person or in a particular situation; they must learn to switch codes at the right moment, to translate or interpret; and they are more often than monolinguals provoked to bridge comprehension difficulties. The abilities necessary for the solution of problems like these are called 'metalinguistic competence', a means of reception and expression which are not strictly bound to a specific language but to language as such.

³ I should add that not only linguistic factors in a narrow sense are relevant for these processes. Other aspects, especially a musical talent and environment, contribute to the 'flexibility' of the articulation possibilities of a child.

Bilingual children have to solve problems like these earlier and more intensively than monolingual ones; strictly speaking, the latter do not start to grapple with such challenges before they enter pre-school or school, thus at the beginning of explicit language education. It is argued by cognitive psychologists that the early development of metalinguistic competences means a head start for language development and cognitive growth.

Because of these circumstances, bilingual children enter the pre-school or school in principle with very promising pre-requisites, which are clearly different from the results of a monolingual childhood. The visible and audible differences do not indicate that bilingual children are behind the monolingual ones or even endangered in their development. It only means that both look back at distinctively different linguistic circumstances in early childhood.⁴ Very often, the differences from a monolingual speaker which are obvious in a bilingual child's language behaviour and practice, prompt the interpretation that the child is in danger of 'semilingualism' or even 'double-semilingualism', if both its languages are affected. The notion of semilingualism is based on the assumption that a bilingual language acquisition process leads to a language competence which could be described as 'double monolingualism'. This is in fact not the case. Instead, bilingualism as a result of growing up with two (or even more) languages leads to an integrated language competence, a composite capacity with – in most cases – unevenly distributed elements, which as a whole serve as a store for communication practice (List, 1995). Figuratively, a bilingual childhood results in bilingualism as a mother-tongue.

But there is indeed a risk for further language development of a bilingual child, which can unintentionally be caused by the principles and methods of language education at school. If bilingualism is not accepted as 'the mother-tongue', if it is ignored as a factor of further language development in the teaching of the majority language, this can result in severe problems for the expansion of competence in that language. If, on the other hand, children are not given the chance of becoming literate in their family language as well, they will not be able to develop this language perfectly. Different research projects give proof of this: bilingual children develop better, both in respect of language proficiency and in other school subjects, the more attention is paid to their specific linguistic conditions, and especially if they are taught to read and write in both their languages in a constant and coordinated manner (Greene, 1998).

Thus education systems play a decisive role in the opportunity European societies have to profit from linguistic and cultural diversity. Arrangements can be made for marginal profits for all those concerned, in that individual bi- or

⁴ For the sake of completeness I indicate that other than linguistic factors, especially the socio-economical situation and the 'cultural capital' of a family, influence noticeably the language development of a child (see e.g. Lantolf, 2000).

plurilingualism is ignored or even despised at school, or for the best possible profit, in that it is explicitly developed further by language education and thereby transformed into a rich resource for the community as a whole.⁵

Language education for the future

In fact, linguistic and cultural plurality within a society is in practice ambivalent. On the one hand, it creates objective as well as subjective complications for communication and day-to-day life. On the other, it is the ultimate proof of human creativity, ability and potential, a source of joy and beauty – and it is inevitable.

A European language policy addressing education and literacy will have to set up and implement strategies which allow a balance between the positive and the negative connotations of plurilingualism and cultural plurality. As a pre-requisite of the development of such a policy we have to be aware that negative perceptions of diversity are to a large extent the result of the strategies used in the historical process of nation-building itself. It was only this process in the 18th and 19th centuries that led to monolingual self-conceptions: to the conviction that living in culturally and linguistically plural circumstances is difficult, that learning in or of foreign languages is complicated, that bi- or plurilingualism too early in childhood may be dangerous for both the linguistic and the cognitive development of the individual, and further, similar beliefs (cf. Gogolin, 1994; Hobsbawm, 1990). The historical strategy of developing the notion of national homogeneity was in fact most successful in creating a negative climate, individual rejection or ambivalence towards plurilingualism and language learning. Admittedly, it was less successful in creating a stable homogenous 'reality', as becomes obvious at the latest when frontiers between nations change or become dysfunctional as a means of regulating lives, because mobility is requested and technical possibilities permit unlimited communication.

Thus, the crucial and at the same time most promising point of departure for a new language policy in Europe will be to promote a linguistic self-concept different from today's: not a 'monolingual', but a 'plurilingual habitus' among European individuals and institutions (cf. Declaration of Oegstgeest, 2001). In the end this means, not only to observe and recognize that a linguistic multiple public sphere exists already, but also to accept and promote its legitimacy.

The linguistic reality around us can be taken as a starting point for language education concepts which aim at the development of 'heteroglossic literacy' - of the ability to deal with linguistic complexity and diversity in the most competent manner (see also Kramsch, 2001). The following diagram indicates the areas and requirements for innovation (see p. 19) (cf. Gogolin 1994):

⁵ It is a well established insight that true language education and development cannot be gained by the learning of one language only but is dependent on detailed attention to different languages and linguistic diversity as such (cf. Humboldt, 1907).

In this conception, vital day-to-day multilingual practice itself is a rich resource for language education. In order to protect and safeguard this wealth, or even to expand it with a minimum of investment, *those who wish to* should be given the opportunity to attend lessons in their family languages if these are different from the national or regional language in the respective area. In these cases the language instruction at school is not the only source of language development, it is exclusively the school's responsibility to give access to literacy which is imperative for an accomplished language development.⁶ Whereas this is meant to serve the particular needs of bi- or plurilingual children, the universal perspective implies an offer of a larger variety of different languages during a school career to all children and young people. The significant languages of a specific school or area should be taken into account as languages which may be learned by all children. It is obvious and substantiated by research that the chances of successful language learning grow through opportunities for actual communication in a specific language. Therefore it means a waste of opportunities and resources if minority languages are not taken into consideration in language planning. This does not compete with other rationales of language education policy. Undoubtedly one of the languages offered to all children should be English – if not as a national language, then at least as an international working language.

In order to learn how to master a linguistically multiple public sphere, foreign languages should be introduced very early in a school career as working languages, as languages, in which children learn a subject matter. This is a well known and successful practice in elite school-models and therefore often considered to be an effect of the pupils' socio-economic background, but there is no research evidence for this point of view. On the contrary, early experiments with early introduction of foreign languages via content learning in 'average' schools are very promising (cf. Vollmer, 1998).

⁶ This applies at least to standardized written languages – in fact the majority of languages of today.

INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION a proposal for the innovation of language education in general	
NEED FOR INNOVATION	POSSIBLE OR NECESSARY STRATEGIES
<p><u>Reform of traditional canons of language education</u></p> <p>according to the criteria:</p> <p>(1) language potential and needs among the given population of a region</p> <p>(2) integration of all languages existing on a territory into the canon of officially accepted and taught – i.e. legitimate – school languages</p>	<p>(1) for those children who grow up with two languages or more: guaranteeing all children a positive right of access to literacy in the family-language where it differs from the official language(s) of the territory. It should be only the parents' right to decide about participation of their child in this offer. The shining example for this is the Swedish model of immigrant language education policy.</p> <p>(2) for all children, whether they grow up mono- or bi- or multilingual:</p> <p>general extension of the foreign language teaching and learning in schools</p> <p>(a) horizontally via the introduction of more different languages into the options schools offer to their children;</p> <p>(b) vertically via the integration of foreign language education in the syllabus from the first to the last day of a school career.</p>
<p><u>Language as the medium of instruction</u></p> <p>Abandonment of the principle of monolingual organization of school systems</p>	<p>Gradual extension of instruction in one or more foreign languages, as is successfully practised in 'elite' school models (e.g. 'Europaschulen'; so-called bilingual or international schools; schools for autochthonous minorities)</p>

<p><u>Education and learning under the conditions of plurilingualism</u></p> <p>(1) Recognition and acceptance of the fact that multilingualism is a general condition for all (language) education in European, i.e. linguistically plural, societies</p> <p>(2) Introduction of 'heteroglossic literacy' as a general aim of general education</p>	<p>(1) Revision of the traditional curricula of all school subjects because of their implicit presupposition of monolingualism as 'normal' among individuals and societies. Replacing this by the notion that plurilingualism in a classroom (a society) is a normality. Paying utmost attention to the fact that the specific language of the school –the 'language of education and training' – is not a natural condition which children bring to school, but has to be taught explicitly and seriously in all subjects.</p> <p>(2) Introduction of a new subject into the syllabus with the explicit task of teaching 'communication under the conditions of multilingualism', i.e. metalinguistic competences as language awareness, the ability to translate or interpret in multilingual interactions or the proficiency to communicate adequately despite the limited command of a language.</p>
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To a large extent, the task of mastering a linguistically complex situation depends on language awareness and metalinguistic competence. Hitherto, foreign language teaching has led to very poor results in this respect, as the required skills and competences are not at all the quasi-automatic accessory to speaking a foreign language. Therefore the addition of a new area to the syllabus is suggested: education which explicitly deals with linguistic and cultural complexity as such – no matter which language is learned or spoken. The most promising content and methodical approach for this area of teaching would be the comparison of languages, varieties or modes of expression (cf. Wandruszka 1979).

Actual linguistic diversity in Europe is a rich resource; the legitimacy of it should be promoted actively (see European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 1992). This should be accompanied by methodologically complex, i.e. triangulated educational and linguistic research about the ways in which linguistically complex living conditions can best be mastered. Such conditions are already admirably mastered by many of those who are forced to do so; that is to say, by immigrants, who, not only in this respect, can be regarded as prototypes for the successful individual in future modern complex societies. It is important to pay attention to and appreciate the practical examples they contribute to the development of a democratic, just and peaceful future of Europe.

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