

LINEE News

6th Issue – January 2010

Editorial

During the last three years, Europe's linguistic diversity has been researched intensively by members of LINEE. They have researched an overwhelming number of topics and they are disseminating their work diligently: I know of 62 publications planned for this year and of 90 conferences in which LINEE members have participated or will participate. Everything we are communicating and publishing aims to better understand the representations, beliefs, constructions and conflicts concerning European linguistic diversity.

The following pages contain summaries of the research conducted in the four areas we work in: language, identity and culture; language policy and planning; multilingualism and education; language and economy. You will find there the outcomes of field work done in a number of European cities and regions (see the map on www.linee.info/research-sites.htm) on such interesting topics as European tourism, national, regional and local identity, English as a lingua franca, linguistic landscapes, migrants of various types, language in multinational companies and many others. On www.linee.info, you find more in-depth summaries of each of these thematic areas, of the levels of our research (European, national, regional/local) and of theories and methods.

One of the central aims of LINEE as a Network of Excellence is overcoming the

fragmentation of the field of research on multilingualism and language contact. During the last year, the exchange between our partners was growing and they were engaged in even more joint activities and presentations than the year before. Thanks to this collaboration we got to know each others' views, attitudes, and research strategies – a precondition for overcoming fragmentation.

The funding of LINEE by the European Commission will stop at the end of 2010 – but we strongly want to continue building the Network: for this reason we have set up a task force for the future of LINEE who presented various scenarios to be discussed in the months to come. Another Task Force links LINEE with the Integrated Project DYLAN to develop a common agenda on the future of research on linguistic diversity in Europe.

Two central events will mark this fourth year of LINEE: the outreach conference in Dubrovnik on *New Challenges for Multilingualism in Europe* (organized in April by the Zagreb team) and the final meeting in Brussels (organized in September by the Coordinator's team).

I am looking forward to meeting as many members of LINEE and readers of this newsletter as possible at these events, where the impressive work will be presented to the public.

Prof. Dr Iwar Werlen, Project Coordinator

Content

Cultural tourism in Europe and its impact on language use and identity, and the identity formation of migrants and locals in cities are topics on **pages 3–5**

European language policies and their implementation and perception, language policies in areas where language has “always” been a sensitive issue, and successful strategies to change public signage are topics on **pages 6–8**

Communication strategies of speakers of English as a lingua franca, the language use of multilingual students, and language choice, language use, attitudes and ideologies in minority school contexts are topics on **pages 9–11**

Language management in multinational companies, the value of multilingualism of migrants on the job market and in doing business are topics on **pages 12–14**

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Languages In a Network of European Excellence

What LINEE Is

LINEE is a scientific network, consisting of 9 universities in 9 countries and around 80 researchers (see bottom of this page). Together, they do research in four fields: “Language, Identity and Culture”, “Language Policy and Planning”, “Multilingualism and Education” and “Language and Economy”.

In each of these fields, research projects address the European, national and regional level. Simultaneously, an overarching research platform collects theories, methods and approaches of all these research projects and aims to find common topics, differences, similarities, concepts etc.

What LINEE Does

LINEE researchers analyse various texts (e.g. speeches of European policy makers, official documents, laws, photos, brochures), they conduct and analyse interviews and surveys in order to find answers to questions in four thematic areas (every thematic area contains research projects on European, national and regional level):

Language, Identity and Culture

Researchers in this area investigate how (or whether) language, identity and culture depend on each other, how important they are and what problems and opportunities arise of their relations. The questions are, for example: How important is your language for defining who you are? What are the central attributes for a nation’s identity: the culture, the language, or something else? Is a culture without a unique language actually a culture? Does a common, international language threaten cultural diversity?

LINEE is co-funded for four years by the European Commission (under the 6th Framework Programme). The purpose of LINEE is twofold: firstly, the research done within LINEE is supposed to be more multifaceted, interdisciplinary and comparable than it would be if the partners worked alone. Secondly, LINEE is supposed to become a persistent network of researchers and universities that continue to collaborate even after funding from the European Commission has ended.

LINEE has started in November 2006 and will end (at least within the framework of the European Commission) in November 2010.

Language Policy and Planning

Researchers in this thematic area investigate policies on language, their effects, adequacy and their perceptions by citizens.

Multilingualism and Education

Researchers in this area investigate, for example, how pupils, students and adults learn (or fail to learn) languages, how they behave in multilingual contexts, what the goals of different school systems are and how they achieve or fail to achieve their goals.

Language and Economy

Researchers in this thematic area investigate, for example, what the goals of immigrants or employees of multinational enterprises are, how they achieve their goals, which problems they encounter, how they solve them or how valuable multilingualism is on the job market.

- ▶ www.linee.info/researchstructure.htm
- ▶ www.linee.info/research-sites.htm

Who LINEE Is

Nine European universities in nine countries form the LINEE network, coordinated by the University of Bern:

- Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan (Poland)
- Charles University Prague (Czech Republic)
- Free University of Bozen · Bolzano (Italy)
- Institute for Anthropological Research,

Zagreb (Croatia)

- University of Applied Languages, Munich (Germany)
- University of Bern (Switzerland)
- University of Southampton (England)
- University of Szeged (Hungary)
- University of Vienna (Austria)
- ▶ www.linee.info/partners.htm

Monica Heller New in Advisory Council

Monica Heller is a new member of LINEE’s Advisory Council. She replaces Hans Goebel. Together with her colleagues in the Council, Harald Haarmann and Wolfgang Woelck, she will provide LINEE with external scientific peer review.

Language Management in Contact Situations

The book “Language Management in Contact Situations. Perspectives from Three Continents” contains contributions which form a picture of how Language Management Theory is currently used in various places in the world. It was edited by Jiří Nekvapil and Tamah Sherman from one of the partners of LINEE, the Faculty of Arts, Charles University Prague.

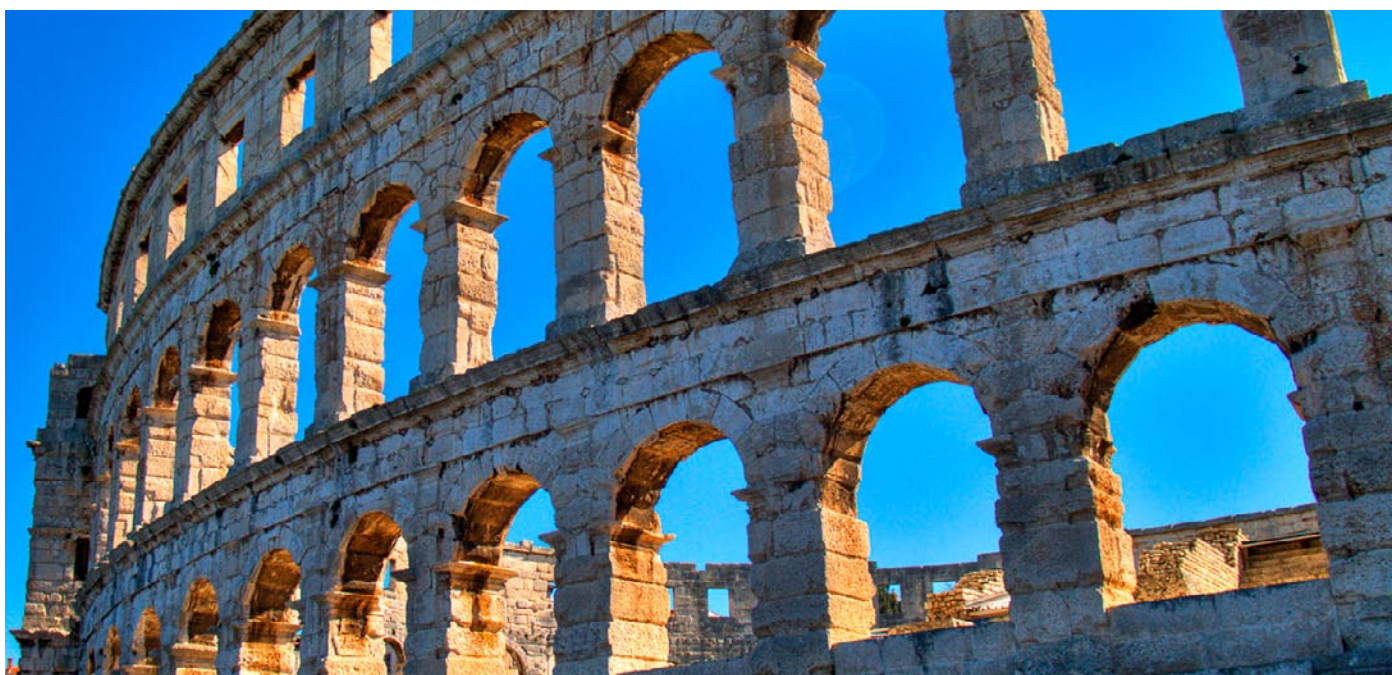
Multilingualism in the Czech Republic

A team of authors from the Faculty of Arts, Charles University Prague (one of the partners of LINEE), published a book which provides basic information on multilingualism in the Czech Republic. The book is meant for a broad range of readers and partially draws on research conducted by LINEE:

J. Nekvapil, M. Sloboda, P. Wagner (2009): Mnohojazyčnost v České republice: Základní informace – Multilingualism in the Czech Republic: Basic Information. Praha: Lidové noviny.

Language, Identity and Culture

The following texts give an overview over the research conducted in the Thematic Area “Language, Identity and Culture”.



Pula's first century amphitheatre: Tourist attractions like this are connected via international itineraries to promote a “European experience”.

Tourist Attractions: Local and Unique, but European as Well

Cultural tourism involves many attractions: museums, national parks, sporting events, shopping malls, to name a few. In Pula (Croatia), Poznań (Poland) and Gdańsk (Poland), tourism organizations present these attractions not only as local attractions but also as belonging to Europe. This is changing not only perceptions of tourists, but of citizens as well.

European policy makers and different stakeholders see cultural tourism as an important and growing part of the European economy. More than that, they see cultural tourism as a means to make people feel as a part of Europe, not “only” a part of a nation state, region or town.

In Pula, Poznań and Gdańsk, researchers have discovered that these cities adapt to this view and present the cultural attractions not only as regional assets, but also as part of Europe. All of them are involved in a number of projects supported by EU funds, which aim at strengthening cross-border cooperation and stressing the European dimension of their cultural assets.

Re-reading the past

In the past, the impressive castle on top of the hill may have been seen as

a reminiscence of the time when the region was ruled by a foreign force. Today, it is re-interpreted as an expression of one of the many cultures which have left their mark in the region, each contributing to the unique cultural experience it has to offer to tourists. All three cities employ experts to re-read the past in order to present cities, regions or countries as a part of a common European history and European diversity.

This re-reading of the past is also changing the perception of local people. In a way, they become tourists of their own history and tradition.

Impact on language use

Cultural tourism has also an impact on language use: officials and workers in cultural tourism have to know and use the languages of the people they are

collaborating with.

Furthermore, the quality of texts of tourist brochures in foreign languages in Poznań and Gdańsk has significantly improved in recent years. Language versions of some brochures are not literal translations: their content varies as well. Some French versions, for example, show links between Polish and French history, while German versions show links with German history. English versions, however, are neutral: no references to the history of the UK or the USA are made.

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Promoting National Identity Internationally

Cultural diversity as well as natural beauties are very well reflected in texts for tourists going to Croatia, Cyprus and Poland. These texts are published in several languages and there seems to be a trend to add new languages to the existing offer. Tourism boards seem to adjust the languages they use according to the increase of certain tourist groups.

The Cyprus tourism material suggests a discourse of inclusion of all Cypriots, both Greek and Turkish; so the promotional brochures continually refer to “the island” and “the people” as a whole. Rarely is the division between north and south mentioned. When it is mentioned, the northern area is consistently referred to as “the northern part”. This successive and consistent use of the phrase suggests a discursive insistence on the totality of the island, and an intentional effort by the Cyprus Tourism Organization to present a viewpoint in consonance with the party line in the Republic of Cyprus.



A piece of Poland's countryside: one of the attractions promoted in tourist brochures.

Tourism promotion has changed

In Croatia, there has been a considerable change in tourism promotion since the 1990s. One of the aspects that have been present after Croatia had become an independent state was the negative image of being a Balkan country – thus the first aim was to make a distance to any notion of “Balkan-ness”. In 2009, on the other hand, the promotional campaign of the Croatian Tourism Board in Serbia (billboards depicting Croatian Adriatic scenery along with the slogans “So close, and so beautiful” and “When your heart says summer, it says the Adriatic”) has proven that political factors have an impact on tourism, because a few years ago it would have been impossible to launch such a campaign due to the strained relations to Serbia.

In Poland, texts for tourists stress the accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004 and the transformation from a communist country to a parliamentary democracy.

How to create a national image

In Cyprus, the metaphors of *bridge* (between Europe and the Arab World)

and that of a *mosaic* appear to be basic for the image of the country. Similar to that, the fact that Croatia is partly a Mediterranean and partly a Central European country, with natural and cultural features typical for both of these regions, has been a rather significant factor in defining its image abroad.

History is central

For all the three countries the role of history is extremely important in building their identities. Thus, the tourism brochures tell us that Croatia has a long and turbulent history: for long periods, the Croats have been ruled by and have fought off Venetians, Ottomans, Hungarians and the Habsburgs, but managed to maintain their identity.

In Cyprus as well the promotional material often refers to the historical composition of the island's culture. The “founding fathers” are the dominant cultures that presided over / ruled in Cyprus the last 10.000 years and Cypriots are presented as the defenders/bearers of this cultural heritage, united in the treasured legacy of the cultural melange that has given Cyprus its unique character.

Poland as well boasts a turbulent past and the promotional material stresses it all the time. It says that few other European countries have had such a chequered history as Poland, but that in spite of strong foreign powers the Polish succeeded in keeping their own culture.

Stereotypes used for tourism

Researchers have also looked for stereotypes which are used to describe a country and its people. It is interesting that one of the stereotypes occurring in tourist guides and brochures of all the three countries is that of hospitality.

A possible interpretation of this is the fact that hospitality is a characteristic generally attributed to Slavic people on one side and the Mediterranean nations on the other; although this could be seen as a cliché as well.

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What It Takes to Become a Local

Language and culture are two different things, as research in Pula (Croatia), Szeged (Hungary) and Jersey (UK) confirms. Language is usually an important part of the identities of the people in these cities, but it is by no means the only one.

In Pula (Croatia), the place of birth is vital for someone to qualify as a Puležan. Even if newcomers are well integrated, have been living in the city more than thirty years and master the host society's languages, they are not perceived to be truly Puležani. Local people say that those "from outside" do not understand the customs and values of the local people and that most often they do not even try to accept the typical life-style. This view seems to be adopted by the newcomers as well: they feel that for the local people they will remain foreigners.

Language skills taken for granted

In Pula, newcomers are expected to adapt to the dominant life-style and to the local variety when communicating with locals. Similarly, people who are going to settle down in Szeged (Hungary) are expected to learn Hungarian, except if they happen to be speakers of English. Whether they happen to arrive as bilinguals or non-speakers of Hungarian, their (eventual) capacity to speak

the language is taken for granted and not considered to be an achievement. For the people interviewed in Szeged, speaking the local variety of Hungarian is not seen necessary for belonging to the local community; it is more of a question of living and working there.

Monolingualism: a problem for tourism

The authorities of Szeged want to invest in turning Szeged into a town of cultural tourism and see the university and its research institutes as the city's main assets. However, many inhabitants of Szeged are monolingual and often experience this as a problem in communication with foreigners.

"Little Lisbon" in Jersey

The situation of the Portuguese in Jersey (UK) is rather different from the situations above in that they have created strong communities and many live and work in the areas around the Catholic church of St. Thomas' in St. Helier, an area known as "Little Lisbon". In this

area, there is often no need to speak English at all. However, more recently arrived Portuguese, university educated professionals, prefer speaking English and do not share many Portuguese sociocultural practices.

The linguistic landscape

An investigation of public signs in the linguistic landscape (road signs, signposts, billboards etc.) confirms the points made above: in Szeged, Hungarian is dominant on signs, but English is also used, thereby acknowledging the presence of tourists and the need to communicate with them. In Pula, Croatian is dominant on signs overall, and in "Little Lisbon" in Jersey, the presence of Portuguese is very strong.

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Language Policy and Planning

The following texts give an overview over the research conducted in the Thematic Area “Language Policy and Planning”.

Language Policies on the European Level

The concept of multilingualism is susceptible to contradictions which present difficulties to decision-makers and policy-makers likewise. An example of such a contradiction: theoretically, all official languages in the EU are equal; however, the European Court of Justice ruled that languages do not have to be treated equally under all circumstances.

The above-mentioned court case regarded a Council Regulation which defined five languages to be the official languages of the “Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market”: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Proportionate language preference

These official languages were defined as the possible languages of proceedings for opposition, revocation or invalidity proceedings. The prosecutor argued that this violated the fundamental principle of non-discrimination and the equal treatment of languages in the EU.

However, the European Court of Justice agreed that the regulation of the language use was appropriate and proportionate. This shows how economic and political power cannot be ignored in language policies and language planning, despite the principle that all languages have equal value in the European Union.

Bilingualism, not diglossia¹

The German-speaking Switzerland is often referred to as a model case for diglossia. However, for the Swiss and foreigners alike, the situation seems to be

more one of bilingualism: for the Swiss, German seems like a foreign language they try to avoid speaking; in the eyes of the foreigners, the dialect appears to be a completely different language. This fact is not taken into account by laws targeting the integration of foreigners: they only mention one language. This needs to change, because for social and economic integration, both the dialect and German are important.

Researchers also point out that European policy-makers promote multilingualism as valuable and positive; however, for reasons of political correctness, nobody is allowed to openly ask the question: which kind of multilingualism is good? No one will say that being multilingual in German, Kurdish and Turkish will be of less value on the European job market than being multilingual in German, French and English.

Little media coverage

In Austria and Switzerland, a search in newspaper databases showed that the press in these countries seems to rarely cover European language policy-making processes. Not very surprisingly then, when researchers discussed European language policies

with Swiss students, they discovered that few of them knew that a EU multilingualism commissioner even existed; furthermore, nobody had heard about Leonard Orban and his functions as the first EU multilingualism commissioner.

Ideology as a key variable

Group discussions with university students in Vienna (Austria), Prague (Czech Republic) and Bern (Switzerland) revealed that conflicting ideologies play a critical role in the construction of informal language planning talk. Ideology comes into play immediately when social actors engage in negotiations and directly influences their outcomes.

Equality, as a part of European multilingualism policy, was found to be an ideologically charged concept which essentially contradicts other concepts, even within the same policy domain.

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¹ Diglossia means that two divergent varieties of one and the same language are used in a society complementarily. One of the varieties might be preferred in formal contexts, the other in informal contexts; one might be preferred for speaking, the other for writing.

Language Policies in Contested Multilingual Spaces

In the UK, in Switzerland and in Spain, official language policies focus on languages which are considered to be indigenous to the country. In regions where the use of more than one language is sanctioned by law, it is mainly the regional minority languages which are supported, promoted or protected. In contrast, support for migrant languages is fairly weak.

Researchers have investigated regions with two or more co-official languages and where migration has become a significant demographic factor: València and Morella (Spain, languages: Valencian, Castilian), Cardiff/Llanelli and Llanybydder (UK, languages: Welsh, English), Grisons (Switzerland, languages: German, Rumansh, Italian).

The language policy in these regions are bilingual more than multilingual. They deal with the “traditional” regional minority languages, not with the migrant languages. For example, in Ilanz (urban city in Grisons, Switzerland) Rumansh language courses are advertised in Rumansh and German; similarly, in Morella, Valencian language courses are advertised in Spanish and Valencian.

Integration through language?

The overriding objective of language policy in all three countries is to facilitate the integration of the economic migrant into the receiving community by means of language learning which is effectively the dominant languages in these areas: Castilian, English and German respectively.

Language competence seems to be used as a measure of integration. However, a study (commissioned by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Wales) has shown that language is not necessarily a factor in grassroots understanding of integra-



Morella in Spain, one of LINEE's research sites.

tion. The same seems likely for the Grisons (where German-speaking migrants are numerous) and for Spain (where interviewees reported to be confronted with prejudices even if they spoke their counterparts' language).

Effective policy-making possible?

Current language policies have great difficulty in adapting quickly to changing migration flows. They are long in gestation – evidence-based policy making relies on adequate data gathering and analysis, which have struggled to keep pace with the scale of population movement (shown by both documentary and interview evidence). Furthermore, the underlying language

policy goal is still migrants' long term settlement, despite the fact that many migrants do not necessarily want to stay for long.

However, the research found that examples of smaller bottom-up organisations (Valencia Acoge, Polish Advice Centre, Cymdeithas Y Neuadd, Chur Intercultural Library etc.) are able to respond quickly and effectively to changing situations, although they are hampered by their limited resources.

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Successful Strategies to Change Public Signage

Making signs, such as street signs, road signs or tourist information signs, bi- or multilingual can meet with opposition. Among others, researchers identified strategies which appear to help in avoiding such opposition.

Researchers investigated how people perceive and behave towards signs in multilingual cities with a significant presence of speakers of different languages, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants and tourist. These cities were Český Těšín (Czech Republic), Békéscsaba (Hungary), Llanelli and Cardiff (United Kingdom) and Pula (Croatia).

Minority language ≠ language of ethnic minority

The main feature of the Welsh language policy is that it is not typically understood as a matter of the relationship between the Welsh and the English but as a matter of civil rights and equality, which improves the acceptance of the language policy in the public. At the other research sites, in contrast, both the governments and local populations understand the support of a minority language as support of a respective ethnic minority. As a result,

the ethnic majority in the regions with historical reminiscences of interethnic conflicts tends to oppose minority language support. If language policies manage to separate the issues of minority language from those of ethnic minorities, they are likely to meet with less resistance.

Successful top-down approach

In the Czech Republic, the advocates for bilingual signs in Český Těšín had success with a top-down approach: as the ethnic majority would oppose such signs, the advocates used soft pressure, rather than direct action, to amend laws. As also the local authorities felt to be bound by these laws, they eventually implemented the policy written in the laws.

Using external events

Policy advocates were successful when they justified their claims by developments in the European language

policy, most importantly the ECRML and FCNM¹. Furthermore, they were successful if they used “external” financial sources, such as the national budget instead of the municipal.

Economic reasons unchallenged

When public signage was justified with the goal of attracting tourist, it met with no resistance in all research sites. Advocates of the spread of a minority language in the linguistic landscape are therefore very likely to succeed if they manage to attract speakers of their language as visiting customers and consumers of services in order to motivate the minority language use in local majority-language population.

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¹ ECRML: European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; FCNM: Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Multilingualism and Education

The following texts give an overview over the research conducted in the Thematic Area “Multilingualism and Education”.

How Non-Native Speakers of English Communicate Effectively

In situations where non-native speakers of English mainly communicate with other non-native speakers of English, they use English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). ELF speakers effectively use a number of strategies for communication and learning, which make them successful communicators.

Researchers have investigated the learning, use and perceptions of ELF in three European countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary and the UK. They identified strategies which are not only used for communication, but also for learning and for expressing one's identities and for building relationships.

Code-switching as a resource

The investigated ELF speakers quite often switch to their mother tongue or, sometimes, to foreign languages not only if they cannot think of a word, but also to build relations and create a certain feeling of group membership. The other speakers not only accept such code-switching, but they help with providing suggestions for the meaning of a word, describe its meaning, give examples and routinely use their linguistic resources creatively.

Informal learning and teaching

ELF speakers consciously use words which others may not know and which they may find useful, funny or otherwise interesting. They do this not only in English but also in their mother tongue or other languages. By doing so, they build relationships, signal membership in a community of multilingual speakers, teach and learn informally.

In general, ELF speakers automatically assess an interlocutor's competence in a language and adjust to it. Often, they seem to identify an expert



Students with different mother tongues employ various strategies for effective communication and for showing their belonging to a community.

in a group and try to learn from him or her. This expert does not necessarily have to be a native speaker of English, but “just” a successful communicator.

The norms concerning language use do not come from outside, but they are created within the group itself. What works in the community is important, not what is considered to be correct according to what one has learnt in language classrooms.

Ambivalent perceptions

While ELF is considered by both native and non-native speakers to be

positive, and ELF communication is considered to be successful, the investigated speakers also sometimes showed feelings of inadequacy when speaking English or tended to compare their speech with that of English native speakers.

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Multilingualism at Home, but Not at School

The family seems to play a crucial role in helping immigrant students to maintain and value the home language, according to research conducted in the UK, Italy and Austria. Although home languages are very important to these students, they do not often use them at school and in formal contexts, but in some cases exclusively with their family.

The investigated multilingual students in the UK, Italy and Austria value their own multilingualism, saying that it is something enriching, something their friends are interested in and something which might help them in their future careers and in learning further languages. All in all, they also seem to be more aware of the languages used around them and have a deeper understanding of the language learning process than their monolingual peers do.

Little multilingualism in the classrooms

However, this view of multilingualism being valuable does not seem to be reflected in the classroom. A large proportion of teachers (25.5% to 64.4%) do not allow their students to speak

their home language in class. Some students say that they speak to their schoolfellows in their home language during breaks, but they still do not use their home language as often with their peers as they do with their family.

Multilingualism: an obstacle to learning?

A large proportion of the teachers (29% to 59.5%) do not refer to their students' multilingualism. Many of them believe that using the home language might be an impediment the students' learning of the official language, for example because the home language could confuse the learners. This goes against recent research in this area, which has shown that the use of several languages is a resource for and not a hindrance to further language learning.

The fact that not all teachers seem to be aware of the beneficial effects of prior language knowledge on further language learning is not only important because it influences their teaching practices, but also because they are often asked for advice by migrants when it comes to language learning and language use. In such situations, many teachers will probably recommend not to use the migrants' language at home, because they see it as an impediment to the learning of the host language.

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Speakers of English Sound Nice and Successful

English enjoys a high prestige among the Hungarian-speaking minority students in Romania, Serbia and Slovakia as well as among the German-speaking minority students in Romania. English also has a high value in foreign language teaching, where teachers try to use only English in the classroom.

Researchers have conducted studies on language choice, language use, language attitudes and language ideologies in minority school contexts among minority Hungarians in Romania, Serbia and Slovakia, among minority Germans in Romania, and among Ladin minority in the Dolomites area (Ladinia, administratively divided between South Tyrol/Trentino/Belluno), Italy.

English sounds successful

In order to investigate the language attitudes of minority students, researchers have used the matched-guise technique: they played speech samples in various languages to students and asked them to rate the speakers concerning status traits like “successful, educated, rich, prominent” and on solidarity traits like “nice, reliable, honest, generous”. Both the Hungarian and the German minority students rated speakers of English higher than the speakers of the majority language, both on status and solidarity traits.

Surprisingly, the Hungarian minority students rated the speakers of English even higher than the speakers of the minority language.

The results on language attitudes of the Ladin minority were less surprising: the English speakers received high ratings on status traits, but they were not always better rated than the speakers of the minority language. However, as far as solidarity traits are concerned,



English only: in English classrooms, teachers try to use solely English to improve the learning effect.

the speakers of the minority language received the highest ratings.

Common English-only ideology

In English classrooms, teachers claim to use solely English, because this would help the learning process. Even the students said that, if they were teachers, they would try to use only English and prefer their students to use only English during the lesson. This stands in contrast to new developments in both multilingualism research and teaching, which propose to move away from isolation towards cooperation between the languages in the learner.

Research in the same areas on language ideologies and policies revealed that, all in all, the schools of the minority contexts investigated expressed their openness to multilingualism and confirmed the view according to which multilingualism is one of the most important bridges of everyday life which could contribute to the better integration of the members of the minority group.

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Language and Economy

The following texts give an overview over the research conducted in the Thematic Area “Language and Economy”.

Language Use in Companies: Common Sense, Not Strict Rules

Multinational companies do not insist on the use of a particular language, other than for the purposes of reporting. In general, the companies have a project-based and dynamic orientation towards the daughter companies.

Many multinational companies do have a corporate language, but the actual language use takes into account the local needs rather than strictly a corporate language policy, which often applies only to limited domains.

Common sense defines language use

Among the various employees interviewed in this research project, there was a general consensus that the official corporate language is a matter of common sense in terms of when to use it. An expression of this “common sense” may be the following: in the Germany-based companies under scrutiny in general, employees acknowledged that many people in the Central European region speak German, so either German or English would be acceptable.

Another example of how flexible language use is, despite an officially

defined corporate language: in a Hungarian subsidiary of a German-owned multinational company, the corporate language was German at first. Then, after the company had been taken over by another company, the corporate language switched to English. However, employees who used German when they were communicating with the headquarters continued using German.

Opportunities as opposed to problems

Interview data from the parent company perspective indicate an attempt to outwardly present the highly functional international character of large multinationals, with the experience of socio-cultural problems as an opportunity for learning. However, interviews with employees reveal communicative problems such as employees having difficulties in following a meeting be-

cause of their lack of language skills (including the ability to understand local varieties of English).

To avoid such problems, large companies have special departments which are oriented toward training future delegates for their assignments abroad, both in language and in cultural issues. However, these services are not always used fully due to time constraints. In this vein, parent company employees showed a stronger orientation toward such training when being sent to more far-off locations such as Asia than to other countries in Central Europe.

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Multilingualism: Opportunity for Economic Success and Integration?

Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic face a major stumbling block in their integration in the Czech society: their language. Almost every second of them speaks Vietnamese only. Little is done to change this situation. Another group of immigrants, Subsaharan Africans in Germany, face another difficulty: they struggle to find an adequate employment and their multilingualism is mostly worthless in Germany.

Many Vietnamese migrants speak exclusively Vietnamese, even if they have been living in the country for several years, which has three main reasons: first, there are very few and not very effective language courses on offer in Vietnam. Second, the Czech and the Vietnamese language are so different in vocabulary and structure that it is very hard for adults to learn the other language. Third, the Vietnamese do not have many opportunities to meet Czech-speaking people, due to their work situation.

Hard work, little talking

The Vietnamese often own shops and work long hours there, even on weekends, and they also live often quite far away from their workplace, which leaves little time for social activities. Furthermore, working in the shops does not require sophisticated language skills in Czech. In some cases, the Vietnamese work near border crossing points and there they use German even more often than Czech.

Interviews with the Vietnamese suggest that language is the main stumbling block to social integration. However, the government does not offer sufficient language courses for the Vietnamese.

On the other hand, young children who arrived to the Czech Republic during their early school age or were born in the Czech Republic have full access to the Czech compulsory education

system and are proficient in the Czech language, in some cases more than in their mother tongue.

Hundreds of them continue their education in Czech grammar schools and colleges. The latter have also some, often good command of foreign languages offered by the Czech school curricula: English and German, French or Spanish. Few have graduated from colleges so far. Their employability in the Czech Republic or internationally remains to be assessed.

Multilingualism is no asset

The other researched migrant community, Subsaharan African migrants in Germany, have a better command of their host country's language. However, apart from German, their language skills (usually one or more indigenous African languages and the official language inherited from their colonial masters) seem to be almost useless to them. Knowledge of "colonial languages" such as French, English or Portuguese is only relevant for the highly educated Africans who are employed, for instance, by international firms or globally operating aid organisations in Germany.

For all the others, finding an employment which is adequate to their education or training undergone in their respective countries of origin or in Germany seems to be very difficult, more difficult than for other migrant communities. Many of them do

not feel welcome in Germany. When among themselves, Black Africans often quote with a bitter smile the three "W-standard questions" they are asked by the Germans: "Where are you from? What are you doing here? When are you going back?".

Unfavourable school system

The interviewed migrants consider German language skills to be vital for social integration and economic success, especially when it comes to their children. However, migrants' children often have difficulties with the German school system: the pupils or students are released at lunch-time with a heavy load of homework to be done against the next day.

In such a school system, doing homework is much more important for educational advancement and success than in a whole-day school system. Thus migrant children with parents who are unfamiliar with such a school system and sufficiently competent in the German language to render them assistance when doing homework clearly are at a disadvantage as compared to their German class-mates.

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Migrants and Minorities in Multilingual Cities

In Vienna (Austria), Jersey (UK), Southampton (UK), Pula (Croatia) and Cheb (Czech Republic), the historical context strongly influences the contemporary situation regarding status and residency of ethnic minorities and migrants. Their knowledge of their own language, of the receptor language, and of other languages, can sometimes be a profitable economic factor, but often mitigating factors need to be taken into account.

Two examples illustrate the importance of history regarding migrants' status in a country: The Italian ethnic minority in Pula (Croatia) exerted a huge social and cultural influence before World War II, and those who stayed enjoyed high status and a privileged position within the host society compared to other ethnic minorities, which has facilitated their integration: the Italian ethnic minority are economically successful; they participate in politics; their rights, interests, and their national, cultural and linguistic identity is well protected either by associations or by law.

Vietnamese are poorly integrated

In contrast, the Vietnamese ethnic minority in Cheb (Czech Republic) is poorly integrated into the receptor community. Immigration started only in the early nineties. The Vietnamese in Cheb have been seeking permanent residence, bringing over family members, especially children from Vietnam. Their business is oriented partly towards visitors from Germany, partly towards Czech down-market customers. As business opportunities with German customers have been shrinking

over the last few years, some families start to explore alternative business opportunities in small towns and villages within the region.

Language as a trademark

In Pula, knowledge of the receptor language is valuable to the Albanian ethnic minority, as it increases opportunities for economic participation in the tourism industry in Pula.

In Vienna, Italian owners of restaurants and ice cream parlours use their autochthonous language in order to cultivate, promote and communicate an Italian "trademark" (ice cream or good Italian food) as a marker of collective identity, and to distance themselves from pseudo-Italian competitors.

Similarly, knowledge of Portuguese and English is vital for employees of a Portuguese food and wine import company in Jersey (UK). However, this is the exception from the rule: in general, the ability to communicate in Portuguese or Polish may be useful in certain jobs, for example ethnic shops, restaurants etc., but it is not necessarily considered advantageous or indicative of promotion prospects within the

general job market in Southampton (UK) or Jersey (UK).

Work environment vital for exploitation of language

Whether the knowledge of particular languages is an economic asset depends largely on the type of work accessed and in what environment it is done: tourism, ethnic services, menial or professional work, migrants being self employed, employees of other migrants or host companies. Another important factor is the educational and class levels of first generation and subsequent generations of migrants. Without a certain level of education and class, the migrants have no access to jobs where their language competencies may be requisite or advantageous, and in turn, may enhance their professional development.

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