

# LINEE News

7<sup>th</sup> Issue – May 2010

## Successful Final Conference

In April, LINEE organized a scientific conference on the “New Challenges for Multilingualism in Europe” in Dubrovnik (Croatia). The international conference attracted renowned researchers from all over the world as well as policy-makers and the media. This newsletter covers some aspects of the conference.

The plenary speakers were Susan Gal (Chicago), Adam Jaworski (Cardiff), Glyn Williams (Bangor), Rosemarie Tracy (Mannheim) and Jan Blommaert (Tilburg). Two EU officials also attended: Harald Hartung (Head of Unit Multilingualism Policy in the Directorate-General for Education and Culture) and Silva Kauko (Policy Officer in the unit Multilingualism and Translation Studies in the Directorate-General for Translation).

All in all, around 300 people participated in the conference and attended the presentations of 200 original and previously unpublished research papers. The presentations dealt with four thematic areas: language, identity and culture; language policy and planning; language and education; language and economy.

Both the organizing institution (the Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb) and LINEE are satisfied with the quality and quantity of the presentations given at the conference. Feedback from participants has been positive as well. Because a broad range of issues was discussed and because the conference attracted scientists from the US to Japan, it was an ideal opportunity for them to do some networking and exchange ideas.



Discussions during the poster session, the opening speech by LINEE's coordinator Iwar Werlen (Bern), and one of the plenary speakers Susan Gal (Chicago) interviewed by Croatian TV.

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*Languages In a Network of European Excellence*

## Inputs from Five Plenary Speakers

The plenary lectures of LINEE's conference were held by Susan Gal (Chicago), Adam Jaworski (Cardiff), Glyn Williams (Bangor), Rosemarie Tracy (Mannheim) and Jan Blommaert (Tilburg). A few points of their talks are summarized below.

In her talk, Susan Gal pointed out that like *single languages* were valued or devalued in the past, today certain *combinations of languages* are valued or devalued. Trilingualism in English, French or German and another language is becoming characteristic for pan-European elites in business, academics and politics; however, the languages spoken by East European, Asian and African diasporas, even if tri-lingual, rarely make them eligible for such elite status.

Standardization is also at play when speakers of minority languages have successfully fought for EU recognition. They created a minority-language standard which is now protected, but excludes the speech of many of the same people whose linguistic practices it was supposed to valorize.

### The role of language in tourism

In his talk, Adam Jaworski showed examples of how language is used in the tourism industry. One of these examples included a tourist guide who “performs” the name of a village for the tourists: he tells a story about the name, pronounces two versions of the name, asks the tourists to repeat one version and makes jokes about it. This shows how language is “commodified”, i.e. made a “product” that can be sold to tourists.

Other examples showed how powerful languages are suddenly not so powerful anymore in a tourism context and how tourists become language learners for the time of their stay.

As he wrote in the abstract of his talk, Jaworski wanted to make a contribution to “a new ‘sociolinguistics on the move’, replacing the ‘sedentarist’ approaches focusing on stable, homogenous and idealized speech communities, and capturing interactions and meaning-making between



Susan Gal (Chicago) during the first plenary lecture.

people and places in flux and on the go”.

### Language as a key factor in the economy

Glyn Williams highlighted the role of language in the knowledge economy: In the past, nation states were carefully regulating the inflow of capital and people in their territory. Today, boundaries are not so clear-cut anymore and the economy relies not so much on products and skills, but on the creation, sharing and application of knowledge. In this economy, therefore, language plays an essential role by enabling interaction, communication and the creation of shared meaning.

### See and foster multilingual competence in the classroom

Rosemarie Tracy made a strong case for a change in the language teaching practices in Germany. In Germany, as in other European countries, multilingualism is not appreciated and exploited in language classrooms. If children's multilingualism includes other languages than those which count on the market (for example the majority language and English), multilingualism is seen as a

problem, not as an asset. Decision-makers and teachers should be trained to recognize and exploit multilingual competencies, as this would benefit the quality of language teaching.

### Language policing

Jan Blommaert showed how the norms of a language are negotiated and enforced locally and not only controlled by a single, central institution. Among others, he illustrated this with examples of how French is used in Tokyo: as long as a name has some accents (like *é*, *è* or *ê*), it is connoted with “French” and “chic”, even if it sounds ... awkward to speakers of French (like “Nina's *derrière*” as a name for a chocolate shop).

The norm of what is French is oriented towards France, but the “details” are negotiated locally. This example shows why researchers “need to look at a wider panorama of actors and practices in the field of language and norms, certainly in an age of globalization where multiple new language policing organisms emerge [...], and where language policing becomes increasingly a form of linguistic border control”, as Blommaert says in the abstract of his talk.

## The Perspective of a Policy-Maker on Multilingualism

**Harald Hartung (Head of Unit Multilingualism Policy in the Directorate-General for Education and Culture) held an opening speech for LINEE's conference and participated in a roundtable discussion. Some of the points he made are summarized below.**

In his opening speech, Harald Hartung said that the the member states of the EU had considerably improved the quality of language education. However, he wished for better intercultural skills of teachers and increased mobility for them to develop these intercultural skills.

He identified three main issues related to multilingualism in the years to come. Firstly, he mentioned the ELAN study: 11 % of the SME's in the investigated sample of this study said to have lost contracts due to a lack of language skills and intercultural skills. How this can be prevented, which languages should and can be promoted, this will be an important question for European countries in the future. Secondly, Hartung mentioned early language learning. Which languages should children learn when they are 4



Harald Hartung after his opening speech, interviewed by a journalist from a Croatian TV station.

to 6 years old and what is the goal of the learning process: is it just to get to know a language or is it actually learning to use the language? An thirdly, he addressed the integration of migrants through learning of the host language. Up to now, he said, attempts to help migrants learn the host community's language have failed.

He also acknowledged the need to include the whole society in the programs to promote multilingualism in Europe. He made a case for flexible programs on a European level, but also on a national and regional level, which would reach not only students, but migrants, senior adults or school drop-outs as well.

## The Conference in the Press, on TV and Radio

Several members of LINEE and other participants of the conference were interviewed by a TV and a radio station. Several online and print media announced the conference. The Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration announced the conference on its website as well.

The newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* from Split published an article on the conference, and a media release was published on AlphaGalileo (a news service specialized in science, health, technology, the arts, humanities, social sciences and business) as well as on Cordis Wire (a news service specialized in news from European innovation and research stakeholders).



Members of LINEE's Governing Board interviewed by radio and TV: Rita Franceschini from the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (Supervisor of Thematic Area "Multilingualism and Education"), on the left Iwar Werlen from the University of Bern (Coordinator of LINEE), and on the right Patrick Stevenson from the University of Southampton (Supervisor of Thematic Area "Language Policy and Planning").

### LINEE at Conferences

Members of LINEE participate in the following conferences:

- The 4<sup>th</sup> Christina Conference on Gender Studies: Gender, Nature and Culture (Helsinki, Finland, University of Helsinki, 20–22 May 2010)
- The Third International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca (Vienna, Austria, 22–25 May 2010)
- Congress 2010 of the Humanities and Social Sciences (Montreal, Canada, 28 May – 4 June 2010)
- Who needs languages? Micro and macro perspectives into language education policies (Jyväskylä, Finland, 7–10 June 2010)
- Beyond Citizenship: Feminism and the Transformation of Belonging: An international and interdisciplinary conference (Birkbeck, England, 30 June – 2 July 2010)
- Spanish in Society Conference 2010, Mediating Spaces (Limerick, Ireland, 8–10 July 2010)
- XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology (Gothenburg, Sweden, 11–17 July 2010)
- Recycling Myths, Inventing Nations Recycling Myths, Inventing Nations (Aberystwyth, UK, 14–16 July 2010)
- Language for Special Purposes: Collaboration and Engagement (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 15–17 July 2010)
- VIII World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES) (Stockholm, Sweden, 27–31 July 2010)

► [www.linee.info/linee/events](http://www.linee.info/linee/events)

## LINEE's Conference as a Networking Opportunity

**“New Challenges for Multilingualism in Europe” was a truly international conference: people from 53 countries registered for the conference. A good opportunity to do some networking.**

The four thematic areas of the conference allowed a discussion on multilingualism from many different perspectives. This attracted people with different backgrounds, but who were all interested in multilingualism and its role in society. One participant said that “finally I've come to a conference where I feel ‘at home’, because we all have a common interest”.

It was evident, though, that these common interests did not in all cases entail harmony. During and after presentations, researchers engaged in lively discussions. Other opportunities used for such discussions were plenary lectures, the roundtable discussion and panels. Finally, 23 posters were presented during a poster session. Attendees had plenty of time to discuss results, methods and theories with the exhibitors. Exhibitors said that they often found these discussions useful and stimulating.

Additionally, there was an unexpected opportunity to deepen the contacts established during the conference: the flight disruption caused by the volcanic eruption in Iceland meant that some people spent some more time together, either waiting for the airspace to open again or travelling home by bus, car, or train.



Poster session during the third day of the conference.

DOLAZAK ARRIVALS					ODLAZAK DEPARTURES				
FLIGHT	ORIGIN	ARRIVAL TIME	STATUS	REMARKS	FLIGHT	DESTINATION	DEPARTURE TIME	STATUS	REMARKS
BRUNN	1645	1635	SLETIO		LH 3495	MUNICH	1705	OTK	
RAJEVO	1705	1655	NA VRIJEME		OU 5434	MUNICH	1705	OTH	
LA	1705		OTKAZAN LET		SK 3553	MUNICH	1705	OTH	
ENNA	1810				TP 7991	MUNICH	1705	OT	
BPEST	1840				OU 464	ZURICH	1745	OTH	
STINA	1910		OTKAZAN LET		OU 442	VIENNA	1750	17	
GHADA	1920		OTKAZAN LET		OU 414	FRANKFURT	1755	OTH	
GHADA	1920		OTKAZAN LET		OU 436	MUNICH	1835	OTH	
NKFURT	1920		OTKAZAN LET		OS 678	VIENNA	1845	16	
CELONA	2005				HA 473	BUDAPEST	1905	18	
CELONA	2005				OU 632	ZAGAR	2110	OTH	
NNA	2025				OU 342	SARAJEVO	2110	OTH	
KELLES	2025		OTKAZAN LET		OU 664	DUBROVNIK	2110	OTH	
T	2035				OU 366	SKOPJE	2115	15	

Lots of cancelled flights, which had also a bright side: more time for networking.

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