**Multilinguism between globalisation and tolerance**

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We would like to open a discussion on the topical tendencies in the didactics of languages, which are developing towards a *higher tolerance for multilingual competences*, in spite of a contrary tendency, the *globalisation* wishing to impose English as the “lingua franca”. Some topical concrete situations (platforms, projects, utensils) will be mentioned to that end.

The concepts which we are going to use are: **multilinguism, globalisation, tolerance**

**I. Multilinguism**

See website of the European Union: <http://europa.eu/pol/mult/index_fr.htm>

With respect to the resolution adopted by the Council on March 31, **1995,** which emphasized development and perfecting the language competences of citizens by confirming that it would be advisable to give to the pupils the possibility of learning, in general, two languages of the Union other than the mother tongue/s, it is laid down:

* efficient mastery of three languages of the Union
* the European Union of 28 languages

**INVITATION TO THE MEMBER STATES** to adopt, within the framework and the limits of their respective political, legal, budgetary, educational and formational systems,

**the Resolution on early learning of languages:**

♣ to encourage, where it appears possible, early teaching as well as diversification of the offer of languages in early classes, taking into account the available resources and making profit of existing initiatives,

♣ to encourage European cooperation between the schools offering early teaching of at least one other language of the Union than the mother tongues/s, and to promote the virtual mobility of the pupils, and even, if possible, their physical mobility,

♣ to favour continuity in the offer of learning several languages, to sensitize all the acting persons concerned, and especially the parents, for the positive effects of early language learning,

♣ to encourage measures aiming at developing and spreading the most appropriate didactic materials and multimedia resources in the field of early teaching of the languages of the Union,

♣ to encourage measures aiming at preparing the teachers working in the field of early language learning for the new needs.

**In 2012 the Eurobarometer: “The Europeans and their languages”** states:

 ♣ For the European population the mother tongue spoken most is German (16%), followed by Italian and English (13% for each language), then by French (12%), and finally by Spanish and Polish (8% for each language).

♣ A little more than half of the Europeans (54%) are capable of having a conversation in at least one foreign language, a quarter (25%) are able to speak at least two foreign languages and one in ten can converse in at least three foreign languages.

♣ The countries where those who answered are least susceptible for knowing how to speak a foreign language are Hungary (65%), Italy (62%), the United Kingdom, Portugal (61% each), and Ireland (60%).

♣ The five foreign languages spoken most still are **English** (38%), **French** (12%), **German** (11**%), Spanish** (7%), and **Russian** (5%).

♣ On the national level **English** is the foreign language spoken most in 19 member states of 25 where it is not recognized as official language (that means excluding the UK and Ireland).

♣ Two thirds of the Europeans (67%) see **English** as one of the two most useful languages for them.

In **2014**: **Report on innovative methods:**

***Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)***

= teaching contents/matters in a foreign language

**English** asserts itself more and more in the European schools as the most often taken foreign language, according to the results of a Eurostat study.

**English** as lingua franca in professions according to an analysis of the stock of emails exchanged in enterprises.

***Computer assisted language learning (CALL)***

**II. Globalisation**

“A tendency of international enterprises to conceive strategies on a planetary scale, leading to establishing a unified global market.”

(According to <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/globalisation/37156>.)

In spite of the efforts of the European Council of Languages (ECL/CEL) to encourage multilinguism, a contrary tendency asserts itself by itself, that of a language globalisation, by means of English.

**English** – “lingua franca” / “language of traffic”?

“I speak Latin to God, Italian to the musicians, Spanish to the soldiers, German to the lackeys, French to the ladies, and English to my horse”, Charles V would have said in the 16th century. Most of the works dedicated to English mention that sentence in order to make it known better that this language which the emperor judged as little refined is a colossus today that dominates the world.

**Consequences**

* “The easiness of understanding, the flexibility and the efficiency of communication would become more important than the exactness of the **terms of a mother tongue.** And English would suffice for that.”
* “The advantages and the scientific and cultural traditions of the Europeans contained in their diverse languages would be lost by and by in a unified language.” (According to <http://www.cafebabel.fr/article/langlais-comme-lingua-franca-adopte.html>)
* Marginalisation of the other languages because of a wrong idea not contained in the documents of the EU, as if English should be the common language of communication on the global level.

**Concepts on the knowledge of languages:**

- “in a perfect way”

- by means of competences

**III. Tolerance**

The formation in languages shows at least 3 ways of teaching/learning:

**a.** **formal**: institutionalised, collective:

 - language classes

 - the ***Common European Framework of Reference for Languages***

**b.** **less formal**: presented by specialists

- self-taught

- Europe Ensemble : [www.europenesemble.eu](http://www.europenesemble.eu)

**europensemble**.**crdp**-**nantes**.**eu**/ENCours/aide/INTRO-AIDE\_bienvenue.swf

- intercomprehension / interlanguage**:**

A situation “when two persons communicate with one another while keeping to their own language”

“From the point of view of language competences intercomprehension relies on the exploitation of resemblances and transparencies between the languages”, especially lexical resemblances: it. *descrizione*, fr. *description*, sp. *descripción*, port. *descrição*, rom. *descriere* ; (<http://www.eurom5.com/p/chisiamo-fr/intercomprensione>)

**-** Romance languages, Slav languages, Germanic languages …

**c. informal**: individual, reading, films, radio, TV, internet, mobile phones

**a.** The ***Common European Framework of Reference for Languages***

 A B C

 Basic user Independent user Proficient user

 A 1 A 2 B 1 B 2 C 1 C 2

 Beginner Waystage Threshold Vantage Advanced Mastery

 -----------------------------------------------------------→

 (primary (secondary (secondary school, (Leaving exam)

 school) school, level 1) school, level 2,

 end of compulsory

 school attendance)

See documents in the annexe ELPExamples (pdf).

b. 1. Europe Ensemble : [www.europensemble.eu](http://www.europensemble.eu)

 **2. Projects of intercomprehension** : **EuRom4, EuRom5,**

**EuroComRom** (The 7 sieves) <http://www.atelierdeslangues.ch/module/2/1/4>

**CLOM** – for the young publics: <http://clom-ic.francophonie.org/> It speaks to:

The teachers of primary and secondary schools of French as a foreign language, a second language, the mother tongue, and of other Romance languages of all the countries of the world.

    To students who have chosen the professions of teaching languages.

To any person interested in the question of multilinguism and wishing to discover and/or deepen that new approach.

N.B. that course is dedicated to the teaching of intercomprehension in Romance languages. For following it mastery of the French language is needed.

**c.** Learning online: <https://fr.babbel.com/>

One finds out that the teaching centred on a perfect knowledge of a language gives way more and more to a pedagogy leaving the choice of one or another way of formation to the learner.

On the other hand the CEFR no more imposes equal competences of listening and reading, speaking and writing on the learners, as those competences can be on different levels (evaluation takes them into consideration separately).

The Europasses are now designed according to the headings of the **framework of self-evaluation** of the CEFR. Example :

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Language** | **Understanding** | **Oral expression** | **Writing** |
| Listening | Reading | Conversation | Oral presentation | Written expression |
| fr | C2 |  | C2 |  | C2 |  | C2 |  | C2 |  |
| en | B2 |  | B2 |  | B1 |  | B1 |  | B1 |  |
| ge | B2 |  | B1 |  | A2 |  | A1 |  | A1 |  |
| sp | B2 |  | B2 |  | A1 |  | A1 |  | A1 |  |
| hun | B1 |  | A2 |  | A2 |  | A2 |  | A1 |  |
|  | (\*) Levels of CEFR |

A person is on different levels of one or another competence. Perfection in one or the other competence is only demanded for particular professions.

**Conclusions**

The new forms of learning languages are numerous and more “permissive” than formerly. They are less compelling for the learners, sometimes with “free access”, and adapted to the motivations/needs of the target public (adults, medical doctors, children, scientists, foreign workers etc.).

Europe must keep its natural languages of communication and its cultures in spite of the globalisation which asserts English as a common language.

A solution for learning at schools: choosing some other language than English **as the first foreign language**; **choosing English as the 2nd or 3rd language**, for it is anyhow present a little everywhere in our spheres of communication.

Translated from French by Wolfgang Rank