

**Scientific Report of  
the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop on**

**Mapping linguistic diversity  
in multicultural contexts**

held in Siena, Italy,  
15-17 September 2006

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## 1. Executive summary

Diversity, in particular linguistic and cultural diversity, is a topic of core concern in the current political and academic debate across the world. It is referred to as a main asset for development and human welfare at a global level, as stated, for instance, in Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO 2001): “Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature”. At the European level, diversity is seen as the core concept of European identity, and *United in Diversity* is the motto proposed by the European Constitution.

Furthermore, the processes of European integration, enlargement, new migration flows, and the compression of time and space induced by globalisation bring diversity to the forefront, facing policy-makers with formidable new questions on such different areas as migration, labour market, education and language policies as well as on the social, cultural and political structure of increasingly multicultural cities. Yet, the knowledge base to support and guide policy elaboration on diversity is still weak. In particular, the elaboration of evidence-based policy-making is hampered by the lack of adequate methodologies and data for mapping and measuring diversity in comparable ways across Europe.

The aim of the workshop was to bring together scholars who from different points of views, from different disciplines, and with different approaches and methodologies, deal with the topic of diversity, and in particular linguistic diversity, both in terms of RM and IM languages. The workshop intended to:

- identify specific data bases, needs and methodological requirements in different research communities faced with the challenges of mapping and measuring diversity;
- explore language use as a base for mapping diversity under the four dimensions of language spread, the role of language as a marker of identity, its dynamics, and its role in policy frameworks;
- explore established and new methodologies for collecting data on linguistic diversity and their integration into a methodological framework addressing needs and requirements previously identified;
- compare the European state of knowledge in this domain with current initiatives being undertaken in other parts of the world (in particular Australia, Israel, Japan, and South Africa).
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The final objective was to provide the European research community with a blueprint for mapping linguistic diversity, and to identify needs and methodological requirements for carrying out meaningful empirical research on diversity in multicultural environments.

## 2. Scientific content

The workshop programme consisted of five sessions on Friday, 15 September (16.00 – 19.00), Saturday 16 September (9.00 – 13.00 and 14.30 – 19.30), and Sunday 16 September (9.00 – 13.30). As planned, each session focused on a particular domain of dealing with linguistic diversity.

### Session 1

#### *Mapping linguistic diversity: conceptual and methodological issues*

Barni and Extra presented the rationale and the goals of the workshop, and its expected outcomes. Poulain’s presentation focused on a typological description of the data available at the European level concerning diversity from a statistical perspective. Telmon’s paper was

distributed to the participants: its focus was on the definition of the concept of linguistic minorities, taking into consideration the Italian legislation on this topic as a case study.

## **Session 2**

### ***Mapping regional minority (RM) languages in Europe***

This session consisted in the presentation and discussion of various research projects carried out in Europe for mapping RM languages. Williams reported some recent developments in relation to Welsh in the United Kingdom, both in terms of language use and language policy. The focus of Gorter's paper was on language survey research covering the territory of the province of Friesland in the Netherlands. The paper written by Cenoz and presented by Gorter reported research on the status of the Basque language in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) following attempts to reverse language shift in the context of a strong official language policy. In all presentations the actual use of the RM languages under discussion was decreasing in spite of revival efforts. The aim of Yagmur's paper was to present the linguistic situation in Turkey in terms of historical and present diversity. Brizic, taking into account minority groups in Austria (in particular the Turkish minority), presented the results of a qualitative study demonstrating that school success and bilingual proficiency go hand in hand.

In all presentations serious weaknesses in the European policy-making process were identified in that the information base to support policy initiatives on diversity is still weak. In particular, the elaboration of evidence-based policy-making is hampered by the lack of adequate methodologies and data for mapping and measuring diversity in comparable ways.

## **Session 3**

### ***Mapping immigrant minority (IM) languages in Europe***

The third session consisted in the presentation and discussion of various research projects carried out across Europe for mapping IM languages. The rationale, goals, design, and major outcomes of language surveys in major multicultural cities across European nation-states were presented using different approaches and methodologies.

Lüdi presented the status quo of IM languages in Switzerland using data obtained by the latest Swiss census. Extra and Yagmur presented the *Multilingual Cities Project*, a co-ordinated large-scale home language survey carried out in six multicultural cities across Europe, using sociolinguistic questionnaires for investigating both the distribution and vitality of IM languages at home. Caubet introduced the new concept of *Les Langues de France*, and its sociocultural implications at the national and European level. Barni presented the Italian situation focusing on the interaction between Italy's longstanding indigenous plurilingualism and the new plurilingualism brought by immigrants, and its potential outcomes.

The outcomes of these sessions can be summarized as follows. Migration is a social phenomenon, in which language acts as a catalyst, shaping forms of identity and providing a focal point for the reformulation of identities. In this sense linguistic diversity assumes a central position, because it encompasses many issues surrounding learning the language of the host communities in order to survive and integrate socially and professionally, and because contact with new languages and cultures calls into question the cultural and linguistic identity at the individual and social level of all communities within a given area.

For this reason the present research outcomes are pertinent to a number of disciplines (sociolinguistics, linguistic ecology, language teaching, linguistic landscaping) in which data on IM languages are analysed according to their possible effects and interpretations, and not solely as quantitative or qualitative data. The applicative spin-off of this type of research, i.e., a systematic study of the distribution and vitality of IM languages, constitutes a necessary

cognitive tool for a cultural policy of linguistic diffusion, and for the planning of social intervention for IM groups by institutions responsible for handling intercultural contacts.

The findings of the projects presented show that using more than one language is a way of life for an increasing number of people across Europe. The data make clear that mainstream and non-mainstream languages should not be conceived in terms of competition. Rather the data show that these languages are used alternatively, depending on such factors as type of context and interlocutor. The data also reveal that the use of other languages at home does not occur at the cost of competence in the mainstream language.

#### **Session 4**

##### ***Crosscontinental perspectives***

The aim of this session was to compare the European state of knowledge with current initiatives being undertaken in other parts of the world. In particular surveys on language diversity carried out in Israel, Japan, and South Africa were presented. Van der Merwe presented ongoing work on the Language Atlas of South Africa, showing differences and shift in the use of languages from 1991 to 2001, based on census data. Kipp's paper, distributed to the participants, presented the situation of Australia where multilingualism has always been a national reality and made clear how questions on language use in the National Census can provide an excellent large-scale picture of linguistic demography. Backhaus examined emerging multilingualism in Japan, in particular in Tokyo, using the linguistic landscaping perspective. For the mapping of linguistic diversity, linguistic landscaping is a useful tool, but it should be used in combination with other methodologies and research tools. Shohamy presented the outcomes of research on language mapping and language testing in Israel, and stressed the ideological danger inherent in mapping languages and the risks of exclusion of people based on language use.

#### **Session 5**

##### ***Conclusions and outlook***

In this session output perspectives of the workshop, both in short and longer terms, were discussed as shown in section 3 of this report.

### 3. Outcomes

#### Short-term ambitions

The papers presented at the workshop will be redrafted and brought together in a coherent book publication under the editorship of Monica Barni (Siena, Italy) and Guus Extra (Tilburg, the Netherlands). The editors will also be responsible for an introductory chapter with an outline of the rationale and contents of the book. Redrafting will be based on feedback during the workshop and on agreed upon format demands in terms of contents, lay-out, and length. The redrafted papers will be available at the end of 2006 or in January 2007 ultimately. First contacts with interested publishing houses have already been established.

#### Long-term ambitions

Long-term ambitions have been spelled out during the workshop in twofold directions.

Given the lack of crossnationally comparable and/or valid data on IM groups in Europe, contacts will be established with EuroStat, the EU office for crossnational statistics in Luxembourg. Derived from experiences in non-European countries with a longer history of collecting nation-wide data on patterns of immigration and minorisation, proposals will be worked out for crossnational pilot studies focused upon the collection of data on nationality, birth country, self-categorisation (in terms of ancestry or ethnicity), and home language use. The table below gives an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of each of these criteria.

Criteria for the definition and identification of population groups in a multicultural society (P/F/M = person/father/mother) (source: Extra & Yağmur, *Urban Multilingualism in Europe*, 2004:31)

| Criterion                  | Advantages  | Disadvantages   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Nationality (NAT) (P/F/M)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>objective</li> <li>relatively easy to establish</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(intergenerational) erosion through naturalisation or double NAT</li> <li>NAT not always indicative of ethnicity/identity</li> <li>some (e.g., ex-colonial) groups have NAT of immigration country</li> </ul>  |
| Birth country (BC) (P/F/M) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>objective</li> <li>relatively easy to establish</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intergenerational erosion through births in immigration country</li> <li>BC not always indicative of ethnicity/identity</li> <li>invariable/deterministic: does not take account of dynamics in society (in contrast of all other criteria)</li> </ul> |
| Self-categorisation (SC)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>touches the heart of the matter</li> <li>emancipatory: SC takes account of person's own conception of ethnicity/identity</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>subjective by definition: also determined by language/ethnicity of interviewer and by spirit of times</li> <li>multiple SC possible</li> <li>historically charged, especially by World War II experiences</li> </ul>                                   |
| Home language (HL)         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HL is most significant criterion of ethnicity in communication processes</li> <li>HL data are prerequisite for government policy in areas such as public information or education</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complex criterion: who speaks what language to whom and when?</li> <li>language is not always core value of ethnicity/identity</li> <li>useless in one-person households</li> </ul>  |

The table reveals that there is no simple solution to the identification problem. Different criteria may complement and strengthen each other. Most European statistics on IM groups are based on the criteria of nationality and/or birth country. Complementary or alternative criteria in terms of self-categorisation (ancestry or ethnicity) and home language use have

been suggested and used in various countries with a longer immigration history, and, for this reason, with a longstanding history of collecting census data on multicultural population groups. This holds in particular for non-European English-dominant immigration countries like Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the USA. The utilisation of ethnicity and home language criteria would also lead to *convergence* in the definition and identification of RM and IM groups.

Contacts with EuroStat on these issues will be established in cooperation with Michel Poulain of the THESIM research group at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium (THESIM = Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration).

A second long-term ambition spelled out during the workshop in Siena is to establish common ground for crossnational and crosscontinental cooperation in acquiring funding in the context of the seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission. The focus of cooperation will be on mapping linguistic diversity in multicultural urban environments, in particular in the following three domains:

- the private domain of the home;
- the public domain of the street;
- the educational domain of the school.

Research on linguistic diversity in the private domain of the home deals with patterns of language choice in intra- and intergenerational interaction between family members, in particular with patterns of language maintenance or language shift. Research on linguistic diversity in the public domain of the street deals with the visual landscape of verbal information: which language repertoires are represented in street signs in multicultural urban environments? Research on linguistic diversity in the educational domain of the school deals with such issues as the (mis)match between the language of the home and the school in terms of (non-)utilisation of linguistic resources, and the operationalisation and testing of multilingual repertoires.

In the European context, multicultural cities will be included which operate in both Germanic- and Romance-dominant environments. In the crosscontinental context, multicultural cities will be included in three countries with longstanding but very different experiences in gaining insights in multicultural environments. These countries and cities are Australia (Melbourne), Israel (Jerusalem or Tel Aviv), and South Africa (Cape Town). In all cases, research groups with longstanding experiences in data collection in these domains will be involved.

## 4. Final programme

*Every presentation consists of 30 minutes for delivery and 20 minutes for discussion.*

### Friday 15 September 2006

Morning/afternoon *Arrival to Siena and Registration*

16.00-16.10 **Massimo Vedovelli**, *Welcome*

16.10-16.30 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**

**Milena Zic-Fuchs** (Standing Committee for the Social Sciences)

#### **Session 1: Mapping linguistic diversity: conceptual and methodological issues**

16.30-17.20 **Monica Barni & Guus Extra**, *Macro and micro perspectives on mapping linguistic diversity*

17.20-17.40 Coffee break

17.40-18.30 **Michel Poulain**, *The challenges of European migration statistics*

20.00 *Dinner*

### Saturday 16 September 2006

#### **Session 2: Mapping regional minority languages in Europe and Turkey**

09.30-10.20 **Colin Williams**, *Welsh in the United Kingdom*

10.20-11.10 **Durk Gorter**, *Frisian in the Netherlands*

11.10-11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30-12.10 **Jasone Cenoz**, *Basque in Spain* (paper presented by Durk Gorter)

12.10-13.00 **Katharina Brizic & Kutlay Yağmur**, *Mapping linguistic variation in Turkey*

13.00 *Lunch*

#### **Session 3: Mapping immigrant minority languages in Europe**

15.00-15.45 **George Lüdi**, *Immigrant languages in Switzerland*

15.45-16.30 **Guus Extra & Kutlay Yağmur**, *Immigrant minority languages in Europe: crossnational perspectives on mapping linguistic diversity*

16.30-17.00 *Coffee break*

17.00-17.45 **Dominique Caubet**, *Languages of France*

17.45-18.30 **Monica Barni**, *Immigrant languages in Italy*

20.00 *Dinner*

### Sunday 17 September 2006

#### **Session 4: Crosscontinental perspectives**

09.00-09.50 **Isaac van der Merwe**, *The language atlas of South Africa: distribution and change*

9.50-10.40 **Peter Backhaus**, *Languages in Tokyo*

10.40-11.10 *Coffee break*

11.10-12.20 **Elana Shohamy**, *Languages in Israel*

#### **Session 5: Conclusions and outlook**

12.20-13.30 *Discussion*

13.30 *Lunch*

Afternoon *Departure*

## 5. List of participants

### Convenors:

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*\* Not able to participate, but paper sent in as requested for discussion*

*\*\* Not able to participate*

## 6. Statistical information on participants

Number of participants invited: 18

Number of participants present: 14

Participants by gender (participants not present in brackets):

Men: 9 (+2)

Women: 5 (+2)

Participants by age (participants not present in brackets):

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| 25-35 years old | 1      |
| 35-50 years old | 3 (+1) |
| 50-65 years old | 8 (+3) |

Participants by country (participants not present in brackets)

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| Australia       | (1)     |
| Austria         | 1       |
| Belgium         | 1       |
| Croatia         | 1       |
| France          | 1       |
| Israel          | 1       |
| Italy           | 2 (+2)  |
| Japan           | 1       |
| South Africa    | 1       |
| Spain           | (1)     |
| Switzerland     | 1       |
| The Netherlands | 3       |
| United Kingdom  | 1       |
| Total           | 14 (+4) |