Multilingualism for all:
Towards Common Standards for European Linguistic Diversity

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Overview of presentation

- European Linguistic Diversity
- European Charter for RMLs
- Unesco Language Vitality Index
- Examples: Frisian, Welsh, Catalan
- Common Standards: Charter & CEFR
- Research Agenda
European Linguistic Diversity

- Council of Europe (1949; 47 states):
  6 working languages
  > hundreds of living languages
- European Union (1957; 27 states):
  23 official / working languages
  > 60 Regional and Minority Languages
  > 175 Migrant Languages

Reality: No monolingual states
EU Linguistic Reality

- 60 RMLs >>>> 10% of EU population
- 175 Immigrant Languages
- 45 – 50 million RML speakers
- Millions of Immigrant Language speakers in all EU member states =
- All EU states Multilingual Societies >>>>
- Co-responsibility for language planning with national and regional authorities
Council of Europe Charter for RMLs (1998)

- To protect and to promote RMLs = programmatic approach
- Domains: education / justice / public services / media / culture / social life
- All inclusive spirit > holistic approach
- Monitoring system:
  - International Committee of Experts
  - National Consulting Body
Council of Europe Charter for RMLs (1998)

- Application at national level
- Entry exam for new EU states (2004)

However:
- 25 ratifications (< 47 CoE member states)
- 13 ratifications (< 27 EU member states)
EU Language Policy (1)

• Fund. Rights (art. 22): EU shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity
• Linguistic diversity: all languages are equal and equally treated
• Barcelona (2002): Mother tongue + 2
• Action Plan 2004-2006
• Communication 2005; 2008
• Co-operation with Council of Europe
EU Language Policy (2)

However:
- Mother tongue = state language
- Principle of “subsidiarity”
- Process of mainstreaming
- No Agency for Linguistic Diversity prevents EU Language Policy in favour of RMLs & discourages vitality of RMLs
EU Network Initiatives

- EU Parliament initiatives:
  - EBLUL (1982-2010): 19 MSC’s

- Language Boards’ initiative:
  - Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (2009): 11 regional authorities + 17 NGOs (www.npld.eu)
Initiatives to research agenda

- 2010-2012: European Network of Universities on Multilingualism (EUNoM): 7 full partners & followers
  http://eunom.uoc.edu

- 2011-2013: EU Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism / Poliglotti: 30 partners
  www.poliglotti4.eu
Research Agenda Themes

- Personal multilingualism
- Multilingualism of Society
  
or:
  
- Corpus Planning
- Status Planning
- Language Acquisition Planning
  
or:
  
- (all inclusive) Language Vitality
Unesco Language Vitality (2003)

- Absolute number of speakers
- Proportion of speakers within the total population
- Availability of materials for language education and literacy
- Response to new domains and media
- Intergenerational language transmission
- Community member’s attitudes towards their own language
- Shifts in domains of language use
- Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use
- Type and quality of documentation
Language Vitality factors (6)

- (1) Intergenerational transmission
- (2) Absolute number and (3) proportion of speakers
- (4) Trends / shift in domains
- (5) Response to new domains & media
- (6) Materials for Education and Literacy
Language Vitality factors (3)

- (7) Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes & Politics
- (8) Community Member’s Attitudes towards their own languages
- (9) Documentation (& corpus planning)
Tools for Common Approach

multilingualism of society:

- Unesco Vitality Index
- Charter RMLs (signed) undertakings
- Common European Framework of Reference – Grid (can do) and levels

individual multilingualism:

- Language Portfolio (electronic)
- Student Monitoring System L1-L2-Lf
Example: Vitality of Frisian

- (2) 350,000 mother tongue speakers
- (3) 54% of population of Friesland
- Language command of all 640,000 inhabitants province of Fryslân:
  - 94% Understanding
  - 74% Speaking
  - 65% Reading
  - 17% Writing
Example: Vitality of Frisian

- (1) weak position in language mixed families
- (6) marginal position in education
  > Charter RMLs - level: ii / iii
- (7) strong provincial support, but weak national legislation
- (8) vacillating attitude: awareness - but no consequent language use
Example: Vitality of Welsh

- (1) Threatened language transmission in mixed families, but: TWF initiative & Mudiad Meithrin good attempts to Reversing Language Shift
- (2) + (3) Census Data 2011:
- (4) All domains covered (also church !)
- (5) Welsh is ‘cool’ – but ‘cool enough’?
Example: Vitality of Welsh

(6) Welsh in education is strong: subject, medium, continuity, quality
> Charter RMLs - level i
Advantage: students take GCDSE & GNVQ external examinations in Welsh

But: 50% of parents in favour, only 20% of children receive bilingual education
Therefore: “micro-language planning”
Example: Vitality of Welsh

- (7) Strong support by Welsh Assembly and Welsh Language Act, *result of process of Devolvement of Power*

- (8) Strong Attitudes among authorities at all levels, but … *lip service & window dressing*
Example: Vitality of Welsh

- (8) Active in use (orally & in writing) in all domains, but …
- Visibility of the language = linguistic landscape
- (9) Corpus Planning, including electronic media applications
Example: Vitality of Catalan

• (1) 52% Catalan; 41% Spanish
• (2) Catalunya (6 Million):
  97.5% can understand
  90.5 % can read
  85 % can speak
  62.3 % can write
• (4) + (5): a “must” in all domains
Example: Vitality of Catalan

(6): Standardisation ("normalisation")
Catalan medium of instruction at all
levels of education
& immersion programmes
& trilingual education programmes
> Charter RMLS – level i

Inspectorate of Autonomous Region
Example: Vitality of Catalan

(7): strong support by autonomous government of Catalunya; Statute of Autonomy (1979) includes Catalan Language Act

(8): strong pro-Catalan and anti-Madrid attitude; activistic use in all domains

(9): Bilingual newspaper “El Periodico” plenty of documentation, standardisation etc.
Unesco Index & CoE Charter

• Description of individual languages within one state
  (no cross border descriptions)
• Lack of overarching common understanding &
• Lack of common policy
• Comex’ frustrations on implementation
Options for Action

- “Dim byd”
- Common Policies of CoE & EU
- Research projects towards:
  - common understanding
  - pre-conditions for common policies
Research Agenda (1)

- Comparative studies on Charter: levels of signed undertakings from part III
- Comparative studies on CEFR: intended target levels for RML / IML education
- Vitality Index: redefinition of subscales and concept of “plurilingualism”
Research Agenda (2)

- Comparative studies on CEFR: comparable results of L1 - L2 - Lf
- Student Monitoring System L1 - L2 - Lf
- Multilingual education:
  - continuity of curriculum
  - content & language integrated learning
  - teacher qualifications (Lisbon Treaty!)
- Redefining Plurilingual Literacy
Comparative Studies

- Euromosaic (1996; 2004; 2009) with “ranking” of RMLs on 7 domains.
- Mercator Study (2007)
  Development of Minimum Standards on Language Education in RMLs
  - Based on Mercator Regional Dossiers &
  - National reports on Charter for RMLs
Member States & Languages

- Austria: Slovenian, Croatian
- Germany: Sorbian
- Netherlands: Frisian
- Slovakia: Hungarian
- Slovenia: Italian
- Spain: Catalan
- Sweden: Sami
- United Kingdom: Welsh
Charter Article 8: Education

- Teaching OF and teaching IN
- Pre-primary provisions
- Primary school
- Secondary education
- Teacher training
- Adult education
Levels of ratification

- Level i: immersion / language of instruction
- Level ii: substantial part
- Level iii: integral part
- Level iv: on request of parents
Themes of analysis

- Educational goals & models
- Time spent
- Teaching materials
- Teacher training
- Inspectorate
- Legal position
Comex’ interpretation art. 8

- Level i: the minority language is used at school for more than 50% of lessons
- Level ii: “Substantial part”: in primary education – more than 6 hours per week in secondary education: 30% of education time
- Level iii: “Integral part”: in primary education several subjects in secondary education at least the minority language as a compulsory subject
Application of CEFR (2001)

- Common European Framework of Reference
- Grid of Language skills: listening, reading, talking and speaking, writing
- Levels:
  - A: Threshold / B: Way stage / C: Mastery
  - can do – statements for L1, L2, Lf
  - parallel assessments of L1, L2, Lf
Language Vitality Planning

- Balance of community language will and infrastructure / programmes on:
- Corpus planning / standardisation
- Status planning / legislation
- Language transmission / learning
Towards EU Language Policy

- Legal base / Treaty partner to European Charter for RML
- Eurobarometer on Languages: Mother tongue + father tongue / Language of preference
- Vitality & empowerment of all languages
- Co-responsibility in stead of “subsidiarity”
- Aiming at “inclusiveness” of RML / IML
- Partnership to permanent networks of stakeholders for regular strategic review
References


- The Development of Minimum Standards on Language Education in RMLs (2007)

- Euromosaic (1996; 2004; 2009) summary:

- Trilingual Primary Education in Europe (2011)