The LEARNMe White Paper on Linguistic Diversity:
abridged version

Mercator Network of Language Diversity Centres

WHITE PAPER ON LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

 A product of the LEARNMe project
(Language and Education Addressed through Research and Networking by Mercator)

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The document is an abridged version of the full White Paper on Linguistic Diversity, which is the result of a three-year international network project, LEARNMe (2013-2015), funded through the European Commission's Life Long Learning Programme. During this project, **Linguistic Diversity (LD)** was considered from the perspectives of policy, research and practice. This abridged paper briefly summarises the project, its background, reasoning and process, but its main focus is on the recommendations or considerations for policy makers, researchers and practitioners, with special regard to language policy and practice, education, media and legal regulations.

For the reader who is interested in a fuller and more detailed account, the White Paper itself, the Final Conference proceedings and the three separate Position Papers (PP below) produced within the project, will be of interest. The three Position Papers contain summaries of the three LEARNMe workshops (WS below, held in Aberystwyth, Wales, UK in 2013, Stockholm, Sweden in 2014 and Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain in 2015) and the presentations made during them[1]. They include the challenges of scientific-theoretic discussions, presentations of policy decisions and their implementation, as well as conceptual and practical aspects. The first draft of the White Paper was discussed at the Final Conference (held in Budapest, Hungary in 2015) and the Conference has also informed the recommendations and findings of the final version of the White Paper. In addition, the full White Paper contains a selection of summaries of research presentations, and a number of best practice recommendations are provided. Copies of all these documents as well as additional video material and full presentations can be found at our Website: http://www.learnme.eu

The development of the WP and the project itself have had valuable input from three invited external researchers, whose contributions included comments on earlier versions of this paper. These experts were Professor Jeroen Darquennes from the University of Namur, Belgium, Professor Tom Moring from the University of Helsinki, Finland, and Dr Eithne O'Connell from Dublin City University, Ireland. We sincerely thank them for their contributions.

Special mention should also be made of the role of David Forniès and Maria Areny of the Centre Internacional Escarré per les Minories i les Nacions (CIEMEN) in Barcelona, a

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[1] The three workshops were entitled *"Revisiting, reanalysing and redefining research on linguistic diversity: media, education and policy"* with an emphasis on **media** in the first workshop, **education** in the second and **policy** in the third.

partner organization during the first two years of the project as well as during the planning stage in 2012. CIEMEN had to withdraw as a formal partner in the project at the end of 2014 and was replaced by the University of Barcelona. David Forniès and Maria Areny contributed as full partners to the first two Workshops and Position Papers and as participants in the third workshop and the Final Conference.

The language of this report

Discussing issues related to LD but doing so only in English presents a potential paradox. On the one hand, the contemporary *lingua franca* of research is English, and much of the frontline development of new theories, concepts and ideas takes place in that language, even among researchers whose native tongue is not English. On the other hand, relying only on English brings with it the danger of (re)producing a skewed discourse on linguistic diversity. This risk may be increased by the fact that most international documents, legislation etc., are drafted in English, albeit occasionally in parallel with a few other languages, for example in French, as is the practice within the EU or Council of Europe (CoE) contexts. These English language originals are often translated into other languages, as are the keywords and concepts used in them.

However, we believe that the risk of English bias was averted to a reasonable extent by a combination of factors. First of all, although the transnational oral and written exchanges of our network took place mostly in English, the modest percentage of native English speakers taking part in the network was in itself a guarantee against Anglo-centric biases (and most of the native English speakers were at least bilingual). Secondly, the multinational and multilingual composition of the network assured that a variety of research traditions and sociolinguistic sensibilities were taken into account; the inclusion in the debates of concepts such as *Ausbau, semilingualism* or *linguistic normalization*, or the attention to Roma and sign language communities, stemming from German, Scandinavian, Catalan, Hungarian and Welsh sociolinguistic traditions respectively, bear witness to this wider approach. Thirdly, the presentation of numerous case studies from a large variety of situations increased the cross-linguistic validity of the conclusions. We therefore believe that our findings and considerations have been tried and tested in many language contexts. However we welcome further consideration of them in other languages and from other contexts, and in the spirit of linguistic diversity we recommend researchers to also engage with these issues in their own oral, written or signed languages. Materials in various languages other than English have been published on the website of the LEARNMe project as part of the multilingual dimension of this project.

The Aims of the LEARNMe project

The aims in short of the project were as follows.
We wanted to:

- create an accessible understanding of the challenges and problems of LD, as well as point out possible solutions;
- provide policy guidelines/recommendations for policy stakeholders in the field, as well as for practitioners; these guidelines/recommendations are meant to provide an outline of how multilingual needs of lesser-used languages, as a role model for other languages, can be approached;
- find how implicit or explicit policies on multilingualism and linguistic diversity can be effective through education, and clarify for what purposes this is necessary; (education being understood widely from the beginning, as was the concept of lesser-used languages, which for us included regional or minority languages, migrant languages and sign languages);
- understand how the above-mentioned points relate to the understanding of the concept of LD in policy terms;
- promote equality of all languages and the availability of the learning of all languages in an academic context, involving the educational practice and policy makers;
- actively involve educational professionals, practitioners, academics and policy makers, inviting them to workshops and to the final conference and to contribute to the content and promotion of a final white paper;
- bring together representatives and stakeholders from various angles to formulate policy recommendations for a better support to linguistic diversity in the EU's educational systems;
- use the lesser-used languages as a showcase, since they are natural laboratories for multilingual societies and multilingual educational models; best practices in this field are taken as examples in the Position Papers and the White Paper;
- confront existing prejudice and support the normalization of the European linguistic reality of diversity; and finally,
- to aim at the inclusion of multilingualism from an early age into the educational practice across the educational careers of all; this could increase the prestige of all languages and contribute to reducing the percentage of early school leavers.

In order to achieve these goals, we wanted to bring together actors in the fields of importance to LD: experts, educators, community organizations, grassroots organizations, researchers, and policy makers from different backgrounds and all levels.

Linguistic Diversity: Context

The LEARNMe project (2013-2015) set out ambitiously to develop new insights and create recommendations on an intensely debated issue that is acutely present and of crucial importance in many parts of the world today, namely *Linguistic Diversity* (LD below). Not only is the phenomenon of LD of *societal* importance, but it is also a challenge for any *individual* in this globalized and transnational world of ours. In addition, due to rapid changes in terms of international and national *legislation*, the increasing role of *civil society*, constant and increasing *mobility*, economic uncertainty, changing socio-economic compositions and varying degrees of *access to education*, the growth of *social media* and *ICT*, LD and *multilingualism* have become even more highlighted as pressing challenges for societal and personal activities,. There are different ways of dealing with such dimensions of change and changeability, not all of which have their roots in present-day demographic changes or mobility.

Europe has a long history of LD, in and between its regions, countries and states. LD has been stated as part of the cultural heritage of Europe. This is and has been reflected in various national strategic and political statements as well as within the European Union (EU)[2] and the Council of Europe (CoE). There are well-grounded beliefs that lived linguistic diversity and attempts to promote it are beneficial for the cohesion, mobility, productivity and stability of the European Union, which is also why it has become one of the cornerstones of European cooperation. However, LD is a challenging and dynamic concept that must be constantly revisited, reanalyzed and redefined in order to fully understand its impact and relevance in all parts of the European Union and beyond. Furthermore, it is clear that Europe is entering into a new era of multilingualism, in which innovative ideas on how the traditional multilingualism of Europe can be used as a resource that can be adapted to address the needs of the migration waves of the last years, should be seen as one of its crucial challenges.

This new era, in which the well-being of and support towards the traditional European multilingualism should be part of the investment for the future, offers some particularly worrying signals to the very existence of linguistic minorities. At the moment – and despite a wide range of EU, EC (European Commission) and EP (European Parliament)

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[2]'It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.' Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12008M003

'The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.' Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/charter/index_en.htm

recommendations – language policies, their implementations, practices and legal regulations vary greatly from country to country in Europe. There also persists a gap between European official rhetoric, the national level implementation of measures supporting LD, and research findings. Frequently, established knowledge based on research is not taken into account in such situations nor is it always interpreted or understood as intended by research. Educational issues are at the core of such discourses and interpretations, in which different languages i are attributed different levels of prestige and importance. Therefore, linguistic assimilation continues to pose a widespread threat to the possibilities of achieving equitable social and educational conditions for all – thus influencing everyone's well-being – as well as jeopardizing the promotion of Europe's cultural heritage. In short, both the situations of speakers and learners of vulnerable languages, as well as the languages themselves, are constantly under threat.

There are several reasons for this state of affairs. One is that from many ideological perspectives, often based on economic-ideological explanations, LD is seen as an unwanted dimension in territorially defined European geopolitical spaces, both historically and at present. Another is, as already mentioned, that the results of research are not easily perceived, nor are they always effectively communicated or packaged in ways that politics can take them into account. Thirdly, there are widespread, resistant negative attitudes regarding the phenomena of LD and multilingualism, which are value-laden and not easily influenced. A fourth reason is that in key European documents (European Charter of Fundamental Rights; The Barcelona Objectives on Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity; European Commission communication COM(2003)449), LD is understood to be a single, unified phenomenon, which is in stark contrast with the interpretations and effects such objectives have had at national levels.

There is thus reason to believe that mapping and identifying different interpretations of linguistic diversity according to language context, historical approaches, political landscape and language policies could help to clarify how the different levels of implementation of international agreements and national policies have developed. Furthermore, it could reveal why principles that are seen on the one hand as cultural and political cornerstones of Europe (as well as being perceived as beneficial), remain on the other hand highly contested in practice.

In this context, education and language learning are clearly at the core of views on LD, as is the implementation of language and educational policies, at all levels of education, and in formal as well as informal learning situations. However, the knowledge of how such educational issues, research, local contexts, language policies and the lived experiences of speakers of various languages actually combine together is quite

restricted. Such knowledge needs to go beyond the currently limited number of informed researchers and stakeholders. A dimension of vital importance is also the role of the media, especially at the national and local levels and the ways in which these factors are discussed.

The concept of LD and its impact are very much core issues in a multitude of research fields, including education, ethnology, sociology, sociolinguistics, legal studies, political studies, media studies and language policy and planning studies, to name a few. But since LD is interpreted and discussed in much wider circles of society, the results of research undertaken need to be provided so that they explicitly and critically discuss the challenges and problems of LD and multilingualism in vulnerable situations. For example, while the emphasis is placed clearly on education, at the same time, the differences and similarities that exist between various levels of legislative frameworks as well as local practices need to be discussed at international, European, state/national and regional/local contexts.

Consequently, lesser-used or minority/minoritized languages, language learning, and educational and language policies are influenced by a host of other societal, ideological, historical, legal and cultural factors. Across the European Union there are marked differences in languages' legal positions and status, territorial distribution, the roles of standard variants, the use of lesser-used or minority languages in institutional domains, in media, in business and commerce, all of which impact on the communicative context in which also all education processes are located.

A main emphasis in this project is placed on education, where language policies are implemented, and where research results and practical experiences of promoting various languages are communicated and considered. By making accessible adequate knowledge on education, linguistic diversity and multilingualism, and by identifying educational practitioners and policy makers as two main target groups, we hope to be able to fulfill the ambitious aims of the project[3]. This process, however, cannot succeed without the involvement and presentation of research in various fields.

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[3] For example, Norberg Brorsson, Birgitta & Jarmo Lainio 2015. Flerspråkiga elever och deras tillgång till utbildning och språk i skolan. Implikationer för lärarutbildningen. Uppföljningsrapport till EUCIM-TE -projektet. Litteratur och språk, nr 10 (2015). Ed. Ingemar Haag. Eskilstuna/Västerås: Mälardalens högskola.

Our understanding of Linguistic Diversity as a concept

Our general starting point was that LD is an asset that enriches both societies and individuals, and creates fertile soil for internationally embraced targets of democratic societies and the integration of all into fact is that authors tend to coincide in that current Europe is experiencing rapid mutations as far as their languages shared societal processes. LD-friendly policies should foster equity and equality in various respects, sustainable values and empowerment of dominated groups in societies, in order to create better possibilities in the cultural-linguistic, educational and economic fields for all. The concrete targets of such measures are often made up of *plurilingual speakers* and *multilingual societies*, and equally often of *languages* that exist under more or less dominated and vulnerable conditions. One crucial foundation for our discussion is that linguistic – and cultural – diversity is seen as a corner-stone of EU cooperation and ideology, and for its language policy-making, e.g. as stated in Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union, and Articles 21(1) and 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as in many international resolutions and declarations.[4] However, on the one hand, this EU level policy has recently been restricted to cover fewer languages[5], which are typically major European, official languages taught in public schools as state languages, as second languages for migrants in those states, and as foreign languages in other EU countries. In contrast to this, lesser-used, dominated or *minoritized* languages (such as smaller state languages, co-official, regional or minority languages, migrant languages, sign languages) can foresee both less recognition in international policy documents, and find their possibilities to participate in, for example, EU language promotion initiatives, increasingly restricted.[6] They also meet with more difficulties and challenges, for example in the fields of media and education. In principle, this can be changed through insights into language planning and language policy (LPP),

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[4] See the so-called Alfonsi report (2013) for a list of these (*Report on endangered European languages and linguistic diversity in the European Union* (2013/2007(INI). http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2013-0239+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

[5] See *European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity* (http://www.npld.eu/uploads/publications/313.pdf) and *Strategic Research Agenda for Multilingual Europe 2020*, Presented by the META Technology Council. Berlin: Springer, Also available through: http://www.npld.eu/uploads/publications/214.pdf

[6] The NPLD (Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity) has worked out the *European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity*, which had an official launch in Brussels 18th of November 2015. This spells out routes to improve the situation for dominated languages in the EU in some detail (http://www.npld.eu/uploads/publications/313.pdf).

internationally and nationally. However, in the light of recent developments, this may not be feasible since the European Commission broke with tradition in 2014 did not appoint a Commissioner responsible for multilingualism.

In our Project Plan (2012), we stated that "linguistic diversity is a challenging and dynamic concept that must be constantly revisited, reanalysed and redefined in order to fully understand its impact and relevance in all parts of the European Union." We understood and foresaw some of the complexity surrounding it since its interpretation and use differed widely in different social and national contexts; it was understood differently in different disciplines as well as differently among researchers and across research approaches. We also agreed that there would be a need to widen the scope of studying it from perspectives other than a "top-down" one – as has been the case in much of language policy and planning studies – and that the lived experiences of LD needed to be reported "from the ground" and included in the deeper understanding of what LD is and what it does in different contexts – as is shown in, for example, ethnographically oriented directions of sociolinguistics.

Still, from early on we could not see a simple way of defining Linguistic Diversity, which becomes all the more logical, when in hindsight we can see that it does not stand alone; it is both covered and complemented by other concepts of similar importance and spread, such as *multilingualism* and *language diversity*. Furthermore, it is part of conceptual webs that define LD by their own use and connectedness to issues that are covered by LD, often in specified and topical ways.

Reflections on other studies

Given their democratic and multilateral basis, language policy has historically been a relevant issue for contemporary European multinational institutions. Indeed, concern with some forms of linguistic diversity was already present at the inception of the European Market, at least as far as the use of official nation-state languages was concerned, but interest for multilingualism rapidly led the European institutions to assume a growing interest in the promotion of foreign language learning, as well as the protection of minoritized/minority autochthonous languages, and even immigrant languages (Swarte *et al.* 2014).[7] Linguistic diversity, for instance, is enshrined in article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights ("The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity"), and in article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union ("It shall

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[7] Swarte, F. *et al.* (2014) 'Introduction: Minority Language in a multilingual Europe', *Us Wurk* 63 1-9

respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced."), and promoted by a number of activities (European Commission 2015). Also the Council of Europe, the task of which is among other things, to promote peaceful relations and democracy, includes languages as one core aspect of European heritage and communication conditions:

"(4) all European languages are equal in value and dignity from the cultural point of view and form an integral part of European culture and civilisation." (Council of Europe 2002)

Table 1 synthesises some of the most prominent initiatives taken during the last decades by the European Union and the Council of Europe respectively.

Table 1. Some key elements of European language policy (Language Rich Europe 2013:5)

European Union		Council of Europe	
1980s Incentive measures for multilingualism	– European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages – Erasmus – Lingua	1950s–1990s Supporting languages for all (democratic citizenship)	– Unit credit scheme – Guidance on Communicative Language Teaching – Workshops – ICT, Autonomy, exchanges – Establishment of ECML in Graz
1990s Co-operation and support for mobility	– Maastricht Treaty (1992)	1990s Regional and minority languages	– European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) – Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995)
1995–2004 Supporting the 'knowledge society'	– White Paper – Towards the Learning Society – Lisbon Strategy – Barcelona Council	1995–2004 Intercultural communication Plurilingualism	– Development of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)
2001 Coherence, awareness raising, information European year of languages	– European Language Label – Eurobarometer	2001 Coherence, awareness raising, information European year of languages	– CEFR – European Language Portfolio
2000s Promoting mobility as a right Supporting quality in language learning	– Action Plan (2003) – Increased support through funded programmes	2000s Planning, curricular development, assessment	– CEFR – European Language Portfolio development
2005 Growth/social cohesion/ individual fulfilment	– Framework Strategy for Multilingualism – Action Plan	2003–11 Language policies	– Language Education Policy Profiles in 15 countries or regions
2007 Diversity an asset	– Multilingualism Commissioner – Lifelong Learning Programme – Communication – an 'Asset and shared commitment' (2008)	2005 Languages of schooling	– Conferences and Reports

Reflection and research on linguistic diversity at a supranational, European level has been growing hand in hand with the awareness that language policy was an area of the EU or the CoE intervention. Two main approaches to the field may be distinguished.[8] On the one hand, a substantial amount of work has been done both by experts and policy makers to consider the area of linguistic diversity from a normative approach,[9] including most of initiatives of the Council of Europe Language Policy Unit[10] or the many language policy activities of the European Union (Romaine 2013)[11].

On the other hand, there is a growing amount of empirical, analytical research focused on linguistic diversity and multilingualism. Some of these research initiatives have been promoted by the very European institutions (e.g. Cullen *et al.* 2008).[12] Others have been born from academic environments and/or due to civic and cultural organizations. A short list of relatively recent examples of academic research on linguistic diversity include several projects such as, for example:

- The DYLAN (Language Dynamics and Management of Diversity)13 Project, funded under Framework Programme 6 (FP6) of the European Union. With a strong focus

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[8] Here we are concerned with research dealing with linguistic diversity from a language policy, management and planning perspective; other approaches such as that of language technologies (e.g., Rehm and Usztkoreit 2012) will not be dealt with.

[9] A non-exhaustive list might include:
- o Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)
- o European Cultural Convention (1954)
- o European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1980)
- o European Convention on Transfrontier Television (1989)
- o Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (1992)
- o European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992)
- o Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995)
- o Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005)
- o Recommendations and resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: Recommendation 1383 (1998) on linguistic diversification
- o Recommendations, resolutions and declarations of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- o Recommendation 222 on language education in regional or minority languages (2007)

[10] Language Policy Unit website < http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Domaines_EN.asp >

[11] S. Romaine, "Politics and policies of promoting multilingualism in the European Union", *Language Policy* 12:2 (2013) 115-137

[12] Cullen, J. et al. (2008). Multilingualism: Between policy objectives and implementation. Brussels: European Parliament.

[13] Website of the DYLAN *Language dynamics and management of diversity* Project < http://www.dylan-project.org/Dylan_en/home/home.php > (last visit 27/10/2015)

on language policy regarding linguistic diversity, DYLAN embraced 20 research institutions in 12 European Countries, ran for five years (2006-2011), and has left a substantial legacy that keeps growing (Seidlhofer 2011, Hüning, Vogl and Moliner (ed.) 2012)14.

- The LINEE Languages in a Network of European Excellence,15 also supported by the European Commission, was, with a stronger focus on language education, identity and economy (LINEE 2010; Rindler Schjerve & Vetter (eds.) 2012)16.
- The Medium-sized Language Communities Project17, which put together a network of European researchers to analyse the challenges of the aforementioned languages in a context of globalization (Milian-Massana 2012, Vila (ed.) 2013)18.
- The Poga - The Language Survival Network19, which united researchers on linguistic minorities from Russia and several European Countries working on the area of threatened languages (Marten et al. (ed.) 2015)20.
- The ELDIA Project European Language Diversity for All21, funded under EU-FP7, designed to contribute to the study of multilingualism and the development of language policies with a focus on several Finno-Ugric languages (Laakso et al.

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[14] B. Seidlhofer, *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011; M. Huning, U. Vogl & O. Moliner (eds), *Standard languages and multilingualism in European history.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012

[15] Website of the LINEE *Languages in a Network of European Excellence* < http://www.linee.info/ > (last visit 27/10/2015)

[16] R. Sindler Schjerve and E. Vetter (eds.), *European multilingualism: current perspectives and challenges.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2012

[17] Website of the project *The Sustainability of Medium-Sized Language Communities* < http://www.ub.edu/cusc/llenguesmitjanes/?lang=en > (last visit 27/10/2015)

[18] A. Milian i Massana, Language law and legal challenges in medium-sized language communities: a comparative perspective. Barcelona: Institut d'Etudis Autonòmics, 2012; F.X. Vila (ed.), Survival and development of language communities: prospects and challenges. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013

[19] Website of the *POGA – The Language Survival Network* < http://saami.uni-freiburg.de/poga/en/index.htm > (last visit 27/10/2015)

[20] H. Marten, M. Riessler, J. Saaraviki & R. Toivanen (eds.), Cultural and linguistic minorities in the Russian Federation and the European Union: comparative studies on equality and diversity. Cham: Springer, 2015

[21] Website of ELDIA *Project European Language Diversity for All* < http://www.eldia-project.org/ > (last visit 27/10/2015)

2013).22

- The MIME – Mobility and Inclusion in a Multilingual Europe 23, is directly involved with discovering ways in which transnational mobility and societal inclusion may be enhanced at the same time.

It should also be reminded that cultural and linguistic diversity are progressively regarded as the norm rather than the exception, and therefore more and more research all over the world include linguistic diversity as one of their by-default variables (Council for Exceptional Children 2015).

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[22] Laakso, J. *et al.* (2013) 'Summary of the Research Project ELDIA (European Language Diversity for All). Abridged version of the orginial English-language report written by Johanna Laakso, Anneli Sarhimaa, Sia Spoiliopoulou Akermark, Reetta Toivonen'

[23] Website of the *MIME – Mobility and Inclusion in a Multilingual Europe* < http://www.mime-project.org/ > (last visit 27/10/2015)

Considerations and recommendations regarding Linguistic Diversity

During the workshops and in the presentations, a host of suggestions were put forward to neutralize negative and critical developments reported about in the various studies on LD.

Some examples of the different outcomes for the discussions on LD in the three main fields of the project, language policy, media and educational fields, are given below. Due to the overlapping and interdisciplinary character of the use of LD, it is sometimes necessary to present the considerations in more open-ended ways. Research has been a main starting point, but at the same time the project has the aim of integrating practice-based experiences, as well as national society level and international policy developments. Due to the geopolitical backgrounds of the partners, central, eastern, western, northern and southern European experiences are represented. Some considerations are also based on North American and South African experiences.

The inclusion of both general themes and more specified topics makes it possible to bring in both general and deep perspectives. The three fields of language policy, media and education are combined in an overall attempt to qualify the considerations. This also creates a potential to combine top-down and bottom-up perspectives, and to integrate the collective knowledge base of several scientific disciplines.

Considerations for the general use of the concept of Linguistic Diversity

- Linguistic Diversity needs to be considered as a dynamic, non-definitive and non-finalised working-concept and term, which may require, not one general, but several context-dependent definitions and even redefinitions over time.
- In the European context, Linguistic Diversity should always include and give due recognition to different broad language groupings: 'majority' and 'minoritized languages' with their varieties, 'regional and indigenous minority languages', 'migrant minority languages' and sign languages.
- Linguistic Diversity should make reference to linguistic rights, in ways that make it possible for people to use their language(s) in a non-hostile environment.

Considerations for the use of the concept of Linguistic Diversity in politics, legislation and policy making

- In addition to the above points, policies that affect Linguistic Diversity should recognise the importance of social, economic, cultural, demographic, geographic and political conditions.
- Language policies about Linguistic Diversity should include the understanding of local practices of individual plurilingualism and societal multilingualism for the well-being of people living in any named area.
- Linguistic Diversity should reflect upon the relationship between territorial considerations and linguistic continuity across language communities, and not confine this relationship to the level of recognized states and official sub-state governance.
- Policies affecting Linguistic Diversity need to challenge prevailing definitions that are based only on restrictive and exclusive groupings of standardized state-languages, which exclude other types of languages from enjoying the same opportunities.
- Such policies, therefore, should be reconsidered so that their actions are not limited to a restricted number of state languages in, for example, internationally based funding within the EU, such as for the development of ICT tools, the promotion of linguistic rights, the facility of learning languages through mobility programs or the support for creative translation.

Considerations for researchers

- In addition to the above points, research on Linguistic Diversity should take into account the importance of social, economic, cultural, demographic, geographic and political contexts when dealing with the dynamic language relations between people, communities and agencies of governance.
- Research related to Linguistic Diversity should be connected to language vitality, in breadth and in depth, as well as to language awareness.
- In order to fulfil this, research should include considerations of the views of the language users. In fact, different types of cooperative research should be developed, in order to bring in a bottom-up perspective, in parallel with other ways of representing the knowledge on the ground among speakers, for more reliable and stable research results.
- Studies on Linguistic Diversity should also include the diversity of and between non-standardised vernacular languages.

- There is a need for more in-depth studies of individual cases, followed by generalizations from such cases, and ensuing contributions to theorization in so far as is possible. International comparative studies can give an added value to these perspectives; however, local studies remain important.
- Furthermore, research on Linguistic Diversity should give due consideration to the possibility that it has an impact on language policies and language practices. Therefore, such research should take into account the need to combine methodological perspectives.
- Researchers should give due attention to the specificities of each sociolinguistic situation when choosing theoretical perspectives, creating the design for a study, and making recommendations to LPP for each case.
- Researchers should continue their efforts to refine definitions of their concepts and theoretical frameworks, and account for their use in both academic/scientific and general/public use. In doing so, they should develop a critical and self-reflective openness to alternative views.

Considerations for the improvement of Linguistic Diversity for media

- The role of the media is crucial for the sustainability of LD for several reasons. Minority media should, for example, be able to set public agendas for collective debate, have the possibility to choose content and be encouraged to develop its linguistic potential, according to the needs of different social and linguistic groups, and it should be supported in relation to these multidimensional tasks.
- Educational provisions for minority media should be developed to meet these LD goals, and minority media both public and private should be facilitated in order to adapt to the changes in technology.
- Minority media thus need their own specific journalism training, relating to the selection of both language and content in such a way as to be able to deal with the life-worlds of the minority, on its own terms and from its own perspectives.
- Media entities and media content should better reflect societal linguistic diversity. Current media practices often monolingualize societal experiences by representing them through single language production paradigms, and hence systematically exclude or marginalise the dominated languages. As a result, majority – or dominant - language speakers are hardly ever exposed to dominated languages through the media, and this presents a skewed understanding of current linguistic diversity. Equally, such policies and practices present users of

minoritized or dominated languages with mediatized monolingualism presented as a norm.

- Social media (participatory media, new media etc.) should facilitate the use of languages and enhance LD. Major social media platforms do not allow always full participation for all languages, and currently only support official languages for some functions.
- In ICT, where language tools are being built – for example voice recognition – these models should allow all languages to be included and to participate, and should not discriminate against dominated or lesser-supported languages.
- Adequate resources should be provided to create an environment for sustainable minority media. Where markets fail, public resources should be made available. There is no logical case to be made that minority media should have media production – for example broadcasting time – allocated according to its population size. Irrespective of the numbers of speakers, the provision of media products needs to be similar to that of mainstream media, in order for the media to fulfil its supportive tasks to LD.

Considerations for educational standards in order to improve Linguistic Diversity in societies and for individuals in education

- The basic principle of education should be equity and equal access to education, not provision of identical and mainstreamed education for all.
- Educational professionals and policy makers should receive training in the fundamental aspects of child and adult plurilingualism, as well as the benefits of the sustained use of several languages, plurilingual education and multilingualism.
- All children have the right to use, develop and learn their first languages/ mother tongues, and the educational system should – from the perspective of LD – make strong efforts to promote the individual plurilingualism of children. A feasible solution implies cooperation with the users of these languages.
- Children and adults should be provided with a fair chance to develop firstly, basic literacy, and secondly, academic literacy in their languages.
- Children have a right to be given access to the language and culture of their heritage, which should be provided by the educational system.
- Children should be given optimal conditions to develop a functional and high-quality bi- or plurilingual capacity, in order for them to have an opportunity to function in and promote a multilingual society, that is, to contribute to LD.
- The functional plurilingualism of children and adults should be adapted to make it

possible to participate in a multilingual labour market.

- The functional plurilingualism of children and adults should be adapted to make it possible for them to participate in and contribute to a democratic society.

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Reflection on our findings - the added value of LEARNMe

During this project, we have been mindful to engage with other studies, research and reports as well as their recommendations on matters related to LD. In this part of the paper, we will try to distinguish and identify the added value of the LEARNMe project. Particular attention is given to areas where there is considerable concurrence or consolidation between the findings of the LEARNMe project and those presented in earlier studies. The amount and variety of research initiatives in the area of linguistic diversity in Europe and elsewhere during the last decades has grown exponentially, and any attempt to synthesise their results in a few paragraphs would not do them justice. However, it is possible to point out a handful of constants that appear once and again in the literature concerned, especially as far as linguistic diversity in Europe is concerned:

- *In Europe, there is support for LD*: In spite of multiplicity of views, there exists in Europe a widespread support for linguistic diversity and multilingualism, at least when defined in general terms, and both at societal level and at the individual level (i.e., *plurilingualism* in CoE terminology). Of course, this support should be understood in general and relative terms, and always in comparison to other societies — e.g., the US or China — where LD tends to be perceived quite generally as a hindrance to be removed[24], and language policies tend to be oriented to eliminate it. In this perspective, Europeans seem to be reasonably happy with a multilingual continent (Cullen *et al.* 2008: iii; LRE 2013).

- *There exists a large diversity of approaches vis-à-vis LD*: in spite of widespread support towards LD in general terms, the area is subject to a remarkable diversity of views. Indeed, European societies are widely different among themselves as far as how LD should be dealt with. This dissonance of opinions holds not only between geopolitical regions (e.g. Eastern vs. Central vs. Western regions, etc.) but also within them and, in many cases, even within each nation state. The diversity of views is rooted in ancient and recent local histories, political cultures, geopolitical location, etc., and affects all possible categories of language, including national languages, autochthonous minoritized/minority languages, sign languages, foreign languages, immigrants' and refugees' languages, etc. In many respects, this diversity is heavily dependent on nation states' legislation, since they use quite disparate terminologies

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[24] For example the fact that it is today forbidden in 31 states in the US to provide bilingual education in public schools (García et al. 2014).

(see below). Some of the areas of most notorious discrepancies among countries may be pointed out: the acceptance (or not) of a special role as a *lingua franca* for English, in what form, and in what direction (resisting or strengthening it?); the need of official recognition for autochthonous minoritized languages, and to what extent; the convenience (or not) of recognition of heritage languages; or the debates surrounding the half a century long tradition of providing foreign language instruction in at least two languages for all primary school children in areas such as the Nordic countries, a tradition that is now severely under pressure due to the monolithic position of English. In such a context, and not surprisingly, researchers tend to coincide in the view that that the European common language policy (e.g., the Barcelona 1+2 goal) is at best general, and indeed quite vague.

- *Researchers and public alike seem to support a (complementary) European approach*: discrepancies about how to deal with LD in general terms do not preclude that a significant number of voices see in positive terms the existence of a European approach towards LD. Indeed, even if common policies in this field may be hard to obtain, authors tend to point out that this European approach is an added value to the management of LD (Cullen *et al.* 2008: iv; LRE 2013). Some authors would favour European norms to be more binding for nation states, but this seems to be a sensitive point of political discrepancy as far as subsidiarity is concerned. Even in the case of a supranational juridical instrument such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, characterized by its high degree of discretion for nation states, «Implementation of the Charter has been limited, slow and uneven» (Cullen *et al.* 2008: vi). In any case, the major capacities of European institutions in the area of language policy lie in education and training programmes.

- *There is an increasing recognition of private, local and regional actors as language policy agents*: whereas neoclassical language policy tended to conceive language policy as something developed essentially by nation state central governments and 'implemented' on citizens, the available literature recognizes the relevance of other actors as far as language policy is concerned:

    "The state supports roughly a quarter of the initiatives identified by the study and a similar contribution is made by regional and local authorities, and by EU programs. Around a quarter of the initiatives are self-supported by the actors involved. The main actors involved at regional and local levels are: European agencies and centres; regional and local authorities;

educational enterprises; professional associations; academic and research institutions; NGO's; commercial organizations." (Cullen et al. 2008: v)

- *There exists a significant degree of terminological confusion*: the field of LD is fraught with concepts that vary from one country to another one, and even within the different nation states there exist differences in interpretation. To cite but one example, authors refer more than once to the problems involved with the variation inherent to concepts such as *national language*, *official language*, *minority language*, *minoritized language*, *lesser-used language*, *immigrant language*, *heritage language*, etc., to the extent that European institutions have been forced from time to time to clarify their understanding of some of these concepts, such as in the well-known cases of *multilingualism* (Commission of European Communities 2005) or *regional and minority languages* in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (see Cullen *et al.* 2008).

- *Most actors agree that there is a need for more research in a new, changing scenario*: the awareness that Europe is in a process of rapid process of sociolinguistic change is widespread in the recent literature. Irrespective of whether this state of change is opposed to a (probably imaginary) past where things were much more stable, the fact is that authors tend to coincide in that current Europe is experiencing rapid mutations as far as languages are concerned, that these mutations are still poorly understood, and that more research is needed in order to deal with them satisfactorily, be that in terms of economic competitiveness, social cohesion, or the preservation of cultural heritage, to mention but a few. Increasing mobility is in fact often pointed out as a factor that is crucially modifying pre-existing conditions.

- *Research on LD is not only relevant for society, but also challenging for scientific knowledge*: there exists a growing consensus that the current sociolinguistic transformation of European societies is pushing researchers to question their traditional paradigms in areas such as linguistics, sociology of language, political sciences, educational linguistics, social work, language technologies, etc. The concept of *languages* can no longer be regarded as basically a synonym of *standard national languages*, and the implications of this change in perspective are enormous for areas such as language teaching and language learning, integration of immigrants, transnational communication, and preservation of cultural heritage, to mention just a few.

Concluding remarks

The views and recommendations of this White Paper (WP), have been discussed and distilled from three workshops and the final conference between 2013 and 2015, in which researchers, teachers, students, media representatives, politicians, practitioners and legal experts participated. This understanding is summarized in the WP. Thus, the aim of the project to contribute to a reconceptualization of Linguistic Diversity is largely achieved, but this is not to be seen as a final solution, rather as a contribution to an ongoing dialogue.

The three workshops shared several starting points, as outlined in the three Position Papers, and their framework was stable throughout the series of workshops, even if each of them had its own main focus. Despite the broad representation of different geopolitical contexts, mainly from Europe --- from Northern Europe to the Mediterranean and from the Irish and British Isles to Eastern Europe -- but also from elsewhere such as North America and South Africa, there seem to exist underlying principles and views that many of the researchers share. These include:

- There is inadequate societal and political follow-through on political declarations regarding the promotion of LD;
- There is a lack of decisive action to improve LD, including through adequate funding;
- Possibilities exist for various international and national actors to avoid implementation of international agreements, through the lack of accountability and also through the principles of subsidiarity;
- Though this may not be a viable solution, the lack of sanctions softens the need and willingness to fulfil international agreements and conventions;
- An underlying view is that there still are deeply rooted misunderstandings and negative attitudes towards multilingualism and LD which could partly explain the first points;
- A knowledge, time and implementation gap exists between what, in academic/scientific terms, could be called 'established knowledge', and the willingness to implement such widely accepted insights;
- This leads to political rather than scientifically informed decisions on many aspects of LD;
- There is a failure of the educational systems to fulfil their tasks according to the recommendations of researchers and other key players in the field of education;
- There is a lack of a fusion between top-down and bottom-up perspectives, to promote the aims of LD;
- There nevertheless is a consistent contestation of assimilationist politics and language

policies, among the speakers of dominated/minoritized language communities, and among researchers involved in the research of these dimensions;

- There is also a willingness to find new solutions and to develop old concepts so that they can be extended to new realities;

- There is sometimes a mix, sometimes a clash but also cooperation between disciplines and methods, between quantitative and qualitative ones;

- There are advanced insights based on a national linguistic and geopolitical contexts, which are seldom transferred to more generalized, and internationally adapted knowledge; in this respect, the use of English may either be a threshold or possibility, for achieving such a bridging of knowledge to a wider audience;

- At the same time, there is a strong need for researchers to look outside their own, defined area and field of research, both with regard to other cases, and other theoretical approaches; this also includes the need to become acquainted with other languages that communicate research results;

- In the European context, there is a growing view, that the established willingness to promote and research Linguistic Diversity has been weakened, both due to a general politically more acute climate in which such issues are discussed at national levels, and as a consequence of this, heightened resistance at European level, against the creation of structures intended to improve both the situation of and cooperative research on Linguistic Diversity;

- There are many questions within LD research, and it should be possible to ask and answer such questions via research, but without systematic political guidance.

In addition to this, one should reflect on the reasons for the discrepancy between research-based views and policies, as well as the mismatch between political aims/legislation and the fulfilment or implementation of these. As a recommendation for future research in the field it would be worthwhile to systematically try to track down where and why these discrepancies prevail. The following aspects could be included in such studies:

- Whether and how there is a systematic existence between on the one hand supportive and promotional international regulations and agreements and on the other articles in the same legal documents that limit, oppose or downgrade these regulations; for example, , e.g. between the Articles 21 and 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, and on the other hand Article 51 and of the same Charter.

- To what extent and how national non-fulfilment of international regulations and agreements is based on political, knowledge-based or attitudinal factors, separately or as combinations of them.

- Attempts to compare the outcome of international and national policies in relation to the possibility of formulating or using sanctions in case of breaches of regulations and agreements on LD.
- To more precisely try to identify and describe what type of research findings are ignored when formulating and developing LPP and when is this most likely to happen in the process.
- How well are international and national pieces of legislation as well as research findings known by key politicians and authority representatives, with regard to LD, and specifically to matters pertaining to educational access and equity.

Results of such attempts to clarify the failure of LPP related to LD, could improve some of the already existing attempts to remedy the situation, but also open up for an intensified discussion on the effects of research on and politics within the fields of LD.

A full version of this White Paper can be found at
http://www.learnme.eu/