



European Observatory for multilingualism



Newsletter N°31 (February 2010), translated by MH Leblanc.
<http://www.observatoireplurilinguisme.eu/>

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- [I Encontro Internacional de Língua e Tradução](#)
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- [To provide quality for the evaluation exams in languages. What are the stakes ?](#)

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2) Open letter to parents et children (second part)

In the letter N°30, we enhanced how important was language and how it should not be perceived as a constraint but as a personal and professional means of freedom and development, which must be appropriated then, because language is the source of one's relationship to others and of one's ability to act within society. Parents must be deeply convinced about this. Foreign languages are extensions of the mother tongue, not comfortable means to travel. They are an intellectual and cultural widening of one's visual field and allow a better knowledge of one's own language.

Without any trace of elitism, the cultural field counts first and must do so. Nevertheless, we are in a merciless world, once for all forced to take economic relationships into account. In a world where exchanges grow and where international communication is even more strong and intense, languages take the first place more and more. It is a fact. Of course, everybody is not always in the necessity of using those languages. Nevertheless, everybody has to gather a maximum of winning cards professionally and humanly speaking. From this point of view languages are essential.

We do say « languages » and not « the international language ». Whereas everybody thinks about English, it is essential today to further.

English is just a transition and it has not been sufficient for a long time.

We are starting from a situation where all our countries were monolingual, excepting rare cases.

Then we discover English language and as a fashion trend everybody grasps it. The use of English is perceived as a distinguished mark. English is used in many circumstances (symposiums, answers to invitations to tender, answering machine messages, airports names, advertisements, titles for youth's magazines, etc.), as a sign of « modernity ». But it is a use at an inopportune moment and a sign of conformity. English is indeed associated to the wildest capitalism which is the most antagonistic to economic sustainable development. Perhaps we shall need one or two decades to recover, but the absolute supremacy of English language and its cultural and economic model already belong to the past.

Future is multilingual.

Many well-informed families know it and have chosen a different language –not English- as a first foreign language for their children. They also make it their « adopted personal language » according to the well-found expression from the "Maalouf's report". As a consequence those children, gifted with a non-English first foreign language (for example in France this will be German, Spanish or Italian), quickly become good at learning English in a second place. If you are convinced of the importance of languages, you must not neglect a third language: Chinese, Arabic and Russian are obvious examples. Of course, for historical, family or other reasons, many other languages are potential candidates as a third language.

3) Multilingualism and education : What does the Charter say ?

Educational structures must give a multilingual education.

The first mission for School is to teach the national language or languages which are the basis for every other learnings and the foundation of social cohesion. Because only language is the way to the world comprehension, education must concentrate itself as a priority on language and especially on the mother tongue.

The educational system must give the choice of a multilingual education at an early age. It must develop self-sufficient learning abilities which are necessary to learn new languages during life time. This mission cannot end into teaching a single foreign language as a language dedicated to a minimum of communication for commercial aims.

Families must have cleared up choices and be aware of the importance of linguistic stakes.

A few suggestions from the Charter

- To re-assert that learning reading and writing is the basis for every other learnings, and then to take on the consequences.
- To emphasize the positive role of the precocious or semi-precocious learning of living languages on the control of one's mother tongue or other school disciplines, scientific disciplines for example.
- To develop the precocious or semi-precocious learning of one living language at least, plus the national language learning. Avoid starting living languages learning with learning English.
- To set up creative educational methods.
- To develop the learning of several languages at the same time or successively, thanks to flexible courses, tailored to individuals with separate units in which pupils will be actors of their training and trained to self-evaluation.

[TO READ THE CHARTER, SIGN IT AND MAKE IT SIGNED](#)

4) Research Pole of the OEP: Research Seminars on multilingualism

In partnership with the UFR Multicultural Studies in Applied Languages, École doctorale 132 :

Symposium University Paris 7 – Denis Diderot/OEP

Linguistic Politics and multilingualism

Next sessions :

19th march 2010 : Linguistic politics and multilingualism in Spain, the Leo case.

By Janick Le Men (University of Leo, Spain)

2nd April 2010 : Linguistic politics and multilingualism in Switzerland

Erich Weider, researcher

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- In partnership with the University Paris Sorbonne (Paris IV) and the [l'EA4349, École doctorale 1](#) Ancient and Medieval Worlds :

Symposium University Paris Sorbonne (Paris IV)/OEP

Plurilinguisme et Moyen-Âge

- 5th June 2010 : Multilingualism in the *Devisement du Monde* from Marco Polo

Philippe Ménard, Professor emeritus in Medieval French Literature (Paris Sorbonne)

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5) Announcements and publications

- Declaration made during the Council of French-German ministers on the 4th of February 2010 : [French-German agenda 2020](#). Many linguistic measures for and from nursery school to university teaching.
- The Educational University of Freiburg (Prof. Marita Schocker v. Dithfurth, Dr. Constanze Weth) with the participation of the Educational University of Heidelberg (Prof. Andreas Müller-Hartmann, Prof. Christian Minuth), and the University of Giessen (Prof. Michael Legutke), in charge for the « Landesstiftung Baden-Württemberg », suggests the Master « E-LINGO – didactic methods for the precocious learning of foreign languages » (precocious French or English). It consists in an official course, during four semesters. The degree course can be followed at the same time with a professional activity thanks to its « mixed training » (teaching on line/ stages on the spot). Deadline for application forms for winter semester 2010/11 : 30th June 2010.
- Publication of *Nos enfants demain. Pour une société multiculturelle (Our Children Tomorrow. For a Multicultural Society)* by Marie-Rose Moro at Odile Jacob editions. Marie Rose Moro is a psychiatrist for children and teenagers, a psychoanalyst and a teacher at the University Paris-Descartes. Consultant at the House for teenagers in Cochin (Solenn's House, Paris) and at the Avicenne hospital (Bobigny), she also wrote *Aimer ses enfants ici et ailleurs. Histoires transculturelles (To Love Our Children Here and There)*, which was a huge success. Elle advocates linguistic diversity.
 - « I would like to tell you about them, those migrants and their children, to tell you their poetry, their dreams, but also their difficulties, their stiffness and their attempts to change and to adapt themselves. I would like to tell you about them because they are a source of life and knowledge for all of us. Tomorrow more than today, every children, all our children will have to grow up and build themselves in a moving world. All of them will be confronted to the diversity of languages and cultures. All of them will be nomadic children and half-breed children. » M.R.M. [To see the official site](#) in six languages.
- *TRACES, Mémoires musulmanes en coeur de France*, Georges A. Bertrand, **TRACES reveals a Muslim-Arabic culture which has been integrated for centuries into the French patrimony**. Through the roman sacred art, the author reveals and describes the relationships which have been uniting for many centuries the Muslim world and the Christian world, sometimes in surprising places. To see the official site : http://georgesabertrand.free.fr/dossiers/dossiers.php?id_dossier=20
- The Society of translators of Romanian literature invites you to discover the first issue of the magazine *Seine and Danube* <http://www.seineetdanube-atlr.fr/> dedicated to the promotion of Romanian literature in France.

6) [To reread the previous letters of the OEP click here](#)

7) The OEP needs you, join the OEP

The OEP is a French law association but mainly international due to its members and partners. In spite of the financial support which is given by public authorities to help the organisation of big events such as the Meetings, the OEP does need its members' support as well as individuals and legal entities. If you want to support its efforts to inform you or to think with us and exploit research studies, to further and highlight the publications on multilingualism as well as linguistic and cultural diversity, to act with the political officials and so on, do not hesitate to join us, be a member of the OEP.

If you no longer wish to receive this letter, please answer this message with the subject title NO.

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