



Minutes of the Thematic Forum Expert Meeting

“Multilingualism in border regions: trends - needs - best practices”

Within the the priority “The promotion of socio-cultural integration between border regions and closer contacts among citizens”

INTERREG IIIC Regional Framework Operation “Change on Borders”

Bolzano - Bozen - Bulsan, South Tyrol, Italy, 26 - 27 November 2004

Host: Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano - South Tyrol

Organisation: European Academy Bozen - Bolzano

The Thematic Forum “Multilingualism in border regions: trends - needs - best practices” was held on 26 - 27 November 2004 in Bolzano-Bozen, with the participation of approximately 50 people coming from Main Partner Regions, invited experts from South Tyrol and from other regions.

Thursday 25 November

The official start of the Thematic Forum was preceded by an informal welcome meeting on the evening of Thursday 25 November. It was attended by participants from other regions, as well as by the organisers. A comfortable atmosphere allowed participants from the various regions to know each other. This was a good base for the work programme of the following two days.

Friday, 26 November

The Thematic Forum took place at Hotel Laurin, situated in the centre of Bolzano/Bozen. The meeting served several goals:

- giving an overview of current issues in multilingualism research;
- highlighting the needs of border regions in the field of languages;
- finding ways of applying recent findings in language research to the promotion of cross-border cooperation;
- comparing the situation of regions that are multilingual in themselves or even share one or more languages with their neighbouring region, with border regions where there is an encounter of two monolingual situations on both sides of the border;
- showing the linguistic potential of border regions.

The meeting was opened by **Luisa Gneccchi**, Vice-President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol. In her opening statement, Ms Gneccchi welcomed the guests, and thanked them for their commitment to share experiences and solutions in language issues. Ms Gneccchi stressed the importance of a widespread and high-level bi- and trilingualism in South Tyrol. A good knowledge of several languages is essential for the internal coherence of the province, but it is also a strength of the province as a whole and a competitive advantage. Ms Gneccchi especially underlined the province's efforts to promote the teaching of the second language in the schools of South Tyrol.

Doede Sijtsma, representing the Province of Gelderland, and in chair of the Thematic Forum, thanked the Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol and EURAC for organising the meeting. He also introduced the main theme of the meeting: the use of languages in border regions. Mr Sijtsma underlined that the European Union is renowned for allowing speakers to use their own language in all official occasions, thus allowing everybody to use their finest political instrument: their mother tongue.

As moderator of the first part of the conference, Mr Sijtsma concluded his speech introducing the first intervention made by Prof. Christer Laurén.

Prof. Christer Laurén from the University of Vaasa/Wasa gave a talk about "The blessings of multilingualism and the influence of a lingua franca.". He reported on pupils in Finland, having Swedish or Finnish as mother tongue, and learning first the other national language (Finnish or Swedish, respectively), and then possibly several "world languages" as English, French, German, Russian or Spanish.

Andrea Abel and **Mathias Stuflessner** from the European Academy Bozen-Bolzano gave an overview of the linguistic situation in South Tyrol, where German, Italian and Ladin are spoken. They explained the legal framework, the statistical and geographical distribution of language groups and the school system in South Tyrol. They finally showed the role of languages in the economy, in the media and in cross-border cooperation.

The first part of the morning was concluded with a short language experiment: A **Lingua Snack** offered by scholars of EURAC. It gave the participants the opportunity to learn in less than half an hour a few useful phrases in a chosen language: Croatian, Czech, Ladin, Italian and Swedish. The five teachers used movement, gestures and objects to help their students remember a small dialog in a language they hardly know.

Daniel Morgen from the "Institut Universitaire pour la Formation des Maîtres d'Alsace", Strasbourg, talked about "The Linguistic Situation in Alsace and the Bilingual Classes in Alsace and on the Upper Rhine". He showed the situation of Alsacian German, French and standard German in Alsace, the various forms of early teaching of German and the system of bilingual classes. Mr Morgen also mentioned the necessity of promoting the idea of bilingual teaching among parents and teachers. Teacher training is a special challenge in Alsace, as well as the acceptance of training and of work experience on the other side of the border.

Prof. Albert Raasch from the University of Saarland in Saarbrücken, Germany, reported on experiences and results in an EU project on neighbouring languages in border regions. In the Saar-Lor-Lux border region a interregional language council has been established. Mr Raasch stressed the fact that pupils should first learn a language they can use in the neighbouring

region, as French in Saarland. They will still be motivated to learn English as a second foreign language at a later stage. According to him, pupils who learn English first have less tendency (are less motivated) to learn other languages.

Stephanie Plaschy from the Institut der Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung Sekundarstufe 1, University of Bern, gave a best practice report on the BTL-research and evaluation project: "Theory and practice of Bilingual Teaching and Learning (BTL) - a linguistic-didactic perspective". She also showed a short video of a lesson in a bilingual classroom.

Angelika van der Kooi from the Province of Overijssel explained the situation of "Education in the Dutch-German Border Area". She gave a review of the cooperation in language training and education. The differences between the two national school systems cause lots of problems, e.g. primary school in the Netherlands starts earlier than in Germany.

Nele Souverijns from the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, Maastricht, reported on the project Euregiocompetence, which aims at creating a new vocational bridging qualification in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. The training combines language skills, intercultural skills as well as institutional knowledge. The global objective of the project is to integrate bridging qualifications in the main systems of vocational education.

Marzena Gorecka from the Catholic University of Lublin talked about "The historical evolution of the relationship between Poland and Ukraine and consequences for the multilingualism in the Euroregio between Lublin and Lviv".

Rosetta Infelise Fronza from the Italian Pedagogical Institute, Bolzano/Bozen, reported on "The Trilingual School Project: Using Italian, German and English as Languages of Instruction." After a general introduction to language and identity, she showed the latest didactic experiences in Italian schools in South Tyrol, where partial immersion into German with additional teaching of English as a foreign language has become very popular.

In the **Workshop on needs of Border Regions** in Language Matters many interesting ideas emerged:

In the discussion, **Christer Laurèn** called for a radical pedagogy and suggested that we should learn from the teachers of English who are often quite progressive in this way.

Albert Raasch emphasised the necessity to spread the awareness that multilingualism is an advantage. This claim is addressed in particular to parents, as they decide on the education of their children on the basis of their own experiences in their childhood. The mass media should play an important role in this matter. He also undelined the necessity of a module "linguistic policy" for teacher education at university.

Kalli Simitopoulou suggested fostering multilingualism through the organisation of summer schools in combination with youth festivals (with art competitions, music competitions etc.).

Stephanie Plaschy claimed to give more importance to teacher education and also to strengthen the cooperation across national boundaries. For this purpose a pan-european mobility-center for the exchange of students could be established.

Daniel Morgen suggested to organise a conference for teachers of bilingual schools for the purpose of exchanging experiences.

Doede Sijtsma proposed that the regional media should present the cultural/legal situation of the other border regions. In this way these regions could know each other better. This could be a good idea for a new project within "Change on Borders".

The section **Proposals for New Projects and for the Next Thematic Forum** was also integrated into this discussion. Participants could also post proposals on a pin board. Some outcomes of this collection of ideas where:

- Need for political and cultural stability as a framework for the development of multilingualism in a tolerant environment.
- Clear description of the multilingual status, people's attitudes and stereotypes, etc.
- To know your neighbour you have to know his language.
- Languages should be promoted on both sides of borders.
- "The language of the neighbour" should be a subject in education from kindergarten up to graduation.
- Exchange of students, common leisure programmes, etc. as motivation to learn a foreign language.
- The role of the mass media in promoting languages.
- Not only education for children, but also the possibility for grown-ups to learn several languages.
- Strengthen the interest in the neighbour regions.

Participating Institutions and experts:

There was much interest and participation in discussions. About 50 participants attended the Meeting, among them invited experts, representatives of Main Partners and of the RFO-Coordination Unit, as well as several experts from South Tyrolean institutions:

Prof. Christer Laurén, University of Vaasa, Finland

Prof. Albert Raasch, University of Saarland, Germany

Ms. Stephanie Plaschy, University of Berne, Switzerland

Daniel Morgen, IUFM, Alsace

Prof. Ulla Laurén, University of Vaasa, Finland

Ms Ilka Meisel, RFO-coordination unit, North Rhine-Westphalia

Ms Eva Böhling, RFO-coordination unit, North Rhine-Westphalia

Mr Karl Rainer, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano - South Tyrol

Ms Samantha Illmer, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano - South Tyrol

Doede Sijtsma, Province of Gelderland
Marzena Gorecka, Catholic University of Lublin
Christine Herrgott, Bavaria
Pawel Kowalik, Lublin Voivodeship
Stephanie Plaschy, University of Berne/Regio Basiliensis
Kalli Simitopoulou, University of Komotini, Eastern Makedonia an Thrace
Nikolaos Xirotiris, University of Komotini, Eastern Makedonia an Thrace
Nele Souverijns, Euregio Meuse-Rhine
Svenja Knecht, Euregio Rhine-Waal

In addition, thirty participants representing local insitutions from South Tyrol attended the Thematic Forum. The local Rai-TV, the private TVA station as well as the local newspaper "Dolomiten" covered the meeting.

Study Visit to Ladin Institutions on Saturday, 27 November

The Study Visit was attended by 18 participants. The first institution visited was the Ladin Art School in Urtijëi (St.Ulrich/Ortisei). The students attending this high school are taught in three languages: German, Italian and Ladin. They leave the school with an a-level certificate and with very good practical and creative skills either in wood carving or in painting. Headmaster Karlheinz Mureda gave a very enthusiastic view of this school. The school is maintained and funded for its unice linguistic situation, despite having less than 100 pupils.

The second step of the visit was the Ladin Commerce High School in Urtijëi (St.Ulrich/Ortisei). After an introduction to the Ladin school system by the headmaster Otto Moling and the English teacher Maria Teresa Mussner, the study group was divided into three groups that could attend six different classrooms with teaching situations in the three different languages Ladin, German and Italian.

The afternoon was spent in Sëlva at the Istitut Culturel Ladin "Micurà de Rü". Jürgen Runggaldier gave a review of the linguistic and legal situation of the Ladin speaking population and of the cultural and linguistic activities of the Ladin Cultural Institute.

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AGENDA

Thursday 25 November

Arrival at the hotel & informal welcome meeting (20:00 Hotel "Laurin")

Friday 26 November (Hotel Laurin)

- 09:00 **Registration** of participants
- 09:15 **Welcome** by Luisa Gneccchi, Vice-President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol
- Opening** by Doede Sijtsma (Province of Gelderland), chair of Thematic Forum 3
- 09:30 Christer Laurén (University of Vaasa/Vasa):
The Blessings of Multilingualism and the Influence of a Lingua Franca
- 10:00 Andrea Abel and Mathias Stuflessner (European Academy Bozen-Bolzano)
Facetten der Mehrsprachigkeit: der Fall Südtirol
(Aspects of Multilingualism: the case of South Tyrol)
- 10:30 European Academy Bozen-Bolzano
Lingua Snack
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:30 Daniel Morgen (Institute Universitaire pour la Formation des Maîtres d'Alsace, Strasbourg)
Die Sprachensituation im Elsass und das bilinguale Angebot in den Schulen im Elsass und am Oberrhein
(The Linguistic Situation in Alsace and the Bilingual Classes in Alsace and on the Upper Rhine)

- 12:00 **Presentation of best practice projects:**
Albert Raasch (Saarland University, Saarbrücken):
A European project on neighbouring languages in border regions. Experiences and results: Needs of border regions in language matters
- 12:30 Stephanie Plaschy (Institut der Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung Sekundarstufe 1, University of Bern)
Theory and practice of Bilingual Teaching and Learning (BTL) – a linguistic-didactic perspective: BTL-research and evaluation project
- 13:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 **Presentation of best practice projects:**
Angelika van der Kooi (Province Overijssel, Netherlands):
Baustelle Bildung im deutsch-niederländischen Grenzraum (Education in the Dutch-German Border Area)
- 14:30 Nele Souverijns (Stichting Euregio Maas-Rijn):
Euregiocompetence
- 15:00 Marzena Gorecka (Catholic University Lublin, Poland)
Der Wandel der polnisch-ukrainischen Verhältnisse und seine Folgen für die Mehrsprachigkeit der Euroregion zwischen Lublin und Lemberg (Historical evolution of the relationship between Poland and Ukraina and consequences for the multilingualism in the Euroregion between Lublin and Lemberg)
- 15:30 Rosetta Infelise Fronza (Italian Pedagogical Institute, Bolzano/Bozen):
Progetto Scuola Trilingue: insegnamento veicolare delle lingue italiano tedesco e inglese (The Trilingual School Project: Using Italian, German and English as Languages of Instruction)
- 16:00 Coffee break
- 16:30 **Workshop: Needs of Border Regions in Language Matters**
- 17:00 **Proposals for New Projects and for the Next Thematic Forum**
- 18:00 End of work session
- 20:00 Dinner (Restaurant "Löwengrube")

Saturday 27 November

- 09:00 Study visit to trilingual projects in South Tyrol
- 17:00 Return to hotel



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Study visit

Saturday, 27. November 2004

- 09:00 Departure from Parkhotel Laurin to Urtijëi
- 10:00 Urtijëi:
Scola d'Ert - Kunstschule - Istituto d'arte (Art High School)
Karl-Heinz Mureda (director): Introduction to the Art High School
- 10:30 Scola per l Cumerz - Handelsoberschule - Istituto tecnico commerciale
(High school for Commerce)
Otto Moling (director): welcome
Mariateresa Mussner: Presentation of the Ladin school system
Visits to classes in different languages
- 12:30 Lunch
- 14:00 Transfer to Sëlva
- 14:30 Istitut Ladin „Micurà de Rü“
Jürgen Runggaldier: The Ladins of the Dolomites.
- 15:30 Departure from Sëlva
- 17:00 Return to Hotel Alpi and to Parkhotel Laurin



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