

the examples above through an account of the characteristics of investment, exemplified in the metaphor of «wrestlers» associated with Milica's attempt to conserve her mother tongue. What Hu (Hu, 1997, 2006) shows about the dichotomy between «own and foreign»—that is, the dissolution of a definable concept of self and the criticism of a concept of purity in relation to identity—turns out to be much more true for migrants' concept of identity when, according to Gogolin (1998), they do not know the imperative of purity.

Drawing these language portraits, many children become aware, for the first time, of the diversity of their languages. For this reason, we advise teachers to develop other language projects inspired by this reflection (see, for example: Oomen-Welke/Krumm 2004 as well as the project «Children discover languages»). Thus, language portraits become part of language courses; they call attention to the sphere of language reflection and allow us to address other possibilities, degrees of relationship, word migrations, similarities and differences between languages. At the same time, they belong to the sphere of intercultural apprenticeship in the sense that they contribute to the awareness of «the right to one's own language» and the strengthening of linguistic diversity.

COUNTERPOINT

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The Austrian linguist Mario Wandruszka (1979) developed a concept of the multilingualism of the person («*Die Mehrsprachigkeit des Menschen*») and showed how the speaker carries out and uses this multilingualism. According to Wandruszka, every person is multilingual, because he possesses more than one language within his «mother tongue», starting from the familiar language he uses with people close to him, the dialect he needs to communicate with the people in his village, town or region, the «standard» language that he learns at school to become literate, which he uses with other language speakers, and lastly the specialized language(s) that he acquires over the course of his professional life and with which he works. In all its forms, his mother tongue is in contact with other languages – through, for example, the process of borrowing. Over time, it incorporates elements from other languages, and thus it contains within it bridges that lead to those other languages.

The multilingual individual need not remain enclosed within his/her mother tongue. He is capable of acquiring other languages at an early age, in his youth, over the course of his entire life (Livre blanc, 1994). His «first language»—or his first languages—give him access to other languages (as will the study of other languages later on) through the mere fact of their interrelatedness. His mother tongue and other languages are replete with borrowings from yet other languages: they all possess an international vocabulary, a vocabulary common to certain language families (for example, pan-Roman/pan-German/pan-Slavic/pan-Turkish, pan-Arab, etc.), with many borrowings from various languages generated over the course of history, with lexicons and structures from his specialized languages (which abound in internationalisms), and grammar structures borrowed from yet other languages. In fact, each language is a large repository of other languages which he must know how to use—or, in other words, which he must *learn* how to use (Stoye, 2000 ; Meissner, Meissner, Klein & Stegmann, 2004).

Therefore, a multilingual person's language is never static; on the contrary, it is dynamic and open. Speakers are not «on principle monolingual and sedentary», but

potentially mobile and flexible (Franceschini, 2003: 247). Their language, plural from the outset, expands and shrinks over the course of their lives, and it can be differentiated from the languages of others. The individual, the self, is capable of learning these other languages, mostly in institutional contexts (pre-school, school, university, professional training), but even more so in other situations – migration, travel, studies, family relations, social relations, reading etc. (see Ch. « Publics et domaines » in « Un niveau-seuil », Coste *et al.* 1976). In short, we can summarize this first section by saying the following: the speaker's language(s) belong to him; they are *bis*. It is therefore better to say «the Self and *bis* languages».

This change of article – *les/the* vs. *ses/bis* – highlights the subjective dimension of the plural approach. It is clear that the «plurality» of «*bis* languages» is not identical for speaker A as for speaker B. Bilingual repertoires are not the same for anyone. Nevertheless, they serve in communication; everyone manages to communicate with others with the help of his own means of expression. The speaker's language is, effectively, *bis* language; the languages he has acquired outside of his mother tongue are also *bis* languages, even if he is afraid of saying so (he calls them – after a long tradition – « foreign » languages, «*Fremdsprachen* », other people's languages). *His* language is not the same—*bis* languages are not the same—as the language(s) of the other; they are effectively *bis*. For his first language (mother tongue), we speak of *ideolect* to indicate its subjective, personal dimensions.

For other languages – the so-called foreign languages – we return to the concept of «interlanguage» (Selinker, 1972). Every language acquired or learned after the first one is effectively an «interlanguage», a learning language—that is, it is unstable and, at the same time, constantly in a process of «normalization». Here, we refer deliberately to the language and not the (native) speaker mistakenly idealized over the course of the history of language teaching and in certain linguistic trends. It is our «foreign» language that we intend to develop until it appears more or less «normal», comprehensible, pleasing, not shocking to the other (and certainly not the native one).

In spite of all our efforts toward «normalization», we will never speak the language of an «ideal» speaker, or even that of a «real» native one—but we will speak our «other» language. The authors of the *Common European Framework for Languages*, who have named the highest level of learning competence «mastery», stress that they are not motivated by «the ambition to compare such mastery to the competence of a native or near-native speaker. The aim is to characterize the degree of precision, adaptation, and ease of the language that one finds in the utterances of those who have been high-level learners.» (2000: 34). High level learners, but learners just the same.

Processes of normalization differ greatly according to situations of acquisition and apprenticeship. In a case of institutional apprenticeship—at secondary school or university or in a specialized school—normalization is encouraged by teachers and through an appropriate pedagogical apparatus. It is often experienced in terms of conflict (censure and self-blame, fault and sanctions). It is marked by the struggle against forgetting and everything that constitutes «unlearning». In situations of verbal communication between native and non-native speakers outside of school,

normalization is manifested in the negotiation of meaning, in the effort to make oneself understood. If all goes well, the negotiation occurs without mutual discrimination; if there is conflict, it can lead to misunderstanding or disagreement. In situations of written communication – writing a letter, translating a text, composing a text – normalization is a long and difficult, individual process, assisted by reference books. In every situation, normalization does not come about effortlessly or painlessly as certain methods have been promising for more than a century.

In this second section, we have described the slow process of normalization: the person, multilingual by definition, can acquire several languages over the course of his life. This acquisition never ceases. His foreign language will never be *the* foreign language.

Is it still necessary to ask how the individual—the self—perceives his languages: what value does he attribute to his «mother tongue», his «second language(s)», his «foreign languages»? This is, in fact, a question of perceptions and values according to different categories: aesthetic (beautiful language, hard language, musical language, prestigious language), political («universal» language, national language, regional or local language, «glottophage» language, colonizers' language, occupiers' language), economic (work or business language, commercial (national and international) language, banking language, etc.), entertainment language, scientific language, journalistic language), emotional language (family language, friends' or group language, enemy language, competitive language, work or study language, etc.).

How does the individual define himself when faced with his languages? Is he ready to accept them as they are and to integrate into the communities of their respective speakers? Or rather does he tend to refuse integration and keep his distance for some emotional, political, economic or social reason? We know that those who want to integrate into a community normally make more effort to speak and to write than others.

Does the individual believe in and want to «possess» his languages? Or rather, does he feel possessed and dominated by them? Does he feel under their control? No metaphor in this field is innocent. To what extent are his languages at his disposal? The issues are different for a writer, for an Erasmus student or for a migrant worker. We could discuss indefinitely whether the individual dominates, commands or possesses a language. Even if we said that we have mastery over the language of a certain field, we still have to recognize that languages do not allow themselves to be freely «mastered» by anyone: they impose rules on us, they limit us in our ways of expressing them. This is true of all languages, «maternal» and others. This limitation is, among others, one of the reasons why individuals are sometimes so restrained in their language activities that they do not even speak, why they prefer one language to another, why they avoid certain languages, why they sometimes block their ears, why they practice *code-switching*, etc.

After having questioned in this third section an individual's perception and his acceptance or refusal of his languages, we are now going to ask what he knows of his

languages (language and linguistic knowledge), what he can do with his languages (know how) and how he acquires/learns them (learning techniques).

To describe the individual's knowledge of his languages and the opinions he has formulated over the course of his life, we speak about *language awareness* (Hawkins 1984) or *conscience linguistique/conscience langagière* in French or *Sprachbewusstheit* in German (Gnutzmann, 2003). This knowledge and these opinions are strongly influenced by school (and therefore indirectly by the language sciences), by public life (public opinion, the media, the world of work, commerce, linguistic policy), but also by families and groups.

The *European Language Portfolio* is at the same time an instrument for the investigation of a person's linguistic or language awareness and a working tool for the learner himself at any age (see theme number of Babylonia 1/1999). The *Portfolio* is used to help form and develop the individual's linguistic and language awareness in all fields concerning languages and their use. This runs from simple knowledge (such as the knowledge of grammar), to the knowledge of communicative usages and opinions on the history and relationships among languages, including their cultural significance, and lastly to their ecology and politics.

In fact, the individual possesses, and needs, different types of language knowledge. This knowledge is often, although not generally, different from his «opinions» on languages. Opinions have a long life and a long history. The historian, Arno Borst, illustrated this in his monumental work *Der Turmbau zu Babel* with this subtitle: *The History of the Opinions on the Origin and the Plurality of Languages and Peoples* (Borst, 1957-1963).

The «practical aptitudes and know-how» listed in the *Common European Framework of Languages* refer to social, technical and professional aptitudes and intercultural know-how. Their common denominator is the ability to communicate with the Other.

For the individual and his languages, communication is a principle that one could formulate with a communicative imperative: communicate! However, this does not prevent the individual from refusing to communicate on occasion, for he needs a communicative know-how that revolves around the following questions: how to address the other? How to answer the other? How to negotiate opinions, talk about knowledge? How to renew contact? How to end a conversation? Through what means should we communicate: the voice, writing, body language, gestures?

To acquire these skills, the individual needs help. He asks himself where to find information, the resources to foster and improve communication, to avoid ambiguity and so on. These skills also include the knowledge that brings help and information.

In our opinion, the individual's fate is to being a constant state of learning. That is why we must consider the skill to know how *to learn* as an indispensable third category. When the individual reflects on his languages (on his knowledge and opinions), and when he develops his language skills to communicate, he is learning without needing to be a student.

It is important to speak of the learner's age. A baby who acquires two or three languages at the same time is in a different situation of acquisition/apprenticeship than a three or six year-old child who learns a second, and later a third, language after having acquired his first. The adult learner is in yet another situation. Given his age and previous acquisitions, he learns differently. Learning depends on one's age and on what one has already learned and previously acquired.

Thus, the individual and languages – the individual and *his* languages – privilege the person and a subjective approach *par excellence* where living and learning are inseparable from one another. This person lives and acts; he recognizes his biography and his multiple belongings in space and time as products of his personal history.