MIME

Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe

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1. Summary description of project context and objectives

Genesis of the MIME project

"MIME" stands for "Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe". The MIME project is designed to address a wide range of questions pertaining to the management of linguistic diversity in Europe. For this purpose, no less than ten different disciplines are brought together in order to better understand – and act upon – the *challenge of multilingualism for the European citizen*. This ambitious objective, reflecting the wide range of questions on which the European Commission explicitly requested guidance, requires simultaneously addressing extremely varied issues. These include, for example, the rights of "indigenous" minority language speakers, the linguistic integration of migrants, approaches to second- and foreign-language teaching and learning, the potential offered by the language industries in overcoming the "multilingual challenge", diversity management in multilingual institutions, a discussion of the functions that might be fulfilled by a *lingua franca*, or the more systematic use by speakers of receptive skills in languages related to their first language.

Core questions and general principles

The MIME project is devoted to the study of highly complex topics regarding the use, learning, and functions of languages at the level of society as a whole. This work takes the form of three main questions:

1. What are multilingual societies and how do they operate?
2. How is multilingualism in contemporary societies affected by globalisation and by the increasing interconnection and mobility that globalisation implies?
3. What are the best responses, in highly different contexts, to the challenges posed not only by linguistic diversity as such, but also by rapid changes in the nature, extent, and experience that actors themselves have of this diversity?

Such questions cast the net exceptionally wide, and answering them amounts to developing a new way of thinking about language and linguistic diversity. This translates into four important features of the project.

First, the project is genuinely interdisciplinary: not only does it bring together researchers from ten different disciplines, but most importantly, no discipline dominates the project. Scholars from the language sciences, translation studies, sociology, political science, history, geography, psychology, education sciences, economics and law are joining forces to develop a truly novel way of approaching the challenges of multilingualism.

Another key point is that the project straddles very different levels. Some teams focus on very "micro"-level processes, such as the ways in which linguistically diverse people develop and express their identity in a multicultural neighbourhood. Other teams look at "meso"-level questions: for example, how does an organisation like a university handle the sometimes conflicting demands of serving the local public while at the same time opening up to globalisation? Other teams analyse large-scale geopolitical questions, such as the effects that the political handling of linguistic diversity can have in ensuring international security. In other words, and in contrast to earlier large-scale projects on language, the project simultaneously considers micro, meso and macro-level issues, and combines them in an integrative framework.

This analysis of multilingualism at different levels can be put to use for policy purposes, and the project is also geared to the formulation of policy orientations, which will constitute central outputs of the project work. These policy orientations are expressions of a general language policy addressing a wide range of aspects of the multilingual challenge for the European citizen. In the project design, therefore, policy analysis plays a special role by providing the receptacle in which findings from various teams can be fitted.

Finally, the project is not confined to research. It involves the stakeholders of European multilingualism, in order to facilitate contact between researchers and professionals (e.g. associations of translators and interpreters, of foreign language teachers, of specialists of migrant integration, and of language planning offices), with a view to ensuring a better fit between policy orientations and practical terrain conditions.

One integrative concept

The key analytical instrument used in order to lend all these inputs an integrative perspective is the "trade-off model". The trade-off approach is a "classic". Its application to language policy, however, is new.

It is used in policy analysis and may be applied to any problem where a human society has to make decisions and, in particular, needs to balance commendable, but not converging goals. Multilingualism, then, is a "challenge" precisely because it points towards goals that aren't easily reconciled:

1. On the one hand, Europe means to become a strongly integrated union whose citizens can freely move between member states for work, study, leisure or retirement. This is what we call *mobility*, a notion intended to denote more than "migration", and to reflect the growing multiplicity of motivations and modalities associated with people's movements. Mobility requires easy communication, which can be achieved by appropriately combining multiple communication strategies involving various ways of using languages.

2. On the other hand, the "multilingual challenge" raises issues of *inclusion*, in which languages are no less important. The range of languages spoken in Europe is crucial to the definition of Europe's diversity, which is recognised as a core value of the Union. This diversity is manifested in the linguistic specificity of different parts of the Union, whose member states have different official languages (often more than

one, with varied internal arrangements set up, at national and/or sub-national level, to deal with this diversity). Inclusion refers to the fact that no individual or group (particularly a group defined by linguistic or cultural features is marginalised, or even excluded from society, or suffers social, political, economic, or cultural disadvantage because of these linguistic and cultural features. Successful inclusion implies a feeling of belonging and of being accepted, as well as participation in the social, political, economic, and cultural life of the country, region and local area of residence. This feeling of "belonging", which is marker of successful inclusion requires that the whole range of languages and cultures that make up European diversity are recognised and nurtured, so that residents feel secure in their capacity to offer inclusion to newcomers. This does not, however, require that mobile persons, who move among the languages and cultures of Europe, should experience the erosion or loss of their sense of identity, when the latter draws on linguistic and cultural features that are distinct from those of other members of society where they have chosen to reside.

The MIME project builds on the idea that a trade-off problem arises between "mobility" and "inclusion": on the one hand, an exclusive emphasis on the necessities of inclusion in a specific locale within the Union can result in material or symbolic restrictions on citizens' mobility (or in added material and symbolic costs to this mobility). Putting it differently, more inclusion typically entails less mobility. Conversely, more mobility can have a detrimental effect on inclusion, because it may, through the potentially uniformising forces it abets, erode the sense of place, specificity and rootedness associated with different locales within the union. At worst, it can cause a negative backlash among citizens who may feel dispossessed of their sense of place. Putting it succinctly, more mobility can weaken inclusion.

Thus, we have the typical makings of a trade-off, in which two goals, each worth pursuing, may be at odds with each other. The aim of the project, across all the specific "dimensions" listed by the Commission and using the insights of all the participating disciplines, is twofold:

1. to identify, given an *existing set of constraints* that restricts the extent of mobility achievable while preserving a certain level of inclusion and vice-versa, the best balance between the two;
2. to identify policy measures conducive to *relaxing this constraint* – in particular, to identify measures or novel combination of measures that can *increase* mobility without impeding inclusion, and *improve* inclusion without restricting mobility.

2. Description of work performed and main results

The MIME project is unusual, both in the range and complexity of the questions addressed and in its interdisciplinary reach. Its thrust is not on the description of the fine-grained detail multilingual communication, which could include, for example, the study of "code-switching" (that is, using more than one language) in the course of a particular conversation. While remaining aware of these micro-level processes, we place the emphasis elsewhere, namely, on the "big picture", in which choices about language carry implications that are not only linguistic and communicational, but also social, political, economic and legal. These choices may be made by persons, households, companies, non-profit institutions, or states, and they interact in complex ways, jointly giving shape to our linguistic environment.

However, the language disciplines have not, so far, proposed a general theory of this "big picture". Therefore, developing a new way of handling the challenges of multilingualism, as a basis for the selection and design of public policies spanning micro, meso, and macro-level considerations, is the core goal of the

project. For this purpose, the work carried out in the initial stages of the MIME project has focused on developing tools enabling us to deal with this big picture.

As a starting point, we use the trade-off approach sketched above, and our first task has been to reframe the social, political, educational, linguistic, or economic challenges thrown up by linguistic diversity in terms of a conflict between mobility and inclusion.

The analysis has led participating teams to revisit, and often to question received approaches to standard issues such as minority rights, migrant integration, foreign language teaching, communication in multilingual organisations, keeping an eye on how the non-convergence between mobility and inclusion might be alleviated through specific, "policy-actionable" measures.

The key findings are arranged in five headings, reflecting the project structure, addressing multilingualism as a political, social, educational, communicational and policy issue.

As part of its first line of work studying *language, society and power*, the MIME approach has yielded the following observations:

* Since parts of the project emphasise comparisons with non-European cases in the handling of linguistic diversity by very diverse countries, we have undertaken an assessment of the frameworks for minority rights in China, India and the USA. In the Chinese case, our assessment brings to light striking differences with the notions of "language regime" and "minority language rights" as these are understood in the European context. In India, language policy prioritises the protection of language diversity as far as official languages are concerned, while disregarding hundreds of non-official dialects. Preparatory work for a US comparative study to be performed at a later stage of research has been undertaken.

* An assessment of "best practices" regarding inclusion in traditional linguistic or national minorities has begun. It rests on a comparative historico-political study of the Turkish and Polish communities in France, the Netherlands, and Sweden. In parallel, initial steps for the comparative study of traditional territorial minorities in Central-European states, with a particular focus on Hungarian-speaking minorities, have been undertaken. Preliminary results show that in many cases, arrangements made at the supranational level seem to substantially affect language policies on minority languages at national and sub-national levels, suggesting that international treaties like the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* are effective tools and operate as a useful lever.

* Whereas the *Charter* pointedly avoids the concept of (language) "rights" and focuses on public policy measures instead, other international legal instruments focus precisely on rights, and the meaning of the latter in terms of mobility and inclusion must be examined. We have therefore carried out a thorough comparative review of the approaches to minority language rights in the European context and at an international level. A case study on the implementation of international standards in a multilingual environment in Serbia, more precisely in the northern region of Vojvodina, has been launched. This results in a systematic identification of the related legal instruments (laws, policies, arrangements, and other regulations) needed for the implementation of a well-designed system of minority language rights.

The second line of work of the MIME project examines *mobility, identity and social cohesion*, yielding the following main results.

* The in-depth review of recent literature on mobility has led to the *identification of three dimensions* in the characterisation of mobility (and of why mobility challenges inclusion): (i) a legal dimension, which concerns the status of citizens (EU, non-EU) as well as language policies at different levels (EU, national, local); (ii) a motivational one, which pertains to the reasons underlying mobility (study, work, family reunification, asylum seeking, etc.); and (iii) a sociological one focusing on the complex interplay between local values and features of mobility (urban, suburban, rural, virtual mobility, translocality, transnationalism). This review provides a backdrop for the analysis of the relation between language skills and the linguistic background of citizens. The analysis is being tested through the application of linguistic-spatial models in the Flemish-speaking periphery of Brussels.

* We also study the interplay between individual and collective identity with the help of the concept of "complex diversity". Recent research had already shown that "complex diversity" makes it possible to take into consideration the impact of Europeanization and transnationalism on patterns of mobility and inclusion in European societies; "complex diversity" (which views the linguistic diversity resulting, in particular, from the fact that patterns of migration are more varied than before) has been revisited and confronted with the trade-off between mobility and inclusion, allowing to confirm the robustness of this concept (which we prefer, for this very reason, to the oft-mentioned notion of "superdiversity". This conceptual work is necessary for the next phase in Task 2.2, which will provide an account of how multilingual environments influence the making of civic identities, and of how their respective dynamics may offer hints for overcoming the tension between mobility and inclusion.

* We have also carried out a comprehensive review of "urban multilingualism", that is, manifestations of multilingualism that appear in the more culturally mixed neighbourhoods of big cities. For this purpose, data on urban multilingualism have been collected and analysed, showing that the challenges posed by

linguistic diversity occur much more often at a micro than at a macro level; in other words, this is an area where the essentially macro-level process of policy development (which mostly takes place at the level of state) must pay particular attention to micro-level issues. Thanks to the social geography perspective included in the project, we can also see that the dynamics of mobility play themselves out differently in cities and in suburban contexts. The trade-off between mobility and inclusion turns out to be more visible in cities, as a consequence of the high turnover of people. We have then identified eight processes that play a key role in explaining why mobility and inclusion typically don't converge. These processes are residential segregation, suburbanization, gentrification, social and economic exclusion, otherness and "othering" processes, territorial avoidances, stereotypical thinking, nativism, "revanchism", and the resulting distribution of residents across types of neighbourhoods such as enclaves, gated communities, as well as *banlieues*, ghettos, and no-go areas.

Turning now to *language teaching and learning*, the work carried out to date may be summarised as follows:

* In a first step, we have synthesised the policies and practices in use at European and national levels, as they emerge from reports by a number of European and international organizations and official documents by national public institutions. Country-wise, a special focus has been placed on Germany, the UK, Italy, France, Spain, and Finland, identifying contrasts in approaches to inclusion by different education systems; our examination shows that they are frequently embedded in the strategies implemented by the teaching staff.

* Moving on to a more specific aspect of language teaching and learning, we have reviewed the scholarly literature, as well as a vast range of policy documents on non-formal and informal language learning. This has led the team to identify (and to get started on the related data collection) four case studies that will eventually depict the mobility-inclusion trade-off in the case of the following groups of persons : ex-Yugoslav migrants in South Tyrol; European students making language choices in various multilingual contexts; workers in international corporations, with a particular focus on the case of Wärtsilä and ABB in Vasa (Finland) and the use of a *lingua franca;* strategies of "lingua receptiva" ("intercompréhension") among Portuguese migrants in Andorra.

* The use of languages in Higher Education (HE) is a politically salient question and a key dimension of the multilingual challenge. A review of the specialist literature, spanning include theoretical work, policy documents, and case studies of actual language practices, has been carried out, including European as well as non-European situations. Our focus on the role of mobility and inclusion in HE brings to light the very ambiguous role and meaning of "internationalization". This word, often left conveniently undefined in these sources, is typically used as a blanket term for man of the processes affecting HE in globalisation. Information about language policies in different universities in Europe is currently being collected on a sample of 23 institutions.

* As part of its broad-based examination of the "multilingual challenge", the MIME project also studies a range of strategies for handling communication in multilingual settings. Communication, however, is assumed to go beyond the mere transfer of meaning or "information" and to embody a mediation dimension as well.

* One of the project teams has been focusing on the identification and definition of the variables, such as age, that affect (positively or negatively) the use of translation technologies. This work includes the development of a general analytical framework, which is now being applied in the study of the habits and

practices in the Russian-speaking community based in Salou, Spain. Other groups of subjects surveyed include university graduates, users of Esperanto, asylum seekers in Germany, asylum seekers at a dedicated centre in Ljubljana, Euroregion officials, and non-Italian-speaking children adopted by Italian families. Our preliminary results show that translation technologies are mainly used in low-risk contexts, and that mobile people are the ones who usually take the initiative to use them. However, technological solutions are not the preferred means of communication in official contexts.

* Preliminary results also indicate that public service interpreting and translation (PSIT), even when provided, is not always the solution preferred by asylum seekers as a means of communication in the country in which they happen to be and in which they may be applying for refugee status. Some prefer to call on friends, family members, or to rely on their own language skills. This appears to be mainly due to lack of trust and fear that dependence on a (human) mediator might restrict their independence. As regards the specific case of families with adopted children, interpretation services are common in adoption procedures, but they are absent at the very micro level of interpersonal communication, as it is perceived as disruptive for family intimacy.

* We also consider *linguas francas*, but we do so in an unusual perspective, in that we does not make the common assumption that "lingua franca" necessarily and only means "English". This leads to a joint consideration, for example, of Esperanto and English; furthermore, in specific settings, other languages are used in this capacity. The fieldwork carried out so far confirms that linguas francas are a multi-faceted reality: English is the preferred *lingua franca* among asylum seekers in Leipzig, but it is replaced by German in the longer term. The use of Serbo-Croatian to communicate with Slovenes has proved useful, but English is nonetheless deemed important by informants for future mobility purposes. Spanish and

English are the preferred *lingue franche* among Russian-speakers in Salou, where learning Spanish is considered more relevant than learning Catalan. This risks, however, undermining inclusion and, by way of consequence, detract from effective cohesion. Finally, Italian adoption families did not seem to use English as a *lingua franca*.

* One task examines *intercomprehension* (IC, that is, the use of receptive skills in a language related to one's first language, or another language that one already knows well). IC appears to be a common strategy among Italian adoptive families, quite independently of the distance between the languages. University graduates seem more inclined to use IC, especially when they know the foreign language fairly well; asylum seekers in Leipzig, by contrast, did not appear to know anything of IC techniques, although some would use it unawares. Esperantists at first seem to prefer avoiding IC, but closer examination shows that they actually make use of it. Instances of IC very often appear among asylum seekers in Ljubljana. Finally, in the case of the Russian-speaking community of Salou, IC is only used to communicate with people speaking other Slavic languages; IC appears to be regarded as a short-term strategy and it is replaced by language learning in the longer term.

As has been mentioned earlier, *policy analysis* plays a strategically crucial role in the project, since it provides the receptacle in which the inputs of the other tasks are consolidated into more synthetic language policy orientations.

* The MIME project as already resulted in a critical, and entirely novel overview of the literature on the modelling of language dynamics. A formal model has been developed, addressing the processes of language acquisition, intergenerational language transmission, and language use. This model adds

a treatment of social structure and language policies to the standard modelling of language dynamics. The analysis shows how acquisition and status planning affect individual language decisions (use, acquisition, transmission). Using optimal-control theory, the model makes it possible to identify what the optimal policy response is, depending on starting conditions.

* Since policy development is not just a matter of efficiency, but also of fairness, we have carried out an in-depth examination of principles of linguistic justice in order to assess language policies. Particular attention has been devoted to the language territoriality principle in all its versions, and of the latter's relevance to systems ensuring equal recognition for autochthonous languages, non-segregation policies for language reasons, and (linguistic) accommodation rights for migrants. The first results suggest applying territoriality in a more complex and differentiated manner than is usually the case. This can allow for a better recognition of hybrid identities, in a society where everyone should have the right to speak his or her language and a duty to understand another.

* We have also begun to examine justice under a different perspective, developing a novel perspective on language decisions through the question (a classical one in political philosophy) of "what" equality should be about. This work has yielded a comparison between different metrics that serve to assess changes in a person's situation as either improvements of "worsenings". The first results suggest adopting a "capability" approach (associated with the name of Nobel Prize laureate Amartya Sen). "Capabilities", which emphasise not what people have, but what they are actually equipped to achieve, helps to account for inequalities that are neglected by other approaches; it also potentially allows the analyst to rank-order a wide range of inequalities according to their priority, thus providing more precise guidelines for language policy.

* Given the extreme complexity of the set of questions addressed in MIME, an approach needed to be designed in order to structure the very process of combining the inputs from the teams working on the political, social, educational, and communicational issues outlined above. Furthermore, this combination must take account of the criteria of efficiency and fairness that are central to policy selection and design. This constitutes a task in itself, for which we have first critically reviewed core principles of language policy and planning. We have in particular confronted them with other approaches to "diversity" (developed in environmental studies). We use the distinction between three dimensions of linguistic diversity, namely, "richness" (how many languages are there in a given multilingual setting?), "evenness" (how evenly are they distributed?) and "distance" (how different are they from one another?). This fundamental reconsideration of the object of language policy generates an entirely novel typology of language policy choices. .

* In order to derive the full implications of policy orientations that the MIME project is intended to produce, we need to assess the legal consequences that *would* arise, *if* a particular orientation is retained and acted upon, whether by the European Commission of by member states. It is important, in particular, to pinpoint the specific legal norms and texts that may require adaptation in order for a broad, consistent language policy suited to meeting the "multilingual challenge" to rest on a sound legal footing. This task clearly comes into full swing at a later stage in the project, but the first steps have already begun with a country-level test, namely the identification of norms that could, in the case of the UK, require such adaptations. This is expected to provide a template that can be applied to other legal contexts.

The MIME project also includes a set of shorter pilot studies designed to address very novel, under-researched questions. These

five pilot studies, of which four have started, are completely independent from one another and from the rest of the project, beyond, of course, the shared concern of throwing light on the multilingual challenge, and how this challenge can be met.

* The first of these pilot studies has begun with a thorough review of different schools of security studies, identifying elements that complicate security issues. These include migration, ethnic tensions, the imposition of a dominant culture, information warfare, the manipulation of ethnic groups by external powers, new expressions of multilingualism, technological change, and the role of social networks. The language aspect in such processes needs to be examined at closer range, and our first results underscore the importance of societal integration as a condition for security.

* In another of these pilot studies, the research team has begun to collect and analyse a list of relevant sources about Roma culture and language, and taken initial steps in fieldwork through interviews with individuals who are representative of Roma culture. Our concern is to identify facets of Roma cultural experience that might prove useful to all Europeans dealing with mobility and inclusion, precisely because the history the Roma people embodies constant confrontation with mobility and inclusion – or exclusion. For this purpose, our research design focuses on the identification of factors that facilitate Romani speakers' acquisition of additional languages.

* With the changing age structure of an aging continent, the language needs of retirees is an issue that is likely to gain in importance. We have therefore reviewed published research on international retirement migration, with a specific focus on language issues. Combining this information with the analysis of data from previous research projects on Scandinavian migration to Spain as well as information gathered through interviews, the team has been busy developing a preliminary analytical framework for examining the language needs of mobile retirees.

* Finally, the MIME projects investigates the existence of a general (and positive) relationship between creativity and multilingualism at the individual level. This has required reviewing and working out definitions of multilingualism and creativity suited to the purposes of the quantitative measurement of the existence and magnitude of such a link. Preliminary results based on a first wave of data suggest the existence of a positive and statistically significant correlation, even controlling for related variables such as multicultural exposure.

3. Expected final results and potential impacts

The MIME project has been designed to generate genuine advances in the management of linguistic diversity. The advances that we expect stem from the fact that it develops a novel approach to the management of linguistic diversity; this novel, interdisciplinary approach is in itself the main goal of the project.

This carries implications for the way in which knowledge about linguistic diversity is processed and organised. While taking account of the findings generated by earlier EC-supported research on multilingualism (which focused on the micro level, and examined at close range the linguistic practices of actors in interaction), the MIME project will offer tools for selection and design of language policies as *public policies*, just as public policies are developed in other areas such as health, transport or the environment. It bears repeating that a key feature of this new way of looking at linguistic diversity is the joint consideration of three levels that typically are in tension with each other, namely, the micro, the meso and the macro.

As the research work progresses, results will need to be transposed into public policy measures, some specifically focused on language, others indirectly addressing language issues but nonetheless relevant to the "multilingual challenge". However, these proposals will all focus on how to increase mobility for a given level of inclusion, or how to improve inclusion for a given level of mobility, or both. This will generate the organised body of compatible, policy-relevant propositions that constitute the MIME project's core objective goal.

The impact of the project may, however, go beyond showing how to achieve a better balance of mobility and inclusion through well-designed, multi-level languages policies, although this in itself constitutes a significant advance and remains our main goal. It can also contribute to Europe's cohesion, which is a recurring challenge in the construction of Europe as a political, economic, social and cultural project.

Europe aims to become a knowledge-based economy, as well as a closely-knit group of countries whose citizens are highly mobile and able to take up employment anywhere in the Union. At the same time, the member states wish to retain and cultivate their specific linguistic and cultural heritage, and evidence shows that citizens are highly sensitive to this issue. This means that the *mobility* of citizens (as well as persons moving in from non-EU member states) must not infringe on the complex process that enables newcomers to acquaint themselves with a local language and culture, and, ultimately, to be *included* in it. A balanced combination of mobility and inclusion can strongly contribute to making residents feel not only comfortable moving between member states, but also confident that the linguistic and cultural diversity that defines Europe will be maintained and cultivated. This combination of comfort and confidence, when moving across Europe and putting down roots somewhere for a shorter or longer periods, can make a crucial contribution to Europe's cohesion.

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Mobility and Inclusion
in Multilingual Europe

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