

MIME

Mobility and Inclusion
in Multilingual Europe

Second Publishable Summary

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1. Summary description of project context and objectives

The MIME research project starts out from the recognition of a tension between two goals that are key to the European ideal, namely the possibility for its citizens to move across internal boundaries (“mobility”), and the recognition of Europe’s diversity, meaning that mobile European citizens must be able to fit into the local surroundings where they decide to settle down for shorter or longer periods (“inclusion”). These two goals are both commendable, but they don’t always converge, and this non-convergence is particularly manifest in the realm of languages: Europeans need to communicate for study, work and leisure, but also to cultivate the diversity that the Union recognises as a core value, and that is so central to the identity of individuals and groups. The MIME project, therefore, investigates this tension, and how language policies can help to best combine mobility and inclusion.

The questions at hand are very broad and complex, and in order to deal with this complexity, the MIME project has adopted four principles: (1) strong interdisciplinarity, with research teams hailing from no less than ten different disciplines in the social sciences and humanities; (2) particular attention to the contrasts and continuity between processes that simultaneously unfold at the micro, meso and macro levels and influence each other; (3) an emphasis on the implications of research findings for public policy; and (4) the maintenance of regular connections with terrain actors through a *stakeholder forum* convened yearly.

Background information on the project, which brings together 25 teams from 16 countries, is available in the preceding *publishable summary* of the first project period as well as on the project website (www.mime-project.org), but the two key points to stress regarding ongoing project work are that:

- * MIME’s crucial contribution is that it offers, perhaps for the first time, a framework to think about the challenges of multilingualism in an integrated way. It simultaneously addresses it in terms of (1) political tensions and associated political and constitutional arrangements, (2) the evolution of group identities and their effects on social relations, (3) educational organisation regarding language teaching, language learning, and language use, (4) the relative effectiveness, in different contexts, of different communication strategies and (5) language policy development, including matters of efficiency, fairness, multi-level design, and legal implications. This results in an entirely novel, systemic approach to multilingualism in Europe. In addition, a set of shorter pilot studies is integrated into the project to explore specific questions such as the effects of multilingualism on geopolitical security, consumer protection, or creativity;
- * in its applications to various questions fitting into the overall framework (from the novel combination of constitutional principles in the design of language rights to the optimal combination of formal and non-formal language learning; from the statistical estimation of the impacts on creativity of individuals’ language skills to the fine-tuning of public-service interpreting and translation), the project’s teams are contributing new knowledge that helps to assess the advantages and drawbacks of policy alternatives, and make better informed policy choices.

2. Description of work performed and main results

During the first period of the project, the research teams have been reinterpreting and reformatting key aspects (some classical, some novel) of the multilingual challenge in terms of mobility and inclusion. In the second phase (months 19 to 36, to which this *publishable summary* is devoted), they have moved on to applications and preliminary findings.



Before presenting the latter, it is important to highlight two features that run throughout the project.

1. Each case is a special case: even if the project rests on an integrative framework, we strive to identify examples of successful practice and to evaluate the extent to which success is transferable to other cases.

2. We live in a time of change: the world is undergoing rapid transformations, by technological development globalization. The MIME project abstains from prognostications, but it tries to maintain a healthy degree of empiricism and to make sure the concepts used remain flexible enough.

Politics

In federal states with competing nation-building projects, the balance between mobility and inclusion reflects unequal power relations between majority and minority language groups. A supranational entity such as the EU ensures that the trade-off between mobility and inclusion is not solved simply through assimilation. Linguistic diversity resulting from international mobility (US) or internal mobility (India) gives rise to other challenges, which show that ethnic and linguistic social networks seem to be the most efficient vectors of inclusion and employment for newcomers of the first generation. In the second and third generation migrants are as mobile as their native counterparts. A balance of power between advocates and opponents of restrictive immigration and border control maintains a legislative status quo but provides the large immigration states with a great bargaining power in drafting and implementing language training policies.

A relatively loose coordination between the federal government and the states, despite federal guidelines, seems to offer reasonably pragmatic, which can take into account: both the relative normative autonomy of the states and the intergenerational dynamics of inclusion and mobility among migrants.

- * In multi-level political constellations, the experimental potential of sub-units' politics should tend to encourage the spread of successful practices, emulation and innovation. Yet, this potential is highly dependent on the trade-off between centralization and decentralization.
- * For the purposes of investigating mobility-induced diversity in EU member states, a survey (translated into Turkish, Polish, English, Dutch and French) is being conducted in Sweden, France and the Netherlands.
- * The relative relevance of territoriality and personality for the allocation of minority language rights has been revisited in relation with different statal approaches to diversity and power. The personality principle offers a range of solutions in states that strongly identify with a titular language. In other cases, the principle of territoriality offered better solutions to the mobility-inclusion trade-off.
- * New developments may challenge the implementation of these two principles: digitalization of public services; cross-border relations and the role of kin-states (e.g. media broadcasting, labour migration).

Society

Language policies are crucial to integration policies. Recent developments indicate a frequent shift of emphasis from an exclusively economic integration to integration into a cultural environment. In the implementation of these integration policies, intercultural grassroots initiatives act as bridge between the different historically entrenched language groups and newcomers. These grassroots initiatives differ from previous organisations in two ways: first, they are no longer grounded in 'traditional organisations' such as political parties. Second, these intercultural initiatives do not consider diversity as a problem and thus go beyond traditional discourses. These new grassroots initiatives' impact on the direction of integration policies confirms the political capacity of cities to offer alternative approaches to national and European integration policies and discourses.



The analysis focused on potential challenges for identity-building processes stemming from the combination of so-called endogenous multilingualism (i.e. local and state official languages) with exogenous multilingualism (i.e. migrant languages). In all three cities analysed, Brussels, Barcelona and Luxemburg, citizens use different linguistic repertoires in order to access material and symbolic goods, such as integration into a neighbourhood or opportunities for social and geographical mobility. By introducing the main languages of migrants in various municipal services offered, cities are encouraging multilingual identity-building processes.

Local authorities influence the language situation with actions ranging from ad hoc initiatives to more institutionalised policies. In addition to these actions, less formal mechanisms, such as multilingual linguistic landscapes and soundscapes at work in local contexts, contribute to foster place attachment and feelings of belonging, cohesion and inclusion.

Education

The integration of formal, non-formal and informal modes of language learning is a key factor for avoiding semilingualism and for reaching a level of linguistic confidence/comfort (in all the languages of the repertoire). Integration of this kind allows individuals to become: (1) more mobile/motile; (2) more oriented towards inclusion; (3) more willing to accept inclusion in the recipient society. Our research identifies the recognition and portability of language skills between formal and informal settings as particularly crucial.

Fieldwork shows that attitudes and language awareness seem to correlate with the type of education, and that non-formal and informal education positively influences the linguistic strategies of people in mobility and those who do not take part in it. It further suggests focusing not only on mobile students and staff, but also on those who stay at home and have to accommodate the diversity brought in by others.

Positive attitudes towards multilingualism at the family, school, and society level are more generally linked to positive attitudes towards diversity and inclusion. This result suggests that the promotion of multilingualism should be linked more closely with the movement for educational inclusion, rather than narrowly focused on the promotion of mother tongue education. Corresponding measures require collaboration between key actors including school administrators and staff, teacher trainers and teachers, peer students and families, and community organisations.

Observations further show that teacher education for diversity is a problematic area, especially with regard to multilingualism, and a substantial rethinking of teacher training (in order to treat language contact phenomena as “normal”, is required. Our survey of European examples clearly shows that the majority languages of recipient societies are not threatened by the contact immigrant languages from below – rather, they can be altered by the overwhelming power from above of supranational languages, a result which also carries implications for the realm of higher education, where a simplistic understanding of “internationalisation” can sometimes efforts to successfully combine mobility and inclusion.

Mediation

We have compared four communication strategies (technical solutions like automatic translation; traditional translation and interpreting; use of various lingua francas, including, but not limited to English, and intercomprehensive approaches. Our results indicate the following:

- ★ All four mediation choices enhance trade-offs between mobility and inclusion by relaxing constraints in various complementary ways.
- ★ The duration of intended mobility is a key variable for the use of one mediation choice or another.
- ★ In general, all four mediation choices can offer appropriate responses to the multilingual challenge;



some, however, seem tendentially better suited to short-term situations.

- * Longer-term mobility finds trade-offs with inclusion in terms of learning local or host languages.
- * There is no evidence that any of the mediation strategies block or hinder the learning of local or host languages; indeed, there is considerable evidence of complementarity between the short-term and long-term modes of mediation.

The findings tend to confirm recurrent complaints among mobile subjects: translation technologies are important but considered unreliable; professional interpreters are necessary in high-risk situations but they restrict independence; and intercomprehension and lingua francas are only pathways to long-term inclusion in the host society. For all these reasons, precisely because of their respective shortcomings, none of the mediation choices inherently blocks the learning of host languages. Such blocking only occurs in situations where no inclusion is actively sought because a lingua franca has become socially sufficient (as would be the case of English teachers in Ljubljana).

Specific policy recommendations ensuing from the above are as follows:

- * Recent immigrants should be provided free translation and interpreting services by qualified language professionals in high-risk situations, in particularly in legal, police and healthcare settings. There is no indication that such services will restrict future language learning.
- * Subsidies should be provided for the quality training for translators and interpreters working in the languages in need.
- * Continuous and free language courses should be provided in the host country languages.
- * Training in intercomprehension skills should be provided as a standard part of language-learning programs.

Policy

The study of the dynamics of languages in contact has moved forward with the identification of key determinants of language spread or decline, and the detailed investigation, through formal modelling, of the complex interplay between these determinants. This paves the way for designing policies that will appropriately take account of the role of various key variables

We have established a robust body of normative propositions with respect to linguistic domination; this approach presupposes that the impacts of language policies are studied in terms of their effects on groups defined through their linguistic characteristics, first and foremost their first language (L1). Our research concerning linguistic domination proves, in terms of normative political theory, that (1) linguistic domination exists in various situations; (2) it is an injustice; and (3) it should be eradicated.

In parallel, a second body of normative propositions has been developed, with a focus on identifying the nature of the advantages (and drawbacks) resulting from language policies. This enables policy makers to assess their policy options in terms of different criteria: for example, are they mainly concerned about the impact of policies on *communicative opportunities*, on people's sense of satisfaction under alternative policy scenarios, on people's *access to significant resources* (material or symbolic), or about whether people, as a result of a given policy choice, feel empowered in their daily life?

Our research on the fundamentals of language policy results in a novel mapping, with the selection of eight main dimensions in terms of which most of the policy responses to the multilingual challenge can be fitted. Many of the risks of inconsistency in language policy have been shown to emerge between the micro, meso and macro levels at which language policies are deployed, because the structure of goals and constraints characterising different levels



differs. This generates a five-step consistency check that can be used to ensure the alignment, in policy design, of the processes unfolding at each level, thus ensuring greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Transposing appropriate responses to the “multilingual challenge” calls for an appropriate legal framework, which could require amending some aspects of the EU Treaties – independently of the question of member states’ willingness to implement such amendments. Preliminary exploration of one country case (the UK) has been undertaken, revealing that in the main, the legal apparatus is in compliance with the needs of mobility as the latter is intended to unfold according to current EU legislation. This compliance is, however, not always complete, which raises problems of proportionality, concerning how far measures to this effect ought to go, confirming that if inclusion is considered necessary, as such and/or, together with mobility, in order to ensure European-level cohesion, consistency may require adaptations to existing EU-level texts.

Frontiers

“Frontiers” refers to a set of shorter independent studies addressing various issues located at the “frontiers” of the range of problems thrown up by multilingualism.

The study on the **Russian-speaking community in Latvia** assesses societal responses against the backdrop of conflict linked to the particular geopolitical situation of Latvia. The resilience of the Russian-speaking community in Latvia highlights the role and interplay of different sets of variables, namely (1) social capital and trust in external resources; (2) skills, knowledge and abilities; (3) economic status within the society and quantity and quality of available resources; (4) identity-based self-determination and sense of belonging to a particular community; (5) threat and perception of risk at the individual level.

Research on **multilingualism and consumer protection** reveals the absence of any definition, or even of a concept of multilingualism or linguistic diversity in EU consumer law. The research team is elaborating

a new definition of “multilingualism” in relation to the EU field of action and/or EU Member States field of action to which a linguistic regime is applicable in line with Article 3(3)(4) TEU; Article 4(2) TEU, and Article 22 of the EU Charter of Fundamental rights. Member States tend to adopt linguistic protection rules regulating economic relations between consumers and professionals in order to strengthen the inclusion of national/regional diversity. These regulations may however impede free movement of goods, and free movement of persons (consumers and/or professionals) between the Member States.

Our extremely novel approach to the **linguistic and cultural experience of the Roma** has brought to light the fact that they apply different educational techniques, which could be relevant for different minorities operating in multilingual environments. Among the most often used are a relatively classical strategy of “learning by doing”, and a culturally specific one of “learning of all from all”. Several techniques accepted by Roma are innovative and could inspire actions for the promotion of foreign language learning in other, more standard contexts.

Many **migrant retirees** do not learn the language of the host society. Consequently, serious problems arise in relation to health care and elderly care. The main contextual factors that sharpen or mitigate the problem: are (1) the presence of well-established expatriate communities; (2) the overlap between retirement migration and tourism; (3) the relatively widespread use of English.

Our research on **multilingualism, creativity and finance** has established (on a topic about which much is confidently asserted but where hard proof is almost systemically lacking) that foreign language skills are correlated with higher performance in creative tasks. While quantitatively modest, the effects are statistically significant and hold in multivariate analysis. We are currently examining the effect of linguistic-cultural diversity (or, conversely, uniformity) on a specific terrain, namely, the teaching of finance.



3. Expected final results and potential impacts

The chief aim of the MIME project is to propose an organised body of policy proposals, based on an interdisciplinary approach that pays particular attention to the *interconnections* between various components of the multilingual challenge confronting the European citizen, and between the various levels (micro, meso and macro) at which they find expression.

The general philosophy of the project, however, is not one in which research would deliver ready-made recipes. The chief reason is that when it comes to the management of linguistic diversity, each case is a unique case, and it would not be possible to propose specific measures tailored to the myriad situations occurring across the European Union. The project's goal is not to arrive at one grand, all-encompassing model of diversity management. Rather, in order to deliver the set or organised policy proposals mentioned above the project aims at providing three things: first, an integrative, politically and intellectually consistent vision of linguistic diversity as a social challenge that must, but also can be met; second, an set of mutually consistent models that fit into the classical theme areas of diversity management (from education to political arrangements, from social engineering to public service interpreting, from constitutional provisions to the study of language dynamics, etc.). Finally, it aims to offer a set of practical tools, based on sound multi-level, interdisciplinary analysis, as well as on the identification of instances of *successful practice*, that users can appropriate and customized for their own needs, reflecting specific conditions. This has led us to start planning for the main publications of the research project, and two such outputs are planned.

The first of these outputs is a *standard academic book* aimed at a readership of scholars interested or involved in the fields of multilingualism and language planning. It is expected to take the form of one or two volumes for a total of (approximately) 25 chapters (one per team, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion).

The other will take the form of a *Vademecum* organised as series of short, practice-oriented Q & A on specific language policy questions.

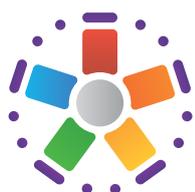
The aim of the *Vademecum* is not to provide an encyclopaedic treatment of how to go about selecting and design language policies to meet the multilingual challenge. Its aim is to offer a panorama of treatments of an array of language questions covering the project as whole, exemplifying how the analytical tools developed in the project can help in the process of selection and design, and illustrating these applications with real-world examples based on our case studies. By providing a set of conceptual and methodological tools that decision-makers (or people called upon, in their professional or political activities, to assess competing language policy proposals) can use for such purposes, the *Vademecum* is intended to provide orientation and, so we hope, inspiration. In this way, it is hoped that the MIME project can have a genuine impact and make a lasting contribution to the governance of linguistic diversity in Europe.



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