

László Márac<sup>1</sup>

## **Instrumentaro por transnacia komunikado en Eŭropo: komparo inter manieroj de komunikado en multlingva Eŭropo**

### *Resumo*

La proceso de la Eŭropa integriĝo estas akompanata de transnaciaj procesoj, kiuj defias la tradicie establitan manieron de unulingva interkomunikiĝo. Kiam multoblaj rilatoj kaj agadoj interligas homojn aŭ instituciojn trans la limoj de iliaj naciaj ŝtatoj, ni parolas pri transnaciismo. El ĝi sekvas la neceso, rekonsideri la fenomenon de multlingva interkomunikiĝo kaj esplori la cirkonstancojn, en kiuj konvenas uzi ekzemple la anglan kiel *lingua franca* (ELF), uzi regionajn lingvojn kiel *linguae francae* (RELF), apliki la teknikon de la *lingua receptiva* (LARA), laŭ kiu ĉiu parolanto uzas sian gepatran lingvon en multlingva medio, aŭ tiun de la kodŝanĝado (CSW). Ĉiuj tiuj metodoj ja disponeblas, sed neniam oni provis kungrupigi ilin en koheran sistemon de komunikstrategioj kaj konfronti la relativajn fortojn de ĉiu el ili kun la specialaĵoj de diversaj multlingvaj medioj.

La nova projekto 'Toolkit' aŭ 'Instrumentaro', kunordigata de esploristoj en Nederlando, kunigas esplorgrupojn en unu konsorcion, kies komuna sperto ebligas la sisteman komparon inter la fortaĵoj kaj malforaĵoj de la diversaj strategioj. La laboroj de la projekto rezultigos la kunmeton de instrumentaro por transnacia komunikado, kiu prenos en konsideron la diversecon inter la agantoj, la medioj kaj la lingvoj, renkontataj en nuntempa Eŭropo. La instrumentaro helpos siajn estontajn uzantojn, decidi pri tio, kiun komunikmetodon juĝi plej konvena en konkreta kazo.

Mia kontribuo enkondukos vin en la komparon inter la malsamaj komunikmetodoj kaj ilia laŭkaza efikeco, esprimita laŭ kriterioj lingvaj kaj eksterlingvaj, kiel ekzemple tiuj de la lingva demokratio kaj la lingva ekonomio. La simpozianoj estas invitataj aldoni Esperanton al mia listo de komunikstrategioj.

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## **A toolkit for transnational communication in Europe: comparing modes of communication in the multilingual Europe**

### *Abstract*

European integration has proceeded along with transnational processes that challenge the traditionally established mode of monolingual communication. Transnationalism results when multiple ties and interactions link people or institutions across the borders of nation states. This requires a reappraisal of multilingual communication, figuring out in which contexts strategies such as English as lingua franca (ELF), regional linguae francae (RELF), Lingua Receptiva (LARA) (each speaker uses his/her mother tongue in multilingual communication) and code-switching (CSW) are appropriate. While these modes are available, they have never been integrated into a coherent set of communicative strategies that match their strengths with particular features of the communicative setting.

A new project called 'Toolkit', coordinated by researchers in The Netherlands, brings together a research groups forming a consortium and their expertise in order to systematically compare the strengths and weaknesses of the various strategies. A toolkit for transnational communication in Europe will be prepared that takes into account the various actors, settings and languages encountered in modern Europe. It will help future users to decide what communicative mode appears to be the most appropriate under the given circumstances.

In my contribution, I will make a start with the comparison of the different modes of communication and their effectiveness in terms of language internal and external principles of communication involved, like the Democracy and Economy Principles. The participants of the conference are invited to add Esperanto to this list of communicative strategies.

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## **A toolkit for transnational communication in Europe: dealing with linguistic diversity**

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*Keywords:* norms, language choice, globalization, proficiency, language contact, culture contact

### **Abstract**

This paper will go over some strategies available in a range of communicative situations in which speakers of different mother tongues come together. The strategies discussed include English as a Lingua Franca, the use of Regional Lingua Franca's, so-called Receptive Multilingualism (in which each interlocutor uses his/her own language), and Codeswitching (in which two or more languages are used together in the same communicative event). Advantages and disadvantages of each strategy will be discussed, and the architecture of a toolkit will be outlined, with which we hope to be able to provide sound advice to people and organization that are interested to manage linguistic diversity in the future. This advice will be sensitive to general properties of the communicative strategies and specific aspects of the local situation.

### **1. Introduction**

Language choice is not always an easy issue. Whenever there is a choice of which language to use, there are generally advantages and disadvantages to all available options. Modern life is full of communicative situations in which a choice has to be made for the linguistic medium. In many cases, it does not really feel to the participants as if they really do have a choice, since one particular language has always been the norm in that particular type of situation; in other cases, however, the choice is not so obvious and it is these cases that the present article focuses on. We will see that the choice for one or the other language is often tied up with some sort of inter-group conflict, and this provides the applied rationale for this study. Conflict is always a possible danger whenever there is diversity, and the toolkit we will argue for is meant to be a management instrument that helps organizations, such as governments and companies, to manage diversity. This is certainly useful in cases of linguistic diversity: whenever there is more than one option for choice of language in a particular communicative context, it is more than likely that any option will be to the advantage of only one of the parties. Any choice, therefore, is connected to issues of inequality and access to resources; good management of such issues is important to stave off conflict before it erupts.

While issues of language choice are in evidence throughout the world, our empirical focus will be on Europe. The progressive integration that has characterized recent European history has proceeded in a context of transnationalism, a process that challenges the traditionally established modes of assimilation to a dominant culture or multiculturalism, and the associated modes of monolingual communication (Vertovec 2007). Transnationalism results when multiple ties and interactions link people or institutions across the borders of

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nation states, typically associated with widespread migration, both of people in pursuit of jobs (ranging from seasonal agricultural work to the offices of multinationals and European institutions) and of companies in pursuit of lower production costs. While not limited to the modern world, it has rapidly become the dominant form of identity formation in our postmodern world of high mobility (job mobility, cheap travel, etc.) and easy communication (email, cell phones, etc.). As this development calls for a large *repertoire* of verbal resources and sophisticated communicative competence (Lüdi en Py 2007; Blommaert & Backus 2011; see below), it is likely that it has caused a marked increase in situations in which language choice is not so obvious. In some of these, especially at the formal end of the continuum, language choice will be regulated by law or custom; in others, various options are possible depending on the actors involved, the particular settings, and the available languages. Possibilities of multilingual communication include English as lingua franca (ELF), regional *linguae francae* (RELF), Lingua Receptiva (LARA) (each speaker uses his/her mother tongue in multilingual communication) and code-switching (CS). These have in common that they allow speakers to use the resources they already have, and therefore avoid the need for professional translation services. What is needed is a coherent framework in which these modes (and perhaps others) are discussed in relation to each other. This article aims to go over the pros and cons of each option, contributing to what should become a toolkit for transnational communication, which can be used as an aid in making optimal linguistic choices in transnational contexts, so as to minimize the likelihood of conflict (Rindler-Schjerve 2007) and maximize communicative success.

There are at least two reasons why language choice is not always an easy matter. Partially it is because it needs to take into account interlocutors' linguistic abilities, but also because language varieties are mixed up with identities, values, and attitudes. Misunderstanding, both in the literal sense and in the sense of people misreading each other's intentions, and the potential conflict that might result, are real dangers. The toolkit is intended to ward off such problems before they can occur, by helping people to understand the motivations behind linguistic choices and the effects they may have on interlocutors. Various subfields in linguistics have accumulated knowledge on parts of this topic; this project aims to bring them together for the first time. These fields, including sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, historical linguistics, the study of language acquisition and others, have identified the four commonly used language choice strategies portrayed in this article. We will compare how actors, including individuals as well as organizations, deal with linguistic diversity in their everyday language choices, in diverse communicative settings, such as border regions, public institutions, cities and families. The major question is what the adequate communicative strategy seems to be in these different situations. Communicative efficiency and the preservation of European principles and values (democracy, human rights, equality, social cohesion, economic prosperity, etc.) are the important reference criteria in establishing what works and what does not. There is a tension between what may be called the Democracy and Economy Principles: interactants will want to act fairly, avoid exploiting inequality in access to relevant resources, and remain faithful to broadly accepted principles of decency, but they will also strive for efficiency, and go for what involves the least effort and involves the lowest costs.

The rest of this section lays out the motivation for the Toolkit effort in the a) the lack of a general theory about why particular communicative strategies are efficient in particular types of communicative setting ; and b) the increased diversity, due to globalization, of the cultural backgrounds participants bring to communicative encounters in modern times. The empirical evidence underlying this effort comes from several research groups who have pooled their expertise in a recently established research network (funded by the Dutch Science Foundation). Examples from their work will feature in the sections below. Section 2 embeds

the topic of language choice in sociolinguistic theory, paying particular attention to how norms get established. Sections 3-6 introduce the four strategies identified above in some detail. Section 7 compares the four strategies, and outlines in which situation which strategy seems to work best. The final section discusses the results so far in light of sociolinguistic theories regarding language choice and normativity, and identifies some theoretical and practical challenges.

### *1.1. Communication strategies*

The sheer existence of linguistic diversity testifies to the fact that communicative choices are not always obvious. Otherwise, there would be no codeswitching or bilingualism, nor style and register differentiation, and the effort to establish Esperanto as a universally used language would probably have succeeded. Norms for which variety to use in which setting can be quite entrenched, and they are sometimes quite hotly contested. Often, this takes the form of linguistic tension, in extreme cases conceptualized as ‘linguistic conflict’ (as in Belgium), though the conflict is usually a proxy war for group conflict. Society is affected by this problem in various ways. If a language variety is to be *banned* from particular domains, public support for this state of affairs needs to be motivated with decent arguments. Access to any *privileged* variety, on the other hand, needs to be guaranteed for all, for example through education. If a language is to be promoted for use by non-native speakers, the issue of proficiency rears its head, because it needs to be decided how proficient speakers need to be in order to function efficiently. Language policy can only do so much to regulate these choices, and it is an open question whether much of this should be regulated in the first place.

#### MORE ON LANGUAGE POLICY HERE? (GRIN, FERGUSON)

One could also argue that human behavior rests on cooperation, and this puts demands on what we do, resulting in the basic aspects of communication captured by, for example, Grice’s maxims. As a consequence, two people who wish to communicate may be expected to do what they can to make communication successful. Theoretically, this would support a *laissez-faire* approach to communication choices that is quite at odds with the idea that regulation is needed.

Of course, people are not always *that* cooperative, especially perhaps when they are not communicating on their own behalf but as a representative of an organization, a nation or some other collective group. The need to assert authority, superiority, authenticity, priority or some other contested kind of social identity often gets in the way of taking the easiest option, or at least the option that is at a practical level the most likely to lead to successful communication. And even this only holds if ‘successful communication’ is defined in identity-neutral terms, as conveying factual (‘referential’) information successfully. There is a good case to be made, however, for including connotations and other kinds of social meaning (‘indexicality’; Blommaert xxxx) in what needs to be conveyed in a communicative act, and this goal may very well require communicative choices that are not optimal for the goal of conveying the referential information efficiently, but help keeping frustration levels at bay. This is essentially why the toolkit will not advise everybody to just learn English well and use that language all of the time.

Communication has undergone interesting changes in recent times. Thanks to globalization on the one hand, and technology on the other hand, the empirical basis has been expanded. It is unclear to what extent this necessitates accompanying changes in theoretical frameworks, but exploration of this issue is certainly needed. The fragmentation of one’s social life into many different subcommunities, each with its own communicative and

linguistic conventions, and the use of social media that until recently did not exist, pose interesting challenges for the conceptualization of linguistic repertoires and the inventory of linguistic forms or resources that make up one's linguistic competence. They also trigger the need for updated descriptions of the language choices made in these diverse communicative settings. This, in turn, necessitates theoretical innovation in the form of an improved description of communicative repertoires, in which both individual resources as well as reifications at a higher level of abstractness (varieties, e.g. sociolects, ethnolects, etc.) are addressed.

There is, as yet, no database on communication patterns and the linguistic and cultural resources they make use of. Building such a database is surely beyond the scope of the present study, but it does allow a comparison of case studies, which in turn could be interpreted as a pilot study for working out common methodological standards and desiderata for the future completion of such a database, which could then sustain and inspire new researchers and stakeholders in the decades to come. Conceivably, this database could be consulted by any organization faced with a language choice dilemma. Similar looking situations can be examined, including descriptions of the language choices made and the effects they had.

## 1.2. Cultural encounters

Transnational communication by definition involves encounters between people with different cultural backgrounds, and often with different native languages as well.

Norms of behavior, including norms of language choice, may become contested in the context of social change, which is why sociolinguistics and pragmatics are naturally attracted to the types of issues implicated in language choice. Such conflicts occur within as well as across communities; here we will focus on the latter, on situations in which two or more languages are involved. Large-scale social phenomena such as (post-)colonialism, urbanization, migration and globalization produce cultural encounters between groups based on such identity-shaping factors as religion, ethnicity and gender, and do so on various scales, ranging from entire nations and all kinds of linguistic minorities to subcultures in society. The norms involved may be linguistic, behavioral, cultural, artistic, etcetera, but to a certain extent maintaining this disciplinary division is counterproductive, as these domains are not independent of one another. This is one of the reasons why this topic needs interdisciplinary research, uniting linguists, anthropologists, social scientists and others. Identity, broadly defined as the way a person positions himself or herself in the world and in relation to fellow human beings, is a central concept in all of this, as many of the things people do are implicit (and sometimes explicit) acts of identity: the act itself, e.g. choosing Language A rather than B, 'stands for' or 'indexes' a certain attitude, opinion or stance. Contesting a norm is, for instance, one outcome of the wish to increase the value of one's cultural background, while adhering to norms, as a powerful mechanism for achieving belongingness, is equally expressive of identity (i.e. the assertion that one belongs to the group that behaves 'this way'). Transnational communication events invariably involve identity issues; the Toolkit aims to help providing ways of identifying these issues and subsequently contribute to mutual understanding of the language preferences different parties may have. Norm contestation does not always originate or result in conflict. Many are the examples of artistic and cultural *hybridity*, where cultural encounters have led to new traditions that are generally evaluated as enhancing local art and culture (new literary genres, ethnic food, etc.). At the same time, cultural encounters often produce misunderstanding and division. Deep down, this is because different groups hold different norms, and may generally even be unaware of this, as they do not share enough *common ground* to successfully inform other groups of what their norms are like. Scholars in the fields of culture and communication (especially *intercultural*

*communication*) have a responsibility to help remedy such situations whenever possible. Hybridity all but presupposes a dynamic conceptualization of culture ('culture is a verb'), and linguistics offers two theoretical approaches that treat language the same way. First, the usage-based approach to linguistic knowledge (Barlow & Kemmer 2000; Bybee 2006; Langacker 2008) holds that linguistic knowledge is completely determined by usage (both active use and passive exposure) and is, therefore, inherently variable and dynamic. This is quite compatible with the idea that cultural competence is forever changing (cf. Blommaert & Backus 2011). A second way in which cultural and some linguistic approaches to language tend to treat language and culture the same way is the emphasis in linguistic anthropology on the fact that speakers combine resources to construct new things (as the active process of 'linguaging'; Jørgensen 2010: the linguistic equivalent of 'culture is a verb', referring to the fact that in using language one is always doing more than just conveying referential information: language does 'social work'). Yet, while this is the current academic view on language, culture and identity, it sits uneasily with the predominant public view on these phenomena, which is very much essentialist and sees both language and culture as relatively immutable. Policy makers, of course, face real social problems, and may dismiss the academic view as too far removed from the public perception to be of benefit to social cohesion (or to combating the lack of it). The task of linguistics and cultural studies is to show that the notion of hybridity holds real promise for solving social problems. If the Toolkit wishes to lessen the weight of having to choose between two languages, for instance, it also has to find a way of disseminating this dynamic view of cultural practice (including language use) and show how it can be used to avoid or lessen conflict. It needs to explain, for instance, why value judgments such as 'contamination', 'bastardization' and 'deterioration' are negative evaluations of the quite natural process of cross-linguistic influence, rather than simply condemn such judgments as backwards and out of synch with modern times. That is, the Toolkit aims to address the topic of how to disseminate research findings about language ideology, and the general metalinguistic knowledge it builds on (i.e. any *explicit* knowledge people have *about* language, as opposed to, e.g., the largely *implicit* grammatical competence most people have). It will do this by collecting instances of good practice, in which multilingual communication proceeds successfully, emphasizing the four strategies we focus on.

## **2. Norms of language choice in communication**

Many people face language choice issues on an almost daily basis. This holds for informal and formal communication, and for one-off encounters as well as institutional discourse. While modern Europe is rooted in the monolingual and monocultural nation state, it is increasingly involved in processes of integration and globalization, which call for a transnational outlook at all levels, from individual European citizens to international multi-state bodies. People move out of their home areas, and are involved in multinational companies or offices; regions and nations collaborate in supra-regional and international organizations. EU citizens are expected to develop transnational identities. A transnational perspective, and the practices in which it plays a role, in turn, call for multilingual linguistic competence, and numerous choices as to which of those resources to use in which situations. Depending on contextual specifics, various communicative options are available: English as lingua franca (ELF), using a regional lingua franca (RELF), Lingua Receptiva or receptive multilingualism (RM), and using two or more languages side by side (codeswitching; CS).

Life would perhaps be easy, if somewhat boring and unfair, if there were laws for how and when to choose which language. For the vast majority of our communicative interactions,

such laws do not exist; yet, we are not generally free to choose, as most recurrent communicative situations are governed by unwritten laws, by **norms**. This term can be understood in two ways, and the tension between them lies at the heart of the subject of this article. First, norms can be conceptualized in purely theoretical terms as a common pattern that emerges from behavior, as the ‘normal’ way of doing things. The second use of the term is how it is generally used in our everyday language use, referring to imposed rules for behavior, as the way things *should* be done. Depending on how effective such imposed norms are, the two types of norm can be virtually the same (the way we do things is also the way we think they should be done), or they may clash (we don’t behave according to the rules). At the level of EU institutions, for instance, imposed norms often follow the democratic principle that provisions must be made for the use of any of the community languages, a principle directly related to the common language ideology that all languages are equal and citizens should not be placed in situations of inequality because of what happens to be their native language. However, actual communication will often be constrained by a number of other factors, such as ease of communication and effectiveness, but also individual factors concerning language purism, attitudes, and prestige. Sometimes such factors will reinforce each other and favor the same language choice, while at other times they may conflict and produce insecurity as to which language to choose. The *Toolkit* we develop is concerned with describing and understanding both kinds of norms, exploring situations in which there is more than one norm, when norms are broken, and why that happens. Disseminating what we find to the wider public, including policy makers, is an explicit goal of the project.

Norms emerge in any domain in which human beings make behavioral choices. Technically, the laws of physics can also be described as norms, but it seems useful to limit the term to behavior that is, to a degree, under the cognitive control of human agents, to the domain of Humanities and Social Sciences, that is. Such behavior is dependent on choices humans make, rather than on the laws of nature. Conceptualizing language choice as a matter of norms allows it to be analyzed as just another aspect of human behavior that can be governed, managed and influenced, and since norms defined this way are always open to negotiation it also provides a framework within which adherence and resistance to current norms can be understood.

Norms vary in the degree to which people are aware of them. Typically, we will be relatively unaware of norms that are reinforced constantly and that hold almost categorically. Constant reinforcement helps entrench norms mentally which has the effect of lowering awareness of them (see below), and universal application means there is little or no resistance to it, which contributes to such norms not being salient. Conversely, norms we are confronted with only from time to time and/or that are the source of conflict will generally be the subject of conscious attention. Choice of language in international communicative situations is typically of the latter category, as these communicative situations are probably not the stuff of everyday linguistic practice for anyone, and the issue is certainly imbued with enough emotion to potentially create conflict. While the toolkit does not aim to prescribe communication patterns in such situations, it does aim to contribute ideas as to what communicative norms apparently hold in any given situation; which alternative ones, if any, could be settled on; and what the likely communicative and societal consequences will be if any of the various options is chosen.

In clearing the theoretical ground, it is important to engage a little more with what norms are, and this requires both a perspective on individual behavior and on social structure. As far as they are not imposed by some source of authority (see the next subsection), the norms that govern our daily lives, including how we speak, develop out of behavior. We keep track of what we do and what other people do, we build up knowledge of what is common and what is not, and we use this knowledge to shape our next actions. The basis for this lies in some of the



most basic cognitive skills humans possess: cultural learning, pattern finding, and usage-based storage of knowledge in memory.

As human beings, we learn how to behave according to the norms, or *conventions*, of human behavior. We are able to do this because our cognitive capacities allow us to build up a mental representation of those norms, built up on the basis of experience, or past practice. As people store traces of everyday experiences in their memory, they build up a cognitive representation of these experiences, and if a particular experience occurs often enough, its cognitive representation gets entrenched. This aspect of normativity explains why we often do things, including choosing the language mode for communication, ‘for no particular reason’, ‘just because’, or ‘because it’s always done this way’. This is what is called a ‘usage-based approach’, developed for linguistic competence in various branches of ‘Cognitive Linguistics’ (e.g. Langacker 2008; Tomasello 2008; Dąbrowska & Street 2010), but it is compatible with current theorizing in sociolinguistics (Blommaert & Backus 2011) and various subfields within cultural studies (Cicourel 2006; Nye 2000, Otsugi & Pennycook 2010, ADD REFS).

While norms are, strictly speaking, located in individual minds, there is an important social dimension to them. When someone does or says something in a particular way because it is always done this way, that person has not just checked his or her own internal norm, but also assessed whether that norm is identical to the one other people hold. This allows interlocutors to gauge how much *common ground* there is between them (Clark 1996), and sufficient common ground is a prerequisite for successful communication. When there is not enough common ground, interlocutors may *think* they share the same norms while they really don’t, and this may lead to misunderstanding and conflict.

If interlocutors have a good idea of what norms are entrenched in the others’ minds, there is a good chance they can design their utterances in such a way that their message will come across just the way they intend them to. In intercultural communication, however, this cannot be taken for granted. Transnational communication is one type of intercultural communication, but it is useful to consider that it is just a special case of a more general phenomenon. Workers talk to bosses, women to men, and residents to their neighbors, and in every case people bring their cultural (including linguistic) background with them into the communicative situation. Common ground will rarely be 100%, and in this sense all communication is intercultural. However, good communication aims to bring the common ground as close as possible to that 100%. In a sense, that entails bringing the individual cultural knowledge of the participants closer together, and every instance of successful communication contributes to this development. Obviously, this entails a dynamic view of culture, as a constantly evolving body of stored knowledge, just like we argued above for linguistic competence under the usage-based approach. Relevant dimensions for the description of all communicative settings include, then, the degree to which the cultural backgrounds of the participants differ, the degree to which the participants are aware of these differences, and the degree to which the interaction contributes to decreasing the difference. As to the linguistic dimension of this, differences are often not to be found in the inventory of linguistic forms the participants know, but in what these forms *index* for them. We gain all this knowledge as we are socialized into our various social networks and *communities of practice* (i.e. the groups to which we belong by virtue of common interests and obligations; cf. Eckert 2003). Importantly, we all belong to many different social networks and communities of practice, which, moreover, rarely overlap completely with those of another person. It is against this general model of *intercultural communication* that we propose *transnational communication* must be interpreted.

All this makes assessing the degree of common ground always a contentious affair: we have gaps in our own knowledge and we cannot see into other people’s minds. We may think, for instance, that our choice for, say, English, for a particular international meeting is a polite

choice that allows everybody to take part, but some interlocutor may well perceive it as an effort to raise the status of those who are good in English, and to block contributions from those whose English is less good, or to subtly accuse those who don't accept the practical choice of English as a lingua franca of silly obstructionism, perhaps out of misplaced pride or jealousy. The basis of the misunderstanding, in this case, would ultimately lie in insufficiently realizing, or insufficiently caring, that language is not just a vehicle for conveying propositional information: it is also a social and political construct.

Sometimes reification of norms produces *explicit* norms at the meta-level, e.g. about what is and what is not part of 'our' culture, what counts as 'standard language', or indeed which language one should speak in particular situations. The most obvious example of such explicit norms is a *prescriptive* rule, e.g. a law, but it is important to note that even in the absence of overtly prescriptive codes of conduct, people attach normative value to common patterns of behavior. That is, we often interpret 'this is how it's always done' as 'this is how it *should* be done', elevating the normal pattern to the status of 'unwritten law'. While failure to comply with norms may sometimes be evaluated positively (e.g. as an act of creativity), it will often meet with negative responses (in which case it is interpreted as rebellion or unwillingness to behave 'normally').

We have devoted quite a bit of space to how norms get established and how they are cognitively represented. The cognitive perspective seems, at first sight, to be fairly irrelevant to the Toolkit enterprise, as it deals with concrete decisions that need to be made in particular, relatively formal, communicative settings, but understanding with what norms people come to these situations helps understanding how much common ground there is between participants, and thus to what degree misunderstandings may be a danger to reckon with. It also helps understand why people embrace certain decisions and resist others. It also implies that we must deal with issues such as proficiency, access to desired norms, their acquisition, and the justification for the privileged positions of only some norms and not others. The Toolkit is **not** meant to suggest more prescriptive rules; it is meant to pool and disseminate knowledge about the normativity issues that need to be widely understood in order for people and organizations to make effective language choices in a range of communicative situations involving speakers of different languages. This will increase their chances of making their communicative efforts successful.

### **3. The four strategies**

Successful communication may be defined as a hearer understanding what a speaker intended to convey, including both factual information and more 'hidden' meaning, such as opinions, attitudes and associations. People wish to make themselves understood, but issues of political power, fairness, status and solidarity may sometimes interfere. The Economy Principle, that is, can be overruled. Different situations call for different strategies.

We have identified four different strategies that seem to be used, often or less often, in transnational communication: English as Lingua Franca, Regional Lingua Franca, Receptive Multilingualism, and Codeswitching. Which one can be used in any given communicative situation naturally depends on what linguistic resources are available to the participants. We will first discuss each strategy in turn.

#### *3.1 English as Lingua Franca (ELF)*

At present, English is clearly the most widespread language in the world in terms of people learning it as a second language, often so that they can function in situations in which people communicate who have different mother tongues. Ensuring that everyone has access to

English and then using English as the default lingua franca in such communicative situations seems, at first sight, a reasonable solution to the language choice problem. However, there are various problems. First, not everyone *has* access to English.

Second, English is not as neutral as the above idealization more or less implies. Its widespread use as the lingua franca of a globalised world may endanger the vitality of other languages, by limiting their role as vehicular languages. In a summarizing article on this problem, Seidlhofer, Breiteneder & Pitzl (2006: 8) write: “This situation is obviously problematic: The need for a common means of communication is in potential conflict with the ideals of societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism.” The authors distinguish two major types of communicative situations in which the use of English avoids having to use translators (Breidbach 2003: 20). The first is that the widespread success of English in various professional domains imposes further pressure on everybody just to use English (‘top-down’); the second is that English is “encountered and used by speakers from all levels of society in practically all walks of life” (Seidlhofer, Breiteneder & Pitzl 2006: 5). They argue that it is in situations of the first type that the employment of English subjects the participants to the norms of a native like competence: making do with just any level of English one can muster is not enough if one wants to fully participate, be taken serious, at, for example, international conferences, especially if they include native speaking participants, and many other relatively formal or official domains.

Less normativity is involved in the choice of English in “informal settings” among groups of non-native speakers. The rules of Standard English are not necessarily enforced in such communicative situations, and such situations give rise to new varieties of English, referred to as *World Englishes*. These varieties are “endonormative”, as they establish their own conventions which will diverge to a greater or lesser extent from those of Standard English. Often, the respective native languages of the speakers can be seen reflected in ELF usage. A particularly productive research area in this area concerns language attitudes and identity (Gubbins & Holt 2002; Duszak 2002; Duszak & Okulska 2004; Jenkins (2007); Joseph 2004; Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004; Simon 2004). Considering its home in informal conversation, it is no surprise that it would “seem premature to ask questions about the degree to which ELF in Europe can be regarded as an actual variety (Euro-English) in any meaningful sense ...” (Seidlhofer e.a. 2006, 21).

### 3.2 Regional Lingua Franca (RELF)

The system of officially monolingual states that has come to characterize Europe after the First World War is at odds with the linguistic diversity on the continent, as, for one thing, there are many more languages than countries. The typical European state has been marked by having one official language, the language of the majority nation. Any other languages used within the state territory were relegated to subordinate status, and its speakers had to accommodate to the official language, should they want to play a role in society. Pre-World War I, much of Europe was part of large multiethnic empires, such as the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, typically multilingual societies in which a lingua franca was used, learned by most people as an L2.

In European history the choice of lingua franca is usually connected to the high status of the language of the ruling classes or majority populations, who had enough political power and prestige for their language to dominate communication in other parts of the empire. The original Mediterranean *Lingua Franca* was largely based on Italian and Provençal; it was spoken from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries around the Mediterranean basin, particularly in the European commercial empires of Italian cities and in trading ports located throughout the eastern Mediterranean rim; Koine Greek was used in the parts of Europe where the Byzantine

Empire held hegemony; Latin was used in the other parts of Europe due to Roman expansion and maintained its prestige for a long time thanks to the wide diffusion of the Roman Catholic Church; Latin was for instance used as the language of scholars in Europe until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in most subjects. In more recent times, German served as a *lingua franca* in large portions of Europe for centuries, mainly on the territory of the Holy Roman Empire and it was one of the official languages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; French was the *lingua franca* of diplomacy from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the language of European literature in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; and the rise of English as a *lingua franca* in diplomacy started after the First World War and achieved its present dominance after the Second World War. In the eastern part of the continent, Polish was a *lingua franca* in regions that belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For several centuries, Polish was the main language spoken by the ruling classes in Lithuania, Ukraine and the modern state of Belarus. Russian is in use and widely understood in areas formerly part of the Soviet Union and may be understood by older people in Central and Eastern Europe, formerly part of the Warsaw Pact. Russian remains the *lingua franca* in the Commonwealth of Independent States; and Serbo-Croatian is *lingua franca* in all former Yugoslav republics, including Slovenia and Macedonia.

Most of these languages may be characterized as **Regional Linguae Francae**, since they were employed as such in the wider region covered by the empire or some other type of political union. After the empires or countries to which they were connected collapsed or lost prestige, they had to compete with the national languages of the new nation states and often disappeared from the official domain.

Since the establishment of the European Union the nation-state system has come under some pressure. Europe is characterized by multi-level governance in which the role of the nation-state has been reduced, especially because its borders have become transparent (Zielonka, 2007). Furthermore, the goal of Europeanization (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005) is that European norms and values, including that voiced by the Council of Europe on the desirability of multiculturalism and the protection of regional and minority languages, spread over the whole continent (Breidbach 2003). In the resulting ‘common European communicative sphere’, the use of former Regional Linguae Francae and other vehicular languages has re-emerged. In some cases, speech communities that were located on different sides of a border but who use the same language have been reconnected due to the stimulation of cross-border, transnational cooperation. In these regionally restricted border areas old communicative patterns have resurfaced within the EU regime. The emergence and re-emergence of transnational communication with the help of regional *linguae francae* offers a possibility for overcoming linguistic diversity at the edges of neighbouring states, although due to its territorial restrictions it is limited in scope. In the territories where RELF is operative RELF may compete with ELF as the more efficient and/or acceptable communicative option.

### *3.3 Receptive Multilingualism/Lingua Receptiva (LaRa)*

Generally speaking, "Receptive Multilingualism" is a mode of intercultural communication in which the conversation partners can employ different languages or varieties and still understand each other without the help of any additional *lingua franca*. Their mutual understanding is established because recipients have enough “passive” knowledge of the language that their interlocutor(s) is (are) speaking. Previously, this phenomenon was conceptualized as “intelligibility of closely related languages” (Wolff 1964), “semicomunication” (Haugen 1981), or “intercompréhension” (Grin 2008). It has recently been described as “receptive multilingualism” or, emphasizing the *receptive* component of communication, as LaRa (“Lingua Receptiva”; ten Thije & Zeevaert 2007; Rehbein/ten

Thije/Verschik 2009). LaRa is defined as the ensemble of the *linguistic, mental, interactional* and *intercultural competences* which are *creatively* activated when listeners are addressed in one of their “passive” languages. Communication is enhanced if speakers monitor “passive knowledge activation in hearers” and make use of subsidiary competencies to control communicative asymmetries as soon as they become manifested in interaction. Such competencies come naturally to many speakers, but they can also be trained.

In LaRa, a distinction is made between a hearer's and a speaker's component, as the roles demand slightly different sets of skills on the dimensions mentioned. The hearer's competence is communicatively realized by nonverbal signals, prosodic elements expressing a range from agreement to disagreement, formulaic expressions such as *I don't understand, what do you mean, what?*, echo questions, and other elements with which the hearer gives feedback to the speaker about the extent of comprehension. Strategies that the speaker may use in order to overcome comprehension problems include reformulations, repairs, recapitulations, rephrasings and other kinds of metadiscourse realisation. In particular, accommodation processes give rise to lexical and morphological adaptations towards what the speaker imagines to be more easily understood by the hearer. In this sense, creative verbal elements are often a product of LaRa, and might issue new insights into the emergence of contact varieties (cf. Matras 2009).

For purposes of understanding, hearers reactivate often implicit *typological knowledge* about language similarities. In earlier studies, covering Scandinavian, Germanic (Haugen 1984, Braunmüller 2002, Zeevaert 2004) and Romance languages (Conti & Grin 2008), typological similarity within language families was pointed out to be relevant for successful *intercompréhension*. In the framework of the Toolkit project, we will zoom in on various European language families, such as Romance, Germanic, and Finno-Ugric.

LaRa has a long standing tradition in Europe, but has been largely ignored or suppressed throughout the twentieth century due to the homogenising language policies of European nation-states (e.g. Rindler Schjerve 2003). And yet, LaRa communication continues to occur in various multilingual niches, in which receptive multilingualism has led to efficient intercultural discourse, sometimes even to *discursive interculture(s)* (Koole & ten Thije 1994). When it works, LaRa helps transcending communicational misunderstanding and failure, and helps construct new forms of understanding.

One of the main questions regarding LaRa is how it relates to the other strategies. In LaRa, communication partners can verbalize in their respective mother tongues what they could not verbalize in English or any other their Lingua Franca. On the other hand, whereas ELF users can base their verbalizations on acquired means which are “safe” to a certain extent, as English will often not be the mother tongue of any of the interlocutors, LaRa-understanders have to activate a linguistic potential and undertake an active adaptation process to a language that they generally master to a lesser extent than the speaker.

### 3.4 Codeswitching (CS)

One option that is rarely chosen or even considered in language choice processes for formal meetings, and one that is extremely frequent in everyday speech, is codeswitching, the use of two (or more) languages at the same time. LaRa could be viewed as one kind of CS, but the latter is broader: it covers any type of language use in which two languages are used together, often by the same speaker, and often within an individual sentence.

CS could be argued to be the prime expression of cultural equality. Its obscurity reflects the dominant language ideology that is held almost everywhere in official quarters that languages are self-contained entities, and that they need to be as pure as possible. Codeswitching goes against this ideology, as it breaks down the barriers between languages.

While discourse about English as Lingua Franca and its alternatives generally takes place under the specter of language recognition and rivalry between national languages, codeswitching practices cheerfully ignore this and seem to expose it as an elite preoccupation. Supporting evidence for this view could come from the interpretation that as long as some form of coercion is possible, people can be forced to stick to one language, but in everyday informal settings where such coercion is generally absent, communication often proceeds in two or more languages at once. The idea that languages are discrete identities is of course reinforced enormously in pretty much everybody's upbringing; that codeswitching is nevertheless practiced abundantly in most bilingual communities studied testifies to the fact that these distinctions are in some sense unnatural. The phenomenon has been studied in multilingual families and communities all around the world.

The proposal here is to see whether an upgrade of the appreciation of codeswitching (and various other types of language mixing; 'codeswitching' is just a widespread, though not very accurate, cover term) is useful, and, if so, suggest ways of doing this. The central ideas are that 1) the bilingual skills involved provide an undervalued resource in communication policies and education, and 2) recognizing their value may help rewrite public perception of what languages are and thus combat some of the purism that plagues much of the debate. The rest of this section works this out for a number of empirical domains where codeswitching might be a feasible alternative to monolingual choices.

Basically, codeswitching should be possible in the same situations as where LaRa is possible, as it can only be communicatively successful if all participants know both (or all) languages involved. This must be relativized, though, in at least two ways: 1) the thoroughness with which participants "know" the languages is open to discussion; and 2) translation mechanisms can help communication even if not everybody speaks all languages involved.

As for proficiency, it would probably be counterproductive if, on the one hand, we promote CS as a valid communicative option, and, on the other hand, only expect people to use both languages if they have a high level of proficiency in those languages. The reality of language is, after all, that people differ in how easily they learn second and foreign languages, and education can only play a limited role in this. While we certainly do not want to argue against teaching various languages in school, we argue against imposing high-level proficiency norms on anyone wishing to participate in communicative practice.

As for 'translation', CS data often show that speakers repeat information in two languages. Often, this has pragmatic motivations, such as lending emphasis to particular information, but note that this is often done as a service to the interlocutors. CS often plays this role: it allows interlocutors to interpret the intentions of the speaker, i.e. it is a contextualization cue. Communication training could educate speakers about these functions that apparently come natural to bilingual speakers, in order to exploit them in more official settings.

One practical advantage of 'allowing' CS is that speakers do not have to think hard about a way to phrase something in the language of communication if another language says it better. Many culturally loaded expressions are of this type: if speakers are allowed to just use the expression in the other language, perhaps accompanied by phrases such as 'as they say in X', and a further explanation of its meaning, this will help them a) to express optimally what they want to say and b) contribute positively to every participant's intercultural competence.

Many of the settings that we are looking at in the context of our Toolkit lend themselves well to CS as practiced 'in the wild', because of their relative informality. This holds, for instance, for daycare centers, schools (apart from the actual teaching, perhaps), community organizations, shops and markets, work settings, and public transport. In theory, more formal domains, such as classrooms, official services (city hall, police, tax office, etc.), staff

meetings in business, parliament sessions, and written media could just as well feature CS, but commonly held negative attitudes about purism work against its use. The question is whether this is to be accepted as normal. Background to all this is sociolinguistic work on language attitudes, both in the form of socio-psychological work through, e.g., questionnaires, and in the form of observations of the ways in which the indexicality of different languages is reflected in communicative practices (as in the current work on linguistic landscapes, for instance, cf. Juffermans 2010).

Attitudes are all-important. Whenever the current norm for monolingual language choice in any communicative settings meets with hostility, disappointment and resentment in some of the participants, making CS acceptable and normal would probably go quite some way to relaxing the tensions involved, and this, in turn, would increase the chances of communicative success. Less urgent, perhaps, but still a positive contribution that CS can make is that it spices up communication, adding creativity and humor. Not being allowed to break into the possibilities other languages allow holds the flow of conversation back, making for stilted discourse, and as we all know, a little fun can do wonders in any communicative situation.

#### **4. Communication strategies: A preliminary comparison**

The four strategies we consider here are not the only ones that are possible in multilingual communication (cf. House & Rehbein 2004; Rehbein, ten Thije and Verschik, to appear). What makes them particularly useful, however, is that they do not involve pressure on the communication partners to develop full competence in one or more non-native languages, nor do they require the use of expensive professional translation services. Use of English or a regionally prominent language as lingua franca can proceed without ‘full’ command of the language in the sense that one does not need to sound like a native speaker, or be able to use the language fluently in any communicative situation. LaRa and CS share the feature that interlocutors are called upon to help each other out whenever comprehension problems arise, by treating the *totality* of linguistic skills available to those present as the resources for achieving successful communication.

Still, significant differences can be detected between the four modes, and these differences provide the clues to the ultimate goal of selecting the optimal mode of communication in a particular communicative setting. Figure 1 summarizes the similarities and differences. First, while all four strategies have in common that they do not rely to any great extent on an excessive orientation towards the target language norm, they differ in the degree to which they avoid this (dimension 1 in Figure 1). Second, there are differences in the socio-historical embeddedness of the four modes, as has become clear from the individual descriptions in the sections above (dimension 2). Third, some strategies are more costly than others regarding the amount of instruction (e.g. language classes) that is needed to make use of them (dimension 3). Seidlhofer et al.’s (2006) analysis attributes to some types of using English as a lingua franca a fair amount of costly and inflexible reliance on ‘perfect’ skills in English, but they also identify uses (‘type D’: lingua franca communication in informal settings) which come close to receptive multilingualism/LaRa. When we survey how the four modes are generally applied, they seem to be preferred on different regions of the formality cline (dimension 4) and differ in territorial scope (dimension 5). Speakers should be encouraged to work on their repertoires throughout their life; however, spending all one’s energies on perfecting his/her skills in one foreign language (e.g. English) is, for most communication goals in modern Europe, perhaps not the most efficient way of doing this. Therefore, we may also compare the four modes with respect to their learnability (dimension 6). As a basic principle underlying efficient transnational communication we suggest that everything should be done to allow communication partners to make use of whatever they

have in their linguistic repertoires (see Gumperz 1982; Lüdi & Py 2008; Blommaert & Backus 2011). Having said this, there is no gold standard that will allow everybody to function in an optimal way; what one needs in terms of linguistic repertoire depends on what communicative settings one is likely to enter on a regular basis. Therefore, we added a final seventh dimension regarding the communicative potential of the four modes.

**Figure 1; preliminary tentative comparison of the four modes respecting communicative effectiveness**

	ELF	RELF	LaRa	CS
1. Orientation towards standardized linguistic norms	low	high	high	low
2. Social-historical embeddedness	low	high	high	low
3. Need for instruction	dependent on regular school instruction	dependent on regular school instruction	limited extra instruction	no special instruction
4. Usage in specific settings	formal and informal	more formal	more informal	informal
5. Territorial scope	global	regional	local	local
6. Learnability: Ease of learning	fast	slow	medium	fast
7. Communicative potentials	not infinite	high	high	restricted

One of the main aims of the Toolkit project is to develop reliable and objective dimensions that enable comparison and assessment of communicative effectiveness. Only on the basis of more comprehensive case studies can the tentative assessments summarised in Figure 1 be underpinned and elaborated. The Toolkit project brings several such case studies together.

## 5. Communicative domains

Transnational communication takes place in many domains or settings, and for each the most efficient strategy may be a different one. Domains of obvious relevance are those explicitly targeted by policy, as they are very visible and hold immediate interest for policy makers: these include education, media, and the provision of public information. Beyond these domains, however, many other parts of life involve communication between people with different mother tongues. Though these domains generally do not need to be regulated, the public often feels the need for some guidelines and suggestions just the same. At the very least, documentation of the choices people make and the implications these choices have, would be a useful undertaking in a world of increasing cultural and linguistic confusion and ambiguity.

A perspective studied rather intensively by sociolinguists is that of multilingualism in modern European cities (Extra & Yağmur 2005, Blommaert et al. 2005; Rehbein 2009; also see Otsuji & Pennycook's 2010 on their suggested term 'metrolingualism'). In this research tradition, the city is a space where many language choice issues can be investigated and compared. Many different domains are involved (service encounters, commerce, public information, informal encounters, etc.) and different degrees of spontaneity (from formal domains subject to language policy to informal encounters on the street). As such, the modern city provides a wonderful laboratory for data collection. However, it must be emphasized that the European countryside is also globalizing on an unprecedented scale. Increased mobility has decreased the linguistic and cultural homogeneity of small and rural places, replacing the village with the region as perhaps the empirically more useful site of empirical research. In addition, labor migration across state boundaries is not just directed towards the cities and



their economic opportunities: there is also a lot of seasonal or permanent migration of agricultural laborers, for example from Romania and Poland to countries in Western Europe (cf. Mutsaers & Swanenberg 2010). Transnational communication in urban and rural places is likely to show similarities and differences that are worth exploring.

In fact, dialectology provides perhaps unsuspected insights, since, in a way, dialects have been through the challenges already that are now facing European national languages. In times of social change, new cultural traditions and new types of behavior emerge, and they are often greeted simultaneously as wonderful additions that spice up life as we knew it, and as threats to the status quo and the beloved traditions of old. After all, new traditions often replace old ones, and this inevitably causes pain, for instance because the new traditions are not embraced by everyone, because access to these new traditions may be limited for some groups in society, or simply because people do not like to see the old traditions disappear. While many European national languages face this situation for the first time in modern European transnational communication, dialects have been here before. Generally seen as, again simultaneously, relics of the past and emblems of local pride, they have factors working to their disadvantage and to their advantage at the same time. Studying how dialects, with their long experience of disenfranchisement, respond to the demands of modern society, may provide us with a fresh perspective on issues involved in language choice, especially negative attitudes, language purism, and fear of language shift.

Dialectology has tended to focus on what may be referred to as ‘deep dialect’ (older, relatively immobile, speakers), while it is clear that much of what passes as ‘dialect’ these days is to variable extents influenced by the standard language. In some areas, this has given rise to ‘regiolects’, a locally flavored version of the standard language, preserving many features of the local dialects in a large region, but leveling out many features as well. Significant for our present purposes, this makes dialect increasingly acceptable in many conversational settings, as a wider share of the population can be expected to understand a regiolect than a truly local dialect.

The simultaneous use of different dialects (including the standard variety) in communication could be seen as a textbook case of Receptive Multilingualism. This would primarily concern communication within national borders, but is not limited to this, as, say, Dutch and German dialects on both sides of the border are often claimed to be more mutually intelligible than the national languages.

## **6. Proficiency**

When we examine the choice of language for a particular communicative exchange, for instance whether to speak German or English, it is generally understood that these should be Standard German or Standard English. Knowledge of these varieties is a prerequisite for carrying out the chosen strategy. The degree of knowledge required, the proficiency level, is a crucial aspect of multilingual communication, as it has direct consequences for the economic costs involved. Reaching a high level of proficiency is expensive, as people need to take language courses and/or travel to achieve immersion in foreign language environments.

Proficiency is a topic that is in need of empirical study and linguistic theorizing (and rethinking). Strictly speaking, ‘perfect’ proficiency is not needed for successful communication, as conversation partners can help each other (especially ‘built in’ in CS and LaRa, but also compatible with ELF and RELF). However, proficiency is also a form of social capital. People judge each other on the basis of their proficiency in English or other relevant languages, and these judgments may stand in the way of cooperative behavior and therefore jeopardize efficient communication. With ELF, this dynamic is obvious in the discrepancy between native speakers and everybody else. People have unequal chances for

achieving high levels of proficiency, partially because of unequal access to the required norms (schooling, travel possibilities) and partially because of linguistic factors (typological distance: it is easier for Finns to achieve good command of Estonian than for Germans; and English is easier for Dutch people than for Italians). Some groups may simply not have sufficient opportunity to acquire the required norms. Linguistically aware communication partners know this, but there is little in most people's upbringing, schooling and training that helps raise this awareness. In its absence, the often unwarranted negative judgments regarding someone's skills and qualities based on someone's proficiency level in the vehicular language play havoc with the goals of communication.

Perhaps more than any other topic, proficiency requires cooperative efforts from academics and stakeholders together. Academics may question the wisdom of imposing the set of essentially arbitrary norms of a standard language on an activity as organic, ephemeral and spontaneous as speaking, but practitioners may point out that total *laissez-faire* may bring uncontrollable chaos and misunderstanding. In addition, they may bring in other arguments in favor of such explicit norms, such as their widespread acceptance, or the secondary effect they may have on the acceptance of general codes of conduct in civilized society. And yet, if English is chosen for communication, should the target be standard English (and if so, which kind?) or 'international or European English'? Or should there not be a strict norm at all? Should we care?

The Toolkit aims to open a scientific contribution to the debate that focuses on clearing up the many misunderstandings about explicit norms and the normativity inherent in everyday life (see Section 2), in short, providing public discourse and the educational field with relatively unknown basic facts about the nature of language.

## **7. Discussion: Investigating the convergence of the four modes**

The project introduced here will compare the four strategies to arrive at an inventory of their respective strengths and weaknesses. The results are collected in a 'toolkit' that allows users, people and institutions faced with language choice issues, to check which strategy would provide the best chance at successful communication. This final section briefly discusses three of the themes that will figure in the academic discussion. They are respectively of an empirical, analytical and theoretical nature. The list is not exhaustive, but meant to illustrate how the project works and what it promises to deliver.

### *7.1 Comparative urban perspective*

The four modes of communication can be studied to establish a comparative urban perspective. Chríst (2007) proposes an urban focus that goes beyond the question of merely investigating the 'belonging' to a particular linguistic and cultural identity and instead proposes to study cities as the site of multilingual encounters, *within* as well as *between* various communities.

In case studies incorporated in the Toolkit project, various city spaces are considered: shopping malls/markets, public transport, international workplaces, homileic discourses (e.g. small talk) in the family and among friends, in restaurants and in leisure areas, schools (including breaks and/or side talk during the lessons), conversations between university students (for instance where there are many exchange students), on the cultural scene etc. In these spaces, citizens meet on an everyday basis, and in pursuing different activities explore new communicative ideas and practices. The role of governmental institutions will be considered with respect to their organisational support or prohibition of multilingual and multicultural encounters.

The Toolkit partners work in cities such as Utrecht, Amsterdam, Tilburg, Copenhagen, Vienna, Tirgu Mures and Istanbul, which represent the complex dynamics and directions of change in European society and culture in the 21st century (Rehbein et al 2008). These urban contexts represent different language typological constellations: North Germanic, Scandinavian, Finno-Ugric, South Germanic and Turkic. Furthermore, these cities represent long traditions which can be traced back to pre-national-state empires with their multi-ethnic and multi-lingual populations. The cities are situated in distinct historical constellations, the Habsburg Empire, the German order and the Ottoman Empire. The Scandinavian and the Dutch situations are the product of very specific histories.

The hypothesis to explore is that, because of urbanization as well as through migration, global influences, and remigration within Europe, the social organisation of multilingualism in these cities is undergoing a qualitative transformation towards innovative forms of multilingual spaces. In these new forms of multilingual communication, the commonality of social actions, i.e. social coherence, is based on mutual linguistic understanding in various constellations of the four modes of communication, at least in situations when superficial linguistic exchange is not sufficient.

## 7.2 *Communicative index of linguistic diversity*

With respect to the convergence of the four modes, a '*communicative index of linguistic diversity*' will be developed, which could be used for estimating the effectiveness of the four modes in various multilingual constellations. Gazzola & Grin (2007) argue that, similar to cost-effectiveness analysis where monetary value is attached to non-monetary forms such as time or number of people, it is possible to measure when one of the four modes would be more effective than the others. In multilingual contexts, the parameters should include multiple dimensions that measure linguistic diversity. House and Rehbein (2004: 3) provide a set of parameters that list languages used (L1 to L+), speech situations, roles of the participants, socio-political status of the languages involved, linguistic repertoires (both for individuals and groups), typological distance between languages and degree of language separation, mixing or switching. These factors could serve as a tool to calculate effectiveness of the use of the four modes. It is important though that effectiveness is measured with respect to dyads, not just individual skills of the participants. The end result could be formulated into 'an individual with L2 proficiency X and linguistic diversity index Y will profit from using one or two of the four modes in situation Z (dyad)'. The Toolkit project assumes that the concept of a '*communicative linguistic diversity index*' could provide a theoretical onset enabling us to compare shared understanding processes in individuals or dyads across different constellations.

## 7.3 *Discursive interculture(s)*

Koole & ten Thije (1994) introduce the notion of *discursive interculture(s)*, in order to explain discursive structures that emerge in intercultural contact and cannot simply be traced back to the respective cultures involved. Some of the Toolkit case studies zoom in on the question of how the four modes contribute to the emergence of discursive interculture(s) in multilingual constellations. Ten Thije (2003) distinguishes seven features important in their emergence: (1) interlocutors have enduring contact within a collective; (2) they have linguistic competencies in various languages; (3) their interaction is determined by superordinate institutional purposes, (4) their interpersonal contact is not unique, but has a repetitive character, (5) achieving the institutional purposes depends on the extent to which interlocutors are capable of coping with the multilingual constellation (6) the choice of language for their

contact is not completely fixed by the language policy of the organization and participants have a certain action space to develop new discourse structures; (7) the communicative setting itself arises from and is related to supranational developments (also see Eckert 20xx on the importance of ‘communities of practice’ as the hub for developing new cultural patterns.

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