

## Multilingualism and education

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## outline

- Education policies in two multilingual settings:
  - Estonia
  - Catalonia
- Preliminary aspects:
  - Questions
  - Implications

## questions

- What does multilingualism actually mean?
  - Macro perspective: the rule
  - Micro perspective: the exception (being challenged nowadays)
- Macro perspective:
  - Policies?
  - Bilingual education

## implications

- Multilingualism is the rule (macro persp.): 6,000 languages and less than 200 countries
- Obscuring this rule:
  - the nation-state building ideology
  - the fact that nowadays' world's population tends to be still majoritarily monolingual (multiling is not the rule at the micro level)
- Challenging this idea: globalization

## implications (cont'd)

- Disunite globalization from the "big paradox" (Junyent, 1998)
- Build on the idea of complementarity, not hierarchy of languages
- The intrinsic equality of all languages and forms of speech (Labov)
- Redefinition of minorities' rights (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003; May, 2003)
- The era of complexity (Morin)

## implications (final)

- The boundaries of mother tongue education
- Alternatives:
  - valorize diversity as such
  - work on teachers' linguistic attitudes and representaions

## Estonia



- Small country, North-Eastern Europe.
- 45,000 sq km (17,500 sq mi), 1.4 M inhabit.
- Ethnically divided:
  - 70% ethnic Estonian
  - 30% non-ethnic Estonian
- Estonian language: Finno-Ugric (Uralic) lang.
- Russian language: Slavonic (Indo-Europ) lang.

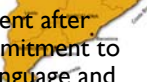
- Re-independent since 1991/92.
- Goal: reestablish previous legality state, strengthening the national language.
  - Language Act
  - Citizenship Law
- Pending: the education system (Soviet).
  - Estonian-medium schools for Estonians.
  - Russian-medium schools for Russians.


- Reform: thought for 2000, postponed to 2007, fully implemented 2012.
- Concern among the Russian minority.
- Opposite sides holding their own views on history and their “realities”.
- Outcome: confrontation by means of linguistic ideologies.

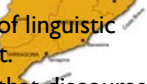
## Catalonia



- Never an independent country.
- Strong and lively historical view of “a nation”.
- Autonomous Community.
- Oppressive regime (Francoism).
- Deep change in the demographic landscape.
- Mixed society, not ethnically divided.
- Catalan and Spanish languages genetically related.

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- First autonomous government after Franco's death: strong commitment to reinstitutionalize Catalan language and give it back its lost prestige and status.
  - Linguistic immersion program (1985): all levels of education function primarily in Catalan.
  - Aim: that all students ended up their school years with good proficiency in the two official languages.

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- Generally positive results.
  - Important shortcoming: people's linguistic habitus (Bourdieu) unmodified.
  - Catalan is not the unmarked language in Catalonia yet.
  - More complexity: the other recently arrived newcomers (all over the world).

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- Deeply rooted perception of linguistic conflicts: only two ways out.
  - Scholarly starting to break that discourse (Junyent, Bastardas, Boix, etc.).
  - At schools: teachers' perception of linguistic diversity as a problem. Contradictory opinions.
  - Constant claim about the discrimination of the Spanish speaking minority, esp in education.

## summary

- Multilingualism, the rule.
- Pay special attention to it:
  - Ideologies
  - Education
- Contrast Catalonia / Estonia: ground for us to think about.

## suggested further reading/watching:

- Bastardas, Albert (2007): *Les polítiques de la llengua i de la identitat a l'era "glocal"*. [The politics of the language and identity in the "glocal" era] Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Autònomicos.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1982): *Ce que parler veut dire*. Paris: Fayard.
- Edwards, John (2009): *Gestió de la diversitat lingüística a l'aula* [Linguistic diversity management in school classrooms], conference available on YouTube (in English). Open University Catalonia. [http://www.youtube.com/user/UOC#p/a/A2CC74330ASDF3940/4\\_MaTi0Repw](http://www.youtube.com/user/UOC#p/a/A2CC74330ASDF3940/4_MaTi0Repw)
- Junyent, Carme (1998): *Contra la planificació* [Against Planning]. Barcelona: Empúries.
- Morin, Edgar (1990): *Introduction à la pensée complexe*. Paris: EME Editions Sociales Françaises.
- Moreno Cabera, Juan Carlos (2009): Interview on YouTube about present-day linguistics. Open University Catalonia. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z57j88m0\\_MU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z57j88m0_MU) [in Spanish]
- Kymlicka, Will (2000): "Estonia's Integration Policies in a Comparative Perspective.", in *Estonia's Integration Landscape: From Apathy to Harmony*. Tallinn: Jaan Tõnissoni Instituut.
- Kymlicka, Will & Allan Patten (eds.) (2003): *Language rights and political theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- May, Stephen (2003): "Misconceiving Minority Language Rights: Implications for Liberal Political Theory." In Kymlicka & Patten (2003).
- "Multilingualism is not associated with low economic growth", interview with David Latín, June 2009 (Open University Catalonia): [http://www.uoc.edu/porta/anglsh/la\\_universitat/sala\\_de\\_prensa/entrevistes/2009/david\\_latin\\_h.html](http://www.uoc.edu/porta/anglsh/la_universitat/sala_de_prensa/entrevistes/2009/david_latin_h.html)