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Professionalising multilingualism in higher education

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**SEND YOUR EXTENDED SUMMARY - not later than -
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Call for contributions - OPEN

Professionalising multilingualism in higher education

Higher education marks a key intersection in the multilingual societies of today. The issue of institutional multilingualism (e.g., Universities with two or more languages of instruction) and the individual's plurilingualism of adults is at stake. This volume brings together practices, policies and approaches dealing with the issue of professionalisation of multilingualism in higher education.

The experimental dimension is linked to an individual trajectory and all the material that is not directly observable in an interaction but is nevertheless present and transparent in an individual's action. The plurilingual individual (whether a student or a professional, whether highly experienced or a novice in a multilingual environment) in the context of social, cultural, or geographic and virtual mobility is not only vocationally and linguistically skilled but also a practitioner with the capacity to transform experiences, qualifications and repertoires into resources for communication.

The socio-organisational dimension can be observed in the plurilingual's action and habits. How does the individual / social actor behave in his/her vocational environment and activities? Which spaces does s/he use and prefer? Which tools and devices are brought into play? How do hesitations and silences work in multilingual encounters? How is participation in conversations accomplished? These observations contribute to

the enrichment of the growing comprehension of the features of plurilingual individuals in their social context, allowing for a contextualising of the multifaceted personality of the multilingual professional?

From a systemic point of view, the individual has to be regarded in his/her involvement with the multilingual institution. From this perspective the institution can be considered through its forms of organisation and its regulations - specifically linked to its language policy - regarding the recruitment of staff, the selection of students or vocational training for members. Procedures, tools, and documentation available are then dedicated to the professionalisation of multilingual practices at all levels (administration, teaching, tutoring and research) allowing also for the evaluation/certification of such multilingual practices (not limited to the certification of one language/languages). All these aspects traditionally tend to constrain an individual, rather than develop him / her as part of the institution.

Finally, an inter-subjective dimension includes all (multilingual) communication practices occurring within the institutional context. Deriving/emanating from the shared life, resulting from common habits, mutual adaptations, implicit or explicit rules, all these practices create interpretations, (mis)understandings and managing devices for multilingual everyday issues in relation to personal purposes.

With regard to the outlined conception of multilingualism and plurilingualism, the issue of suitable language training is addressed from a lifelong learning perspective, considering multilingual competences (and their certification) as an overall phenomenon not only bound to study programmes dedicated to the learning of languages. In sum, the issue of plurilingual individuals acting in multilingual institutions gives rise to a reconceptualisation of the professionalising dimension regarding not only multilingualism in higher education.

Thematic strands - Perspektiven für Beiträge - Volets de contribution

1 - Training plurilingual professionals in a multilingual world

Les recherches soulignent le rôle fondamental joué par les institutions d'enseignement supérieur dans la création d'espaces plurilingues et pluriculturels. De ce point de vue, la question de l'enseignement et de la formation des enseignants en devient dès lors d'autant plus importante. Elle pourrait être résumée de la manière suivante : Quel profil multilingue est à encourager ou à développer pour quel enseignant (pas uniquement en langue/s) en vue de quel multilinguisme (fonctionnel, savant, élitiste, scientifique, etc.) ?

Research has emphasised the role of higher education in the development of plurilingualism and multicultural areas. From this point of view, the training issue and the question of vocational teacher training is of core interest: which characteristics have to be developed in professionals in teaching (not only in teaching languages)? Which challenges and contexts have to be managed by the plurilingual professionals?

Studien unterstreichen die grundlegende Bedeutung der Schaffung von mehrsprachigen und mehrkulturellen Räumen. Die Qualifizierung und Professionalisierung von Lehrpersonal im mehrsprachigen Umfeld ist von vorrangiger Bedeutung. Sie kann folgendermassen zusammengefasst werden: Welches Mehrsprachigkeitsprofil wird gewünscht oder entwickelt, für welche Lehrkräfte (nicht nur in den Sprachen, sondern auch in anderen Fächern) und für welche Arten der

Mehrsprachigkeit (funktionale, gelehrte, elitäre, wissenschaftliche, ...Mehrsprachigkeit)?

2 - Biographie langagière et identité (professionnelle) du plurilingue

Everyday life at university engages biographical, linguistic and professional backgrounds as regards acting in formal and informal multilingual communication at university in scientific, technical or administrative domains. Moreover, multilingual biographies and professional practices serve as training tools for multilingualism in professional contexts outside the academic framework. Multilingual universities represent the economic dimensions of multilingualism today. On the one hand side, university administrations have to handle costs and validations regarding documents and the set-up of administration in different languages. On the other hand, they are key players in the creation of added value with regard to the future economic success of candidates in a multilingual world and the enhancement the potentials of a region which hosts a multilingual university.

An Hochschulen wird in einer oder mehreren Sprache(n) kommuniziert, obwohl diese nicht die Erstsprache(n) des Individuums ist/sind. Diese Kommunikation erfolgt schriftlich, mündlich, in formellen und informellen, wissenschaftlichen, administrativen und technischen Zusammenhängen, sie betrifft Lebenswege und vielsprachige Erfahrungen, die als Werkzeuge der Ausbildung in und zur Mehrsprachigkeit in beruflichen Zusammenhängen dienen können. Auch wirtschaftliche Aspekte der Mehrsprachigkeit kommen hier zum Tragen, bei der Wahl einer Universität oder der Zugangsberechtigung zu bestimmten Berufen oder Arbeitskontexten.

Que ce soit dans un contexte de communication formelle ou informelle, à un niveau administratif, technique ou scientifique, la vie quotidienne d'une université ou d'un établissement d'enseignement supérieur multilingue repose sur les apports multiples (biographiques, linguistiques, professionnels) des individus qui la composent et qui contribuent ainsi à lui donner son visage particulier. Au-delà de l'anecdotique, comment faire en sorte que ces histoires de vie multiculturelles et ces pratiques multilingues deviennent des outils de formation à part entière, participant eux aussi d'une dynamique de professionnalisation du multilinguisme. Dans un contexte de marché de l'emploi ouvert privilégiant de plus en plus la mobilité de professionnels multilingues, et dans la perspective d'un espace européen commun de l'enseignement, comment les établissements d'enseignement supérieur peuvent-ils répondre à ces défis et rendre le multilinguisme encore plus attractif d'un point de vue économique ?

3 - Mehrsprachige Hochschulbildung: Ausbildungsgänge, Messverfahren und Rahmenpolitik

Standardisierte Mehrsprachigkeit wie sie in Qualifizierungskontexten gefordert wird, muss sich positionieren, wenn es um die Messung nicht allein einzelsprachlicher Kompetenzen geht. Die Frage der Standards für Mehrsprachigkeit betrifft den Prozess der Normierung als auch die zu Grunde gelegten Normen. Mehrsprachige Studien- und Forschungsprogramme erscheinen als Experimentierfelder mehrsprachiger Praktiken und stehen im Kontrast zu aktuellen Evaluationsmodellen auf der Basis von Einsprachigkeit-en.

Les dispositifs multilingues mis en place dans l'enseignement supérieur soulèvent la question des normes, des critères et des standards multilingues à adopter ou non, vers lesquels tendre ou non. Dans cette perspective, les programmes de formation multilingues peuvent constituer des terrains d'expérimentation et de réflexion propices à l'élaboration de nouveaux modèles d'évaluation ne reposant plus exclusivement sur des critères monolingues.

Multilingual higher education settings raise the question of the implementation of standards and normalisation efforts for multilingualism and/or multilingual practices. Moreover, experiences and observations of multilingual study programmes and their successful implementation demonstrate new models of assessment and evaluation, which cannot (only) be based on monolingual standards.