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## La Lettre de l'OEP N°56 (October-December 2014)

<http://www.observatoireplurilinguisme.eu>

Translated by Sylvie Aubert

### Editorial : the dawn of a new era ?

It is often said that you must translate words into action to win conviction. In politics, attitudes and actions are more important than words. If there is a contradiction, credibility is destroyed.

At the debate organized in eurovision on 15 May, during the campaign for the designation of the future president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker spoke in French whereas Alexis Tsipras spoke in Greek, to the great displeasure of the European Union broadcasting organising team who wanted to impose English as the sole language of the candidates.

Later, Jean-Claude Juncker claimed his intention, if he was elected, to give more importance to the official languages, beginning with French and German.

None of the media mentioned that at the inauguration of the new European Commission, on 22 October, Jean-Claude Juncker made his [speech in French, German and English](#) and that Martin Schulz spoke mainly in German. It has been the same during the [press conference](#) held at the end of the session of the European Parliament. The audition of Federica Mogherini, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, on 6 October, was also a nearly perfect example of multilingualism.

The European Union has of course many problems to face, particularly on the economic and social levels, and the OEP has no role in these debates. But the signs given by the two presidents, the president of the Commission and the president of the Parliament, and by the High Representative, are to us major political acts that must be acknowledged, for at least two reasons.

First, the evolution of the European Commission towards monolingualism under the pressure of English has reached such a high level during the last fifteen years that it was urgent to return to the spirit of the European construction and to the treaties that make the linguistic and cultural diversity one of the pillars of the European Union.

The second reason is that the gap between the European institutions and the European peoples has grown ever wider,

Editing and writing : Christian Tremblay

La Lettre de l'OEP is translated by volunteers in [allemand](#), [anglais](#), [bulgare](#), [croate](#), [espagnol](#), [grec](#), [italien](#), [polonais](#), [portugais](#), [roumain](#) et [russe](#). The texts can be read on-line. Thanks to the translators. You can add other languages. [Please contact us](#)

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->but because the European governance does not meet their expectations, these being so much stronger in this period of deep changes in the state of the world.

Of course, the question of the language is not a central element, but it must be understood that the hegemony of English in the European Commission is a sign of a deep gap between the European Commission and the citizens because the European Commission is not a classical international organisation. It is the European executive power.

We must keep in mind that in a distant and meaningful past, to which some refer to promote the hegemony of English, called the modern "Latin", Latin was eventually abandoned for the popular languages because it was no longer understood by the population...->

<p>not because the peoples are against Europe ...-&gt;</p> <p>-&gt; As a matter of fact, English today is really understood by a small minority of the population. It is a <i>lingua franca</i> in much specialised spheres but it is neither the sole language nor a common language and will never be. Unless we consider that it is quite normal that the power should be in the hands of a caste who has the culture and the foresight to exercise it, which is actually one of the hidden principles of neoliberalism that guides so much western governments and is nothing but a soft version of tyranny. But the European Commission cannot be identified with neoliberalism.</p> <p>Therefore we must write and speak in the languages of the European peoples.</p> <p>A right to language is emerging. The Swedes have a very evocative term of it : KLARSPRÅK<sup>1</sup>. Everybody should be able to understand what is said and written by the authorities. Everybody has a right to understand. It is a matter of democracy, legal certainty and efficiency. It is the one condition for everybody to take part in the life of society. Of course, these elementary rules should apply to the usual language of administration. They are even more imperative and significant at the level of an international organisation whose decisions have a huge impact on people's everyday life.</p> <p>There is thus an absolutely essential right to understand. But there is also a right to express oneself. In the consultative bodies of the civil society, if only the speakers who master English well enough can express their point of view, then only they take part in the decision making. The others purely and simply desert these bodies. The selection on language is anything but neutral. In the meantime the doors are wide open to the pressure groups.</p> <p>There is thus a right to language that includes a right to translation, interpretation and mutual understanding.</p> <p>There are still a lot of things that need altering in the linguistic functioning of the European institutions.</p> <p>But let us start at the beginning.</p> <p>We mentioned this question before : to have non-English copywriters writing English texts that will be later translated into the language of the writer is rather surrealistic, to say no more. In our opinion, the copywriter should write preferably in his own language. But of course, as his text should be understood by all and as it will undergo numerous modifications, it should be translated into one or several languages so as to guarantee a good understanding. The text undergoes a process of multilinguistic elaboration that guarantees its quality.</p> <p>A partner association of the OEP, the "Institut de coopération avec l'Europe orientale" (ICEO) studied this problem seriously. Their answer is to prescribe a "flexible trilingualism" for the elaboration of the texts. The rule is as follows : the text is first written in the language of the copywriter and immediately translated into at least two other languages, one of them being a working language. Depending on the context, it leaves room ...-&gt;</p>	<p>-&gt; for official languages other than working languages. The text then undergoes a trilingual elaboration. This organisation prescribed by the ICEO, in accordance with what the OEP advocates too, can be applied to the civil servants in the member states as well as to the civil servants of the European Union.</p> <p>The impact of such an evolution can be easily measured. It would be partly a return to basics and to former usage that was too quickly abandoned in the last decade.</p> <p>To us the effects are foursome.</p> <p>First of all there is the linguistic quality. The trilingual elaboration, without being more complex, is superior to the elaboration in one language followed by a translation in 23 languages.</p> <p>The second consequence is mechanical : whole parts of the website Europa that are now in English only, thus creating a feeling of exclusion among the non-English-speaking readers whatever their level in English, will disappear.</p> <p>Third consequence : all the official languages would be valued and would benefit from these new practices. The trilingualism in question does not use working languages only but uses some languages which are not.</p> <p>The fourth and last consequence is symbolical. In today's world, monolingualism is not a progress, it is a flaw. The diversity of languages is part of biodiversity. A proper balance should be found in the functioning of the institutions. ◀</p> <p>1 Reference to a presentation by Karin Ridell (University of Strasbourg , EA 1339 LiLPa/GEPE) au colloque des 25-26 septembre 2014, « Emergence des notions de « droits linguistiques » et « droit à la langue ». Les apports d'une approche historique », Maison des Sciences de l'Homme - Alsace – LiLPa (Linguistique, langues, parole) – GEPE (Groupe d'étude sur le plurilinguisme européen).</p>
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## Articles not to be missed

[The Confusion between languages – too many anglicisms !](#) When Heinz Wismann writes *Penser entre les langues* (Albin Michel, 2012), he means "sharing the richness of languages, in their authenticity" not "mixing up the languages" which leads to confusion. Illustration by a short subject broadcast on 21 October 2014 on the news on France 2. This subject interests more than a French-speaking public. Most Europeans have the same problem. Let us unite against the confusion of languages !



[The Erasmus children](#) Many bilingual families were born through the European program Erasmus. The members of these families are from different origins and they speak English together, but their children are brought up with two cultures and are trilingual.

Petit reportage de 3 mn diffusé au JT (Journal télévisé) de 20 heures sur France 2 le 21 octobre.



[Grèce](#) : les enfants migrants privés de cours de langue (Le Courrier des Balkans) traduit par Laurelou Piguet



Italiano in Svizzera, "il plurilinguismo è valore fondante della Confederazione" - Intervista alla cancelliera federale Corina Casanova, presente agli Stati Generali che si sono tenuti a Firenze - tvsvizzera.it, martedì 21 ottobre 2014 19:57 - ultimo aggiornamento 20:04

[Lire la suite](#)



[Dualité entre le français et les langues africaines : L'espace francophone à l'heure du renouveau linguistique](#) - Écrit par [Gilles Arsene TCHEDJI](#) - jeudi 16 octobre 2014 13:35 pour [Le quotidien](#)

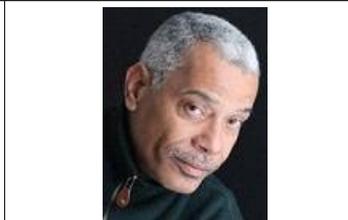
S'il est vrai que le français est très parlé dans certains pays africains, il ne demeure pas faux que la langue de Molière perd du terrain. Beaucoup d'ouvertures se créent vers les langues africaines. Et ce renouveau linguistique doit susciter une réflexion profonde au sein de l'espace francophone.

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[Pour mieux comprendre la dimension linguistique de la qualité de l'éducation en Haïti \(R. Berrouët-Oriol\)](#) - Dans un très récent courriel, mon collègue et ami le linguiste Hugues Saint-Fort confortait mon propos en ces termes : « *Tu as tout à fait raison d'insister sur la dimension linguistique prioritaire de tout virage vers la qualité de l'éducation en Haïti* ».

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[Educação Bilingue no Brasil](#) - Plurilinguismo, Interculturalidade e Educação no Brasil - O que é uma escola bilíngue?

Nesta época do ano é comum que os pais comecem a procurar escolas para os filhos e sintam falta de parâmetros objetivos em que basear sua escolha. Além dos muitos pontos a serem considerados na escolha de uma escola em geral, uma questão importante para os que procuram escolas bilíngues tem a ver com sua definição. Afinal, o que é (e como escolher) uma escola bilíngue?

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## Announcements and publications

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**Les cahiers  
de l'OEP**

Les Cahiers de l'OEP – Call for contributions

**Plurilingualism and scientific creativity**

Unlike the service languages whose aim is to circumscribe with the greatest possible precision limited representations of reality, the languages of culture embrace the whole of human experience. They are universal and have all the semantic resources necessary to the development of new forms of knowledge. Thus when a German-speaker studies physics in German or a French-speaker learns mathematics in French, they keep contact with their mother tongues, whose lexical wealth and metaphorical power stimulate intellectual creativity and favour the elaboration of new hypotheses. In opening the specialised research to other fields of experience, the historical languages play a major role in the advancement of knowledge. But the anglicisation of university trainings that is happening nowadays in the whole of Europe leads to a drying-out of this creativity. The teaching will be done in a service language, international English, thus cutting the sciences from the languages and the cultures that gave them birth, registering fixed states of knowledge, simplified results and recipes that will certainly remain technically operational but will doubtless lose their creative power.

When the European universities are in the process of imposing their teaching in English, it is a necessity to question the legacy we are going to leave to the younger generations and to denounce the dead ends in which we might get trapped.

**Key dates :**

**15 December 2014 : Dispatch of the presentation the article (1 page maximum)**

**Dispatch date of the article : 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015**

Format of the article : 8 pages (20 000 characters, spaces included), following the [enclosed style model](#)

Texts to be sent by e-mail (WORD document WORD with a RTF format) to José Carlos Herreras <[jch@eila.univ-paris-diderot.fr](mailto:jch@eila.univ-paris-diderot.fr)> AND to Pierre Frath <[pierre.frath@aliceadsl.fr](mailto:pierre.frath@aliceadsl.fr)>.

**Scientific conference : traductology and geopolitics  
(call for papers)**

Deadline : 1st December 2014

**Organised by :** Mathieu GUIDÈRE (University of Toulouse 2), James ARCHIBALD (McGill University, Canada), Lynne FRANJIE (University of Grenoble 3), Astrid GUILLAUME (University Paris IV Sorbonne)

Since the time of the drogmans, translat and geopolitics have been sont inseparable, but the upheavals that occurred since the beginning of this century (war against terrorism, war in Iraq, arab spring, war in Lybia, war in Syria, other conflicts with international issues, and also the rise in extremism in Europe) have deeply affected and modified the working conditions of all the language professions in general and of the translators in particular.

[Lire la suite](#)



### **In Paris, a museum to discover the languages of the world**

The language plays a central role in our lives, even in our dreams. The 170m<sup>2</sup>-wide permanent exhibition MUNDOLINGUA invites you to discover the secrets of language during an unusual visit with many different themes. The exhibition is open to all, either beginners or experts. It proposes several levels, reading and listening on touchscreens, games, many unusual objects such as a sound head, a language tree, syntax cubes and bricks, many instruments used by linguists, a copy of the Rosetta Stone, the encrypting machine Enigma, etc.

ASSOCIATION MUNDOLINGUA  
10 rue Servandoni – 75006 Paris - tél. +33 (0)1 56 81 65 79

<http://www.mundolingua.org/> - [contact@mundolingua.org](mailto:contact@mundolingua.org)

Open every day from 10am to 7pm



### **The Guide to good linguistic practices at work**

What languages do you speak in your job ?

How can we reconcile the use of French, our normal working language, with the needs of global communication ?

Why are languages such a wonderful asset for business?

...

[A lire](#)



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### **A new model of international school : Eurécôle**

It is not exactly a new school, as this school opened almost twenty years ago in the 16th arrondissement of Paris.

The idea was that after the fall of the Berlin wall and the announced extension of the European Union, it was urgent to take the matter of languages seriously but without limiting the teaching to English only, contrary to what has been done during the same period in many European countries and particularly in France where the linguistic offer has been limited to English.

Besides, when there is a linguistic ambition it must be backed with financial means while respecting the national programs.

[Lire la suite](#)

	<p><a href="#">Journée d'étude 2014 : "Migrer d'une langue à l'autre ?" (Paris- 26 novembre 2014)</a>  <i>Mercredi 26 novembre 2014, 9h00-18h00</i>  <i>Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration</i>  <i>Palais de la Porte dorée - 293 avenue Daumesnil - 75012 Paris</i></p> <p>La 2ème édition de cette journée consacrée aux langues de l'immigration vous proposera : <a href="#">Lire la suite</a></p>
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p><b>LA SEMAINE DES LANGUES</b></p> <p><b>Du 22 au 29 novembre 2014</b></p> <p><b>Une semaine d'échanges, de rencontres, d'animations pour valoriser le plurilinguisme et la diversité linguistique, dans les familles, à l'école, dans la sphère publique</b></p> </div>
	<p><b>Is this language mine ? Plurilingualism and migrations in the French-speaking literature (call for papers)</b></p> <p>This international conference has the ambition to formalise and theorise a phenomenon concerning both linguistics and literature. There is a growing interest for plurilingual writing in different types of texts...</p> <p>Organised by : Ana Clara Santos (Univ. Algarve), Isabelle Simões Marques (Univ. Aberta), João da Costa Domingues (Univ. Coimbra), José Domingues de Almeida (Univ. Porto), Maria de Jesus Cabral (Univ. Coimbra)</p> <p><a href="#">Lire la suite</a></p>
	<p><b>PARUTION Michel Zink (dir.) D'autres langues que la mienne (Odile Jacob), 2014</b></p> <p>Dans le recueil d'aphorismes intitulé Le Territoire de l'homme, Elias Canetti écrit ceci : « Toutes les langues que l'homme devrait posséder : une d'abord pour parler à sa mère, et qu'il n'utilisera plus jamais par la suite ; une exclusivement pour lire, et dans laquelle il n'ose écrire ; une dans laquelle il prie, et dont il ne comprend pas un traître mot ; une dans laquelle il fait ses comptes, réservée aux seules préoccupations financières ; une dans laquelle il écrit (sauf ses lettres)... ». <a href="#">Lire la suite</a></p>
	<p>The 6/2014 issue of Cahiers du GEPE (Groupe d'étude sur le plurilinguisme européen) is out.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Linguistic policies in Europe.</b>  <b>The Common European Framework of References for languages.</b></p> <p>It is available on-line free of charge :</p> <p><a href="http://www.cahiersdugepe.fr/index.php?id=2608">http://www.cahiersdugepe.fr/index.php?id=2608</a></p>

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